

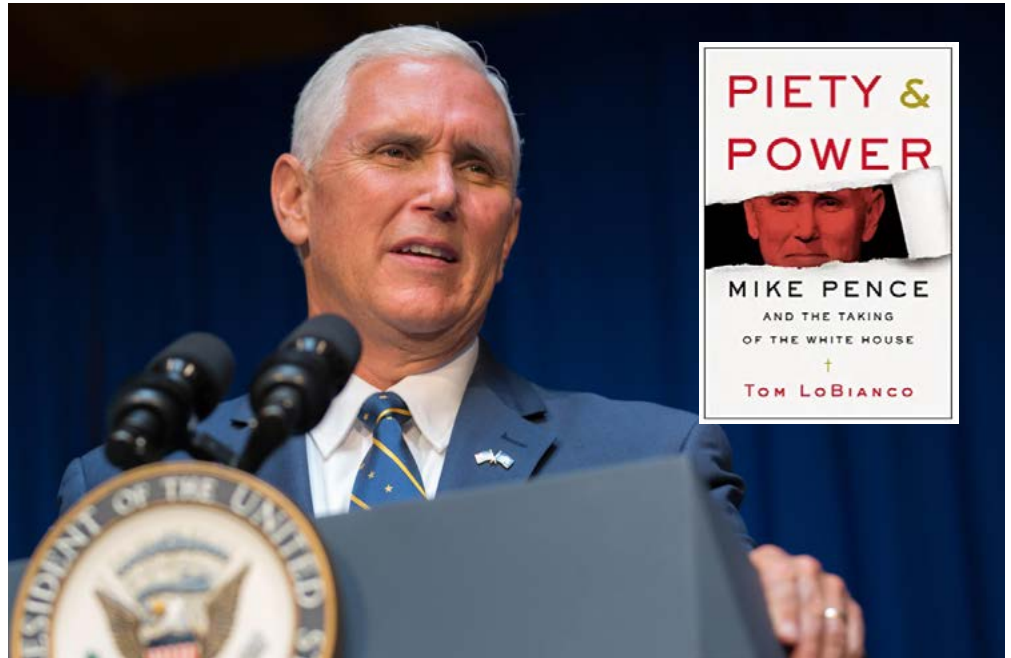
# Seeking the lost soul of Mike Pence

Tom LoBianco's 'Piety & Power' book on VP Pence became a search for an elusive Hoosier

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Just as the latest flash of impeachment fever hits the White House and Capitol Hill, author Tom LoBianco's new book, "Piety & Power: Mike Pence and the Taking of the White House," arrives at the bookstores and beyond.

The man who is the proverbial heartbeat away (or a 67-vote Senate impeachment conviction) from the White House is featured in a book that follows Pence from his Columbus boyhood home with a cornfield in the back yard, to high



school debates, Hanover College theological exercises exploring Abraham Lincoln's evolution, the Network Indiana broadcast booth and careers in Congress, the Indiana

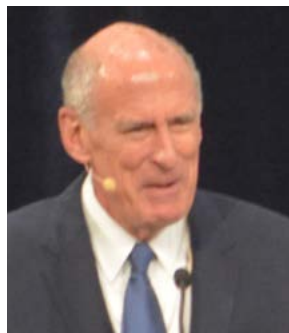
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## The Patriot returns

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Patriot came back home to Indiana on Tuesday. This would be Dan Coats, who began the day of Nov. 8, 2016, planning to retire, bounce grandkids on his knees and go to a Cubs game whenever he damn well pleased.

By the end of that year, Dan Coats was swept into Donald Trump's vortex, destined to be "Director of National Intelligence." If you've had a complex, unrelenting and crushingly demanding job, you'll understand this was, in essence, a duty, a burden and a nightmare. "In the first three months, I was literally overwhelmed," Coats told the Economic Club



**"I am greatly concerned that the conduct of the president continues to threaten the safety and security of our nation and our allies. Given the seriousness of the president's actions, I believe the speaker's announcement is warranted."**

*- U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky*



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**Jack E. Howey**  
editor emeritus  
1926-2019



of Indianapolis on Tuesday. "I could not get my mind around it. I finally concluded it was impossible. Once I did that, things settled in."

He had background as a Senate Intelligence and Armed Services committee member as well as the ambassador to Germany during the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York City and Washington. He described himself as a "liberal arts major" at the helm of a STEM group. "When a liberal arts major walks into a STEM group with thousands and thousands of analysts and experts, there's a big learning curve," Coats said. "It's been quite an adventure."

**He found himself** presiding over a sprawling array of threats that would boggle most minds.

"People ask me, 'What keeps you up at night?'" Coats said. "Ummmm, sometimes as you get older, you have to go to the bathroom." There was laughter relief that swept through the 500 Ballroom. "There are threats that when you see the picture, you focus in and you have to do it day after day on a 24-hour basis," Coats continued. When you're director of national intelligence, you're never off duty.

He then began listing them: The "Big 4," China, North Korea, Russia and Iran. And, of course, Afghanistan, North Africa, Venezuela, and "What's happening in Indonesia. What about the terror states and the failed states? And, fentanyl."

There is the threat of cyber attacks that could shut down electric and internet grids, with chaotic results that could throw societies into utter turmoil. There is climate change, encroaching deserts, and Category 5 hurricanes and tropical storms that stay in place for days, dumping yards (or meters) of rain.

"We have more displaced people in the world since World War II," he said, before citing the Middle East, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. "A spark goes off here and

does that start a wildfire?" he asked. A miscalculation could start a war "if somebody got it wrong."

He asked former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis what would happen in a worldwide nuclear war? Mattis responded, "Every single species will be extinguished and it will take 10,000 years to recover."

Pressure? What pressure?

Beyond rogue actors, terrorists seeking to weaponize ebola in central Africa, and friends of Dennis Rodman hurling missiles into the Sea of Japan, there is the wickedly fast evolution of technology. "The technological changes in the private sector and around the world are evolving so quickly," Coats said. "Early on, I had to say to my people, 'Our predecessors did a great job of bringing us to where we are, but we cannot rest on our laurels. The world is changing faster. It is racing forward.'"

While Presidents Xi, Putin and Chairman Kim can make unilateral weapon system decisions, American presidents need to go through Con-



gress, through legislating, budgets, authorizations, and appropriations. "The change in technology is so fast, a government process cannot keep up. Decisions have to be made. Dictatorships and monarchies don't have that system. A dictator can say, 'I want this, do it in six months. Get it done.'"

**"We had to reach** out to private sector, to tech companies, others across the country, engaged in this technological revolution. We had to build those partnerships. We positioned ourselves to reconstruct ODNI, but also the entire intelligence community," Coats explained. "We put in place Intelligence Community

2025. What do we need to look like? What kind of people do we need to have? What kind of processes do we need to have? That was an enormous task all the time I was there."

"It is no secret we are living in a diversified, unsettled, threatening world, with a lot of chaos," he said. He could be talking about Aleppo, or Kabul, or Reynosa. But he was also talking about Washington and "the turmoil inside the beltway."

"**The challenges there is** to try and do what's needed to be done with a lot of turnover and a lot of change," Coats said. "That requires a lot of responsibility and commitment."

As if WMD, terror states and waves of starving refugees aren't alarming enough, Coats flagged the coming red menace of national debt. "It took nearly 200 years to reach \$1 trillion debt level. In 1981, when I first started in House, we had to raise the debt limit to \$1 trillion. We've gone to \$22 trillion in my service time, and it's projected, next term, to be \$28 trillion plus. That will undermine our ability to lead the world with financial stability."

The worst kept secret in the world was the friction between Director Coats and President Trump. At the Helsinki debacle when Trump and Putin spent hours alone, with Coats getting a read-out most likely from Russian sources, his own president cut off the American intelligence assessments that Russia assaulted the 2016 election, the one that would thwart Coats' own retirement. Trump said he had "no reason to doubt" Putin's insistence that the Kremlin didn't meddle.

It prompted an extraordinary pushback statement of July 16, 2018, from Director Coats: "The role of the intelligence community is to provide the best information and fact-based assessments possible for the president and policymakers. We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine democracy, and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security."

**Coats made it clear on** Tuesday he could not discuss "classified" material his team developed for the White House and Pentagon. Like Gen. Mattis, there was no overt criticism of President Trump, with whom he had a legendary stare-down over the Resolute Desk last January after the boss was upset with Coats' intelligence assessments that included an on-going Kremlin election assault and a continued nuclear threat from Trump's buddy, dictator Kim Jong Un.

Read between his lines and there were nuanced observations about Trump world. Coats made a subtle appeal for "the truth." He noted that DNI was created in the

smoldering ruins of Sept. 11. He said the threat assessments were there, "but in pieces." The new reality was that, "We had to integrate, we had to bring it all together to provide the daily briefings to the president, vice president, secretaries of Defense and State and the military.

He said he took the "Jack Webb" approach: "We are obligated to provide the facts. Just the facts." Thus, his dedication to "the truth," which is a commodity in short supply in Washington these days.

"If you walk into lobby of CIA, the Gospel of John 8:32 reads 'And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' I took that phrase and the need to seek the truth and speak the truth and I was grateful to do that," Coats said, adding that he required his employees to renew their oath of office annually. The large audience at the Economic Club of Indianapolis erupted into prolonged applause.

It was in that same CIA lobby the day after he was sworn into office in January 2017 that President Trump commenced more than 12,000 lies, half-truths, distortions and misleading statements that has marked his troubled presidency. Trump complained about the crowd size at his inauguration under the wall containing the names of fallen CIA agents.

**Coats left the Trump** administration on Aug. 15, literally as the Ukraine controversy involving Trump and President Zelensky began unfolding into a full-blown scandal as the president has acknowledged seeking "dirt" on Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's son, Hunter.

"There's much I can't say because I'm in the secrets business. There are a number of things going on relative to that," Coats said, adding the ODNI whistleblower complaint came up on Aug. 12. "That is an on-going issue. Unfortunately I left on Aug. 15 and that information was provided to the DNI, which is required to be provided by the inspector general after a three-day review. He started his three-day review on Aug. 12. I did not know this, so nothing came to me. I left on Aug. 15. The person that I earlier hired to head up counter terrorism ... Joe Maguire, retired military, and the very next day that was presented to Joe. I feel so bad for Joe. That's about all I can say about it."

There had been speculation that Coats might have been the "whistleblower," just as earlier there were some who wondered if he was "Anonymous," the New York Times op-ed writer who declared to be "part of the resistance" inside Trump's churning, chaotic White House.

Coats's statement ruled out the first rumor. Those who know him well are utterly confident he wouldn't resort to an anonymous missive with the stakes that high.

Coats was asked about President Trump's most important project, the border wall. Is it necessary?

He responded by saying while in the Senate, he



traveled to San Diego to view the “fence that goes out into the Pacific Ocean. I spent three days talking to everybody. The one conclusion I came to is, if you build a 20-foot wall, they’ll build a 21-foot ladder.” He described tunnels that began in a factory a mile inside Mexico, ending in a factory a mile inside America. “It had a sophisticated air control system and rail tracks. It cost about \$2 million,” Coats said. “They said one trip of drugs paid for that \$2 million.”

“Does the wall give us better protection?” Coats asked. “In places, yes. In other places, no. So I can say that from a Senate standpoint, not an intelligence standpoint.”

Which made me ponder the notion of what Dan Coats really knows on a gigantic range of topics, with only a small slice applicable for public consumption. It’s a wonder he can sleep at all.

In my view, the Patriot Dan Coats has crossed into the pantheon of the Hoosier Senate class who contributed transformational change to the world, joining Albert Beveridge, Birch Bayh and Richard Lugar.

The final words of his 31-minute address on Tuesday were poignant. He recalled a speech of President Reagan. “Late in his presidency, during a memorial service to

those who had fallen in service to our country here’s what he said: ‘Yes, they were ordinary men who did extraordinary things. Yes, they were heroes. And because they were heroes, let us not forget this: That for all the spring and summer days we will never share with them again, for every Thanksgiving and Christmas that will seem empty without him, there will be other moments, moments when we see enlightenment and discovery with young eyes, eyes that see for the first time the world around them and know the sweep of history and wonder, why is there such a place as America? And how is it that this precious gift is mine?’”

“I’m a son of an immigrant,” Coats said, once an ordinary man himself. “I’ve had extraordinary things happen in this life. I’ve opened doors of opportunities and the love for my country and the realization that has been reinforced by my travels around the world, there’s no place like America. There has never been a place like America.

“And isn’t our job for each of us, regardless of our profession, regardless of what we achieve in life, don’t we all want to join those in sacrifice and say, ‘I’m going to pass this on. I want my children, my grandchildren, future generations to discover the sweep of history, to be able to say, how is it that such a precious gift is ours?’”❖

## LoBianco, from page 1

Statehouse and, finally, President Trump’s volatile White House.

Some of the stories are familiar, like Speaker Brian Bosma’s retaliatory 2012 Gridiron joke, to Donald Trump’s airport tarmac flat tire, to the RFRA saga that repositioned Pence away from Trump’s campaign grinder. There is new material, including Marty Obst and Nick Ayres’s 11th hour threat that might have kept the sanguine Pence on an uphill reelection bid instead of playing a lead role in the greatest presidential upset in American history.

It took LoBianco two years of research, in which he studied theology to learn how Pence would embrace the Christian conservative movement on the way to Congress in 2000, only to jettison them during his 2012 gubernatorial bid. Pence had delivered his confessions of a negative campaigner more than a decade earlier, and almost saw his gubernatorial stepping stone slip away following Richard Mourdock’s Senate race blunder.

The early campaign defeats to U.S. Rep. Phil Sharp would give way to Pence’s rise to the House Republican Study Committee, then leadership, and finally his spot on the Trump ticket.

Through this three-decade journey, Pence is portrayed as a political “Zelig” (a reference to a Woody Allen movie) about a character who changes his stripes to fit the

perceived tasks or circumstances at hand. In the end, LoBianco remains perplexed by his subject. “I just feel he’s a lost soul,” LoBianco told me in this exclusive HPI Interview conducted Monday.

To LoBianco, a former IndyStar, Associated Press and CNN reporter, Pence’s career was often one where he chased the wave just after it crested. He didn’t lead a



revolution like his hero, Ronald Reagan, Bobby Kennedy or Newt Gingrich. But he was there to ride it into the next careening chapter of his career.

In the end, we’re left to envision how Mike and Karen Pence can level their deep Christian faith with a

Faustian calculus that has placed his career into the hands and volatile mind of a profane billionaire, whose word can hardly be trusted at the most poignant moment of their lives.

The HarperCollins-published book goes on the market this week.

Here is our interview with LoBianco:

**HPI:** Last summer we had a conversation on the boat when I didn't think I could do a book on Mike Pence without having access to him, and you said he was the perfect subject to do such a book without that kind of cooperation.

**LoBianco:** You always want the subject to talk with you. But in this case that was shut down from the get-go. So then you have to work with what you've got. He ended up cutting loose people to talk with me. They were able to give me key insights into him, though not everyone. There was certainly a lot of back and forth internally in Pence world over whether or not to talk. As a reporter, the people who talked did good for him because they were supporting him. They were telling me things that were good about him. They were couching events we already knew about in those terms. It's important to have that because you need to see that he is human.

**HPI:** I thought that came through in your book. He comes to life, though in very imperfect ways, to position for his childhood goal, which is the presidency. You really did flesh him out in ways we had not seen prior. What was the biggest revelation for you about Mike?

**LoBianco:** I know you'll understand this, I just feel he's a lost soul. I can't shake that feeling. I think about the guy who was in philosophy and political science classes at Hanover College. I think about the guy who wrote the thesis on religious expressions of Abraham Lincoln where he struggles. He's talking about a president who is struggling through his feelings on religion as Mike Pence is struggling through his own conversion, which ultimately takes 16 years. I think by the time you get to 2008 when people are seriously starting to court him to run for president and he's teasing the decision to really ramp up, and it feels like we lost that guy. We lost the guy who would ponder over whether Abraham Lincoln should or should not be very forthright in whatever his feelings on organized religion were in public life and what role that plays. I feel like that slipped away.

**HPI:** We've talked about Pence as a political Zelig. Is he the most adaptable, chameleon-like politician of this era? It goes along the lines as Republican analyst Mary Matalin observed, that whenever there's trouble, Pence is nowhere to be seen in the most uncanny fashion. When

things seem normal, he hovers around Trump in the White House, almost as if he's afraid that if he's not there, Donald Trump will change his mind about him or an issue that is very important.

**LoBianco:** By the time I got through teasing out the main anecdotes and fitting them into the chronology, very often it felt like he's the guy who's catching the political wave just after it crests. He's never a leading indicator and he's never a leader of any new change in the political ecosphere. Often the people who are leaders in major change are the ones who haven't really changed themselves. They've been at it for 20, 30, 40 years and times come around to them. It just felt like he was always adapting in a cautious way, in a very careful way. It was almost like he was one step behind where the movement is. Remember his radio show? He doesn't really get into a Rush (Limbaugh) mode until the mid-90s. This is long after Rush has become a force in politics. When he goes to Washington, he gets drafted into the Republican leadership. The clearest example was when he came

back from D.C. to run for governor and just completely dropped the Christian right culture warrior. I've even had some of his people, one in particular, tell me that was the clearest indicator of giving up who he is to win in the clearest sense. He specifically cited RFRA as a return to form for him. Any politician is constantly making decisions based on a number of factors, and it felt like that was his past tugging against his future. As I point out, it is literally his future because Paul Singer, the Republican billionaire donor who they're courting to try and help with a 2016 White House run, explicitly tells him, "No, you will not get any money unless you sign that fix."

**HPI:** You spend a lot of time talking about his relationship with Speaker Brian Bosma and the loyalists of Gov. Mitch Daniels. We watched this as reporters in real time. We knew there wasn't a lot of respect or fear of this governor. Bosma and Senate President David Long knew from the get-go that the governorship was his stepping stone. The income tax cut was just checking off boxes. Gov. Pence didn't inspire the fear or respect that Gov. Daniels did.

**LoBianco:** We were there together when it was happening and that really came through clearer with time and a new governor. People felt freer to talk about it, not always on the record. That dynamic was just stark. I went into the Brian Bosma joke that he told at the 2012 Gridiron Dinner. You had some of that Gridiron Dinner in your Howey Report in the 2012 race. You had some good photos of Bosma, (John) Gregg and Pence all on stage together and that joke (the Pence garage door opening and closing during the couple's intimacy) was just a bellwether for the way it was going to be with them. It's true at every Statehouse, especially in Indiana, every speaker is even more empowered and with weak gover-



norship without the veto power, always thinks they're the governor. Bosma certainly acted that way. There's a lot to be said for that. He's a man who understands his caucus, he understands where his votes are, what can move, how it will move, so there's a lot of power in there. When Jim Kittle, Bob Grand and the Republican money braintrust actively cleared the field for Mike Pence so he could run for governor coming out of that December 2010 meeting at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, that's the stage that pissed off Bosma. That sets the stage for that terrible joke at the 2012 Gridiron that Bosma tells. This animosity is what we saw play out once Pence does win the governorship. The great irony is Pence was so hands off with everything. It's why it's so hard to run for president. You have to be active and engaged where you are. Since he didn't have his feelers out in the Statehouse throughout most of his term and he didn't have a good sense of what was going on, he ends up getting blindsided by RFRA, which is a functional creation of Bosma and to a degree, David Long. It's the consolation prize for the religious lobbyists Micah Clark, Eric Miller and Curt Smith, and Pence is blindsided by it. It's not exactly revenge from Bosma so much as Pence not being plugged in.

**HPI:** Mike certainly had a huge reelection challenge. The WTHR/HPI numbers early on were not good, but I believe he could have won, though there was a distinct chance he could have been looking at the end of his political career, at least in the short run. The national ticket was a better option.

**LoBianco:** It wasn't just the better option. By the time you get to 2016 and the Indiana primary and you see what is happening with Trump and the base, everyone from Pence world was convinced by that point Pence was going to be OK in his reelection. I am inclined to believe them. I never bought in that he was definitely going to lose.

**HPI:** Neither did I.

**LoBianco:** Could he have lost? Yes. But I always thought it was overstated, particularly in Washington. They go from that assumption; they think they are going to win. So what decision do you make with Trump? I always felt, he didn't enjoy being governor. He was not effective as a manager; he was not engaged. The ultimate goal and decision they made and you see this when his people go out courting donors for 2020 with "get on board with the Pence train early; Pence will be the prohibitive frontrunner for 2020," because everyone thought Trump would lose. It was never about serving with Trump. It was always about capturing that change. It was like what we said earlier about Zelig, it was about capturing that change in the Republican

base and moving on to the next iteration of the GOP, and leaving behind a lot of people who had gotten chewed up in the Trump machine. Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush and the entire Bush family.

If you're a Pence supporter you can see this as God's divine hand, that he loses his political career over RFRA in that moment in 2015, it looks like it's over for him. It keeps him from running in 2016 primaries and keeps him from getting ground up in the Trump machine, all of which makes Trump think it's OK to pick him. He was never going to take one of those people actively slighting him, except for Chris Christie. Ted Cruz and John Kasich were never seriously



in the cards. Trump doesn't do well with people who fought him.

**HPI:** One of the highlights of the book, you get into Marty Obst and Nick Ayres putting a waffling Donald Trump on notice that it's now or never in that July 13-15 time frame when Pence is faced with withdrawing from the gubernatorial ticket. It was one of the high dramas of this era of Indiana politics when we watched Mike and Karen Pence get off that flight at Teterboro. He had everything on the line and I always wondered what they were really thinking when they turned in that night. They thought they had it, but Trump was out in California saying a final decision hadn't been made.

**LoBianco:** To be honest with you I didn't have it that way in the original draft I submitted to the publisher. I'm glad we took the time on this. I didn't understand the importance of it and didn't have the details. I heard the story about how Trump calls Mike and Karen Pence on the night of July 13, he offers it to them and they say yes. They're off the next day to New York for the planned announcement. I also heard the Chris Christie version of events where Trump tells them, "You and Mary Pat be ready; I'm going to give you a call." And also (Newt) Gingrich was in the mix but Pence kind of decaps him in July 12-13 with that flat tire and the whole balance of power shifting from Manhattan to Indianapolis. I asked somebody from the campaign, "Why is it that I have all these different competing versions of events. I have no reason to doubt any of these people. Why is it that all these different people are saying Trump told them yes?" Well, because, Trump tells ...

**HPI:** ... everybody "Yes."

**LoBianco:** ... everybody yes. This is where Pence, by having Marty (Obst) around; everybody focuses on Nick Ayres, but I never bought it. Marty's the guy to really know. He's been with him. People around

D.C. are always talking about Nick Ayres, but it's Marty, who brings Nick Ayres into the fold. Trump was telling everybody "Yes" and when you understand that, well, his word is meaningless. So the only thing that matters is making him stick to his word. That changed everything for me because I was a big subscriber to the flat tire theory. The flat tire gives you the opening. Nick and Marty leverage it and it happens. That's the political brute force that changes history.

**HPI:** You document that the Pences lose \$1.7 million in personal wealth over two incidents. Ouch. And yet you would think the billionaire Trump wouldn't respect that. The Pences are pure middle class, in debt and struggling to pay bills. But it was almost a moot point with Trump, that the political machinations meant more.

**LoBianco:** Yes. Trump, at least according to the campaign aides I spoke with, Trump saw it was kind of a novelty. Who's Trump friends with in Indiana?

**HPI:** Steve Hilbert.

**LoBianco:** Hilbert. Exactly. He's not friends with middle class people. Trump doesn't even give it a thought. I had first heard of them losing the money in 1986 and not a lot of people knew about this. They actually talked to the Trump campaign about it as part of the vetting. When you put it in the chronology, when you see Karen is working as a teacher and he's not doing well as a lawyer; he's pushed out of that Doniger law firm. He fails to pick up clients at his second firm, so they are just not making money. Part of that is that's not where his passion is. Mike Pence is not passionate about the law. He's said that, too. What he was passionate was about politics and campaigning. By the time he gets to 1990, when (U.S. Rep. Phil) Sharp campaign discovers he's been using the campaign donations to pay his mortgage, credit card debt and Karen's car, you ask without any context, "Why would anybody do that?" It's political suicide. It was legal, but it was a total political calculation, unless you don't have any money.

**HPI:** One of the reasons he was chosen for the ticket was that Trump and the Kushners thought he had mojo in Congress to get deals done. But when Mark Schoeff and I reviewed his congressional career in 2012 for an HPI analysis, one thing that stood out was that he had no legislation of any consequence with Democrat partners. Dan Quayle worked with Sen. Ted Kennedy and Sen. Todd Young is working with a number of Democrats. So it wasn't surprising that Pence couldn't get the Obama

care repeal through, ending with Sen. John McCain's famous thumbs down.

**LoBianco:** It was a sign of the failure by the Trump campaign in not knowing that Pence was not effective in moving legislation in Congress. This was not what he was good at.

**HPI:** He didn't even try.

**LoBianco:** Give him credit for his immigration reform proposals ...

**HPI:** OK, I agree on that, but I cannot think of a single Democrat that he had an on-going working relationship with.

**LoBianco:** He was always partisan. He was a partisan warrior. But it was promulgated by the national press. It was a story line that wasn't accurate. That wasn't his goal when he was there. He had different priorities. He changed the way the Republican Study Committee worked, which is a broader-based organization. It paid dividends for him because he gets



recruited for House leadership by John Boehner. He wasn't interested in legislation. That was not his focus. His focus was on messaging, the ideas and the battle. That becomes very clear when President Obama comes to office.

**HPI:** I'm not convinced that Pence is a slam dunk for the 2020 ticket. Trump is transactional and that will be a decision based in real time on what his needs will be. Trump has no loyalty to anyone, other than his family. What do you think?

**LoBianco:** Here's what I know about him on the ticket. Most people believe he is OK for the ticket. But it doesn't change the fact that the most powerful advisers in Trump's orbit, Jared and Ivanka, want him gone. Their calculus is that it would bring back women voters in the suburbs. I think that misses the voters he would lose by dumping Pence. I think his caution leads him into circumstances in July when Trump sent Pence to the border detention camp. It was awful, the look on his face. I think he's probably fine for the ticket in 2020. Somebody told me ... and this is a very salient point ... if Mike Pence would simply announce he would not run for president in 2024, all of this would disappear. I think that's right. He's been successful when he's diminutive in Trump's orbit. He gets in trouble with stories about his Great American fundraising committee raising gobs of money. That angers Trump. Which is why he won't talk with any biography or

profiles about him. They're afraid of angering Trump. That makes sense. Steve Bannon got a cover story in TIME magazine and he's gone a month later.

**HPI:** I actually think that Pence's political career might be better served by him not being on the ticket in 2020. That would allow him and Karen to take full control of their future heading into 2024. I heard you on "Morning Joe" pan that theory. Walk me through your thoughts.

**LoBianco:** What they tell me is that his best outcome is two terms with Trump, then riding on his coattails like George H.W. Bush.

**HPI:** But Trump is no Gipper. Trump will be far more toxic by the end of a second term with all the guardrails gone and he does whatever his instincts tell him.

**LoBianco:** I don't think Trump has coattails like Reagan, not by any stretch. Somebody who is friends with both Pence and Trump made this point to me the other



day: As long as Pence is vice president, he gets to be everybody's friend. He can go out and tell everybody what they want to hear. He doesn't have to make decisions to piss them off. If there's a rough spot, he just repeats what Trump is saying. They don't have to make active decisions, which is a good place for him. Is he carrying water for Trump? Does he have to explain "Send her back" and this Ukraine corruption thing?

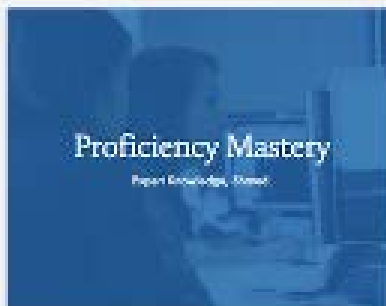
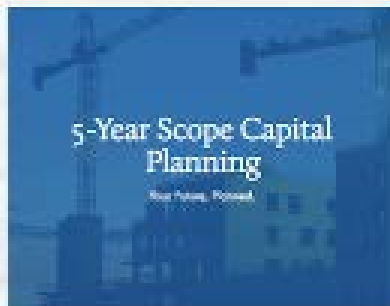
**HPI:** Let's say that Trump decides to run the most racist, volatile reelection campaign in 2020, the most racist since Lester Maddox and George Wallace. That will stick to Pence, right?

**LoBianco:** Yes. What I saw in some stories in other books, Pence had to make a big moral calculus on whether he can join Trump. That's a real thing. Pence could no longer quote Bobby Kennedy.

**HPI:** And of course, a big early influence on Bobby Kennedy was Roy Cohn. "Where's My Roy Cohn" documentary director Matt Tyrnauer put it this way: If Roy



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Cohn and Sen. Joe McCarthy could have a baby, it would be Donald Trump. You really did a good job of researching the theological aspects of Pence. Many people seek a clash between the evangelical, born-again Mike Pence latching on to the profane, lying billionaire Donald Trump. How did Mike and Karen Pence reconcile all of that?

**LoBianco:** To understand his faith and past faith was essential. I was told two different biblical allegories. One is Mike Pence is Daniel, the Jewish prophet enslaved in battle under the yoke of the Persian dictator Nebuchadnezzar and is commanded to be loyal and faithful to them by God. To be faithful to whatever God's designs are. That is even in one of his favorite verses, Jeremiah 29:11. That entire chapter of Jeremiah 29 is a message from God telling them, "No you're not allowed to return to Israel until I tell you may" (Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you, and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.") The second allegory, and this gets to how they rationalize this and it's a service concept. It's Joseph and the Pharaoh. He is sold into slavery by his brothers and he warns them about the coming onslaught with the plague of locusts. It all gets to this bigger idea that Pence is the guy keeping the country on the rails. It makes sense to me. Coming from their viewpoint, it makes total sense.

**HPI:** What do you think is going on with the DNI/ Ukraine thing? And is Pence one of the people keeping Trump within the rails. After the "Send her back" chants, was it Pence who convinced Trump to knock it off?

**LoBianco:** I don't have a lot of direct reporting on that. You look at the timing, coming the day after the Mueller testimony in Congress.

**HPI:** The next day! Astonishing.

**LoBianco:** It reminded me of something that happened after Trump fired James Comey. The next day he met in the White House with Sergei Lavrov and revealed the Israeli intelligence to them. It looks like a trend.

**HPI:** Is Pence one of the key guardrails for Trump?

**LoBianco:** I know he tries. I don't know how effective he is. The Washington Post reported that Rep. Paul Mitchell reached out to Pence after the "Send her back" sequence and got no response from Pence. That's part of him surviving for his own political gain. But, also, in the heat of the moment when Trump is in a Twitter war that could result in a nuclear holocaust with Kim Jong Un ... Pence steps up and brings Dick Lugar directly into the Oval Office for an impromptu briefing on a weapons drawdown and how that works. After spending two years working on this, I'm still confused by him. There are no easy answers. ❖

### **Pence in Indy today, Friday**

Vice President Mike Pence plans to visit Indianapolis today and Friday. He will speak today about the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the free trade pact proposed by the Trump administration, at an event at McAllister Machinery today. The visit is being sponsored by America First Policies, a nonprofit organization that supports President Donald Trump's agenda.

On Friday, Pence will tour the NeuroDiagnostic Institute and Advanced Treatment Center and join in a roundtable discussion with public health leaders, his office said. Pence will be accompanied by his wife, Karen. ❖

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Senior Vice President of Government Relations  
Acadia Healthcare



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# The grind of scandal will take its toll

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — A week ago Monday I began writing the ["Double dog impeachment dare"](#) story that headlined the Sept. 19 edition of HPI as a cautionary primer for why going down that rabbit hole would be dangerous for our nation because the consequences are often unintended and the ramifications impossible to gauge.



By the time I published it a week ago, the emerging scandal of the DNI whistleblower's urgent complaint involving President Trump and Ukraine President Zelensky had blown up like a mushroom cloud, as fast as Hurricane Rita did in 2005.

It is a disconcerting circumstance. And I am disturbed by what appears to be another round

of scandal and hyper media, allegations and denial, talking heads churning out conspiracies and illogical defenses.

Our nation faces huge challenges. Our entitlements are on an assured crisis course, probably by the end of the next presidency. We are now running trillion dollar deficits with a good economy. We have no idea how bad that will get in a recession, or a severe recession. We have climate scenarios that are daunting in an immigration/refugee and humanitarian sense, and we must begin preparing now. We don't have a grasp on how artificial intelligence is going to impact the workforce as a whole, and the vital middle class specifically.

Scandals, probes and hearings are grinding us down at a time when we should be preparing our great nation for the generations of our children and grandchildren.

**If you've read the previous** nine pages involving Mike Pence and Dan Coats, there are some important tell tales that are cautionary.

Dan Coats became emotional at the end of his Economic Club speech when he urged us to appreciate the great nation we have and prepare ourselves to hand it off in the "sweep of history" to our children. I've heard a lot of great speeches, but that one was truly moving.

Coats reminded us of the importance of the truth.

Or getting captured in a slogan ("build that wall"), which can be 20 feet high and topped by a 21-foot ladder or 21-foot deep tunnel.

Coats tells us that technology is accelerating at an unimaginable pace. Dictators like President Xi or Kim Jong Un have an advantage: They can make split decisions, while our presidents and Congress must go through

processes. This could put us at an incredible disadvantage without wise leaders who work with each other, have a viable trust, and don't get swallowed into the rabbit holes.

In Tom LoBianco's profile of Mike Pence, a man I once had a working relationship with, we learn that his boss, President Trump, cannot be trusted. His word means nothing, as we learned on the July 12-15, 2016, sequence that brought Pence onto the GOP ticket. We learn that Mike and Karen Pence rely on Biblical scripture to reconcile their exchange of principle for power.

**Vice President Pence has** cut off an array of relationships out of fear of stoking the paranoia of his boss, and that will not serve him well in the long run.

In President Trump, we find a leader who dodged what he calls a "witch hunt" after he sought, as a private citizen, help to power from a foreign adversary. The Republicans in our congressional delegation claim he was exonerated, but the only reason Trump wasn't indicted was because of a Department of Justice rule stating that a sitting president cannot face charges.

Even more disturbing is what we're learning now, which is the day after the Russian collusion threat seemed to pass on July 24, he engaged in the same behavior. This time as president, appearing to extort dirt from a foreign leader in exchange for congressionally approved military aid. It is an astonishing development.

As Trump opponents try to paint him as a wannabe authoritarian, we're finding a handful of states cancelling presidential primaries so that Trump's Republican challengers — William Weld, Mark Sanford and Joe Walsh — can't get on a ballot. That not only reveals a lack of confidence in the political potency of the incumbent, but it reinforces what Trump himself called a "rigged system."

This past week, I've pressed several members of our delegation to weigh in on just one component of the Ukraine story, since at this time we don't have the DNI inspector general's report, haven't heard from the acting DNI Joseph Maguire, the whistleblower, or Dan Coats, other than what he said Tuesday, which was greatly constrained due to the classified nature of his knowledge.

It's a simple question: Is it OK for American political candidates to seek anything of value from foreign sources? There has been no response. So let me help them out with what should be P101: No, it's not OK. Or as U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse said, "It's really, really bad."

**There are laws that prohibit** campaign funding to come from foreign sources, as well as anything of value. There is a sprawling history of presidential races where foreign powers don't endorse our nominees.

The last time foreign money came into an American presidential race, with President Clinton in 1996, there was widespread criticism and offenders faced legal consequences.

Our challenges and dilemmas grow and multiply, while our courage and logic pool dissipates like a shallow puddle in a heat wave.

So much for my cautionary primers. ❖

# Mayor Pete's scenario develops as Biden begins to tank

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — The key scenario for South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg to have any realistic chance at winning the Democratic presidential nomination is now in play. Frontrunner Joe Biden is beginning to tank in the polls.

A Monmouth Poll in New Hampshire shows Sen. Elizabeth Warren with a 27%-25% lead over Biden with Sen. Bernie Sanders at 12% and Buttigieg at 10%. In Iowa, Warren has taken a 22%-20% lead over Biden in the Des Moines Register/CNN Poll, with Sanders at 11% and Buttigieg at 9%.

In a national Quinnipiac Poll released Wednesday, Warren is essentially tied with Biden, leading 27%-25%, with Sanders at 16% and Buttigieg at 7%.

At this point in the process, the state polls are more meaningful than the national surveys. But in the Buttigieg mindset, two of the three septuagenarians frontrunners, Biden and Sanders, are fading. At this point, it doesn't matter much if a candidate like Warren is gaining. What really matters is the predominant order of this cycle is cracking.

Another promising piece of data from Iowa was this: Sanders and Biden each saw an increase in unfavorable views alongside a drop in favorable ratings (Sanders shifted from 70% favorable and 25% unfavorable to a 58% favorable to 36% unfavorable rating; Biden's favorable numbers dipped 6 points to 66% while his unfavorable rating rose 5 to 29%). Beyond Warren's gains, Buttigieg boosted his favorable rating 8 points to 69% without an appreciable rise in unfavorable views. Warren's supporters are a bit less apt to be locked in than are those backing Biden (12% of Warren supporters say their mind is made up vs. 26% of Biden's supporters). Overall, though, just 20% of likely caucusgoers say their mind is made up now, suggesting there is plenty of room for these preferences to shift before February.

"This is the first major shakeup in what had been a fairly steady race," said J. Ann Selzer, president of Selzer & Co., which conducted the poll. "It's the first time we've had someone other than Joe Biden at the top of the leader

board. The data in this poll seem to suggest the field is narrowing, but my sense is there's still opportunity aplenty. The leaders aren't all that strong. The universe is not locked in."

That is music in the ears of Buttigieg and campaign manager Mike Schmuhl.

In the Quinnipiac University national poll, Warren gets 27% of the vote while Biden gets 25% of Democratic voters and independent voters who lean Democratic. Sanders is at 16% and Buttigieg at 7%. "After trailing Biden by double digits since March in the race for the Democratic nomination, Warren catches Biden," said Quinnipiac University Polling Analyst Tim Malloy. "We now have a race with two candidates at the top of the field, and they're leaving the rest of the pack behind."

So this is what Buttigieg needs: At least two of the three frontrunners fading. While he is still in that second tier behind the frontrunners, trailing just behind Sanders, the overall scenario is shifting in his favor.

While Warren is drawing huge crowds and is rising in the polls, her big challenge now is to convince Democratic voters she is electable against Trump. A September ABC/Washington Post poll found that 42% of Democrats nationally think Biden would fare best against Trump, 14% said Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, and 12% said War-



ren. In head-to-head matchups, Biden beats Trump by 15 points and Warren beats him by 7 in the poll, which shows Biden head of the president by 14 points among independents while Warren is up by only 4.

Warren faces challenges on the policy front. She backs Medicare for all, but the latest Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll shows two-thirds of registered voters support letting anyone buy into Medicare, which is the Buttigieg and Biden position.

Biden appears to be losing support due to three unsteady debate performances when he used antiquated terms like "record player." Then came President Trump's decision to press Ukraine President Zelensky to investigate Biden's son, Hunter, that has since set off the impeachment inquiry in the U.S. House. Biden's poll fade coincides with the eruption of the Ukraine story. He has been defensive in his response, and that may be populating doubts in the minds of Democratic voters.

Buttigieg responded to the Ukraine/Trump story on Monday, saying, "If the intent is to involve a foreign leader in supporting a domestic political agenda, in supporting the reelection of this president, it is as inappropriate for a foreign leader to do that here as it is for a U.S. president to try to use foreign officials or governments for his own domestic political purposes. It's almost as if this president is doubling down on mixing domestic and foreign politics. It is a terrible precedent, and it puts away, it ignores this rule that you know, politics is supposed to stop at the water's edge."

The other component to Buttigieg rejoining the top tier is reducing the Democratic debate stage in November and December. The Democratic National Committee upped the polling and fundraising levels to qualify, but the threshold increases are modest and many analysts believe it won't significantly reduce the stage. Buttigieg would likely benefit if it were he facing off only against Warren, Biden and Sanders, as the next generation candidate.

Buttigieg's Iowa bus tour this week is designed to confront the electability question. "It's a chance to do something different in terms of trying to get us all out of gaggle mode," Buttigieg told CBS News. Buttigieg released a new TV ad on Monday in Iowa, saying, "Whenever I visit, I hear Iowans frustrations with politics so broken for so long. We keep sending politicians to Washington to fight for us, but then when they get there seem more interested in fighting, than us."

"We know that Iowa is where we can turn heads," Buttigieg told CBS News. "I think even other early states will be looking to see what Iowa did. I think the thing is so fluid, including the expectations game, that we won't really know fully what success in February looks like until January."

Buttigieg also created a big stir at the Polk County steak fry on Saturday, receiving an enthusiastic reception. "We know that when our country needs to rise to meet some of the greatest challenges ever laid at our feet, the leaders that we are counting on have us divided, and discouraged, and doubtful," Buttigieg said. "And what's at stake in 2020 is whether we can redirect the American project before it's too late. The North Star of my politics is the idea that everyday life comes first; that the only reason politics matters is because all the decisions they make in those big white buildings in Washington flow into our everyday lives, into our workplaces and our paychecks, our living rooms and our marriages. And I know that because I've lived it."

Democratic Presidential Nomination RCP Poll Averages					
National		Iowa		New Hampshire	
Biden	29.0 ↓	Warren	23.0	Biden	23.0 ↑
Warren	21.4 ↑	Biden	20.3	Warren	20.0 ↑
Sanders	17.3 ↑	Sanders	12.0	Sanders	18.8 ↓
Buttigieg	5.8 ↓	Buttigieg	11.3	Buttigieg	7.8 ↑
Harris	5.0 ↓	Harris	5.3	Harris	5.5 ↓
Yang	3.3 ↓	Klobuchar	4.7	Gabbard	4.3 ↓
O'Rourke	2.6 ↓	Gabbard	2.3	Yang	3.0 ↓
<b>Biden +7.6</b>		<b>Warren +2.7</b>		<b>Biden +3.0</b>	
Nevada		South Carolina		Betting Odds	
Biden	25.0 ↓	Biden	39.3	Warren	43.1
Sanders	17.7 ↓	Sanders	14.7	Biden	25.2
Warren	17.3 ↑	Warren	13.3	Sanders	11.3
Harris	6.3 ↓	Harris	10.3	Harris	7.2
<b>Biden +7.3</b>		<b>Biden +24.6</b>		<b>Warren +17.9</b>	

### O'Rourke campaigns in Gary

Getting rid of AR-15s and AK-47s by buying them back is a focus of Beto O'Rourke's presidential campaign. The Democrat candidate told a crowd in Gary Monday afternoon that the weapons are meant for war, and blamed the fear of immigrants for the mass shooting at



an El Paso Walmart (WIBC). "The killer before posted a manifesto, reflecting the words of President Trump, warning of an invasion that he was

going to repel in that Walmart," said O'Rourke, who came to Gary from Chicago, where he participated in a roundtable discussion on gun violence. He compared his hometown of El Paso and Gary, saying he believes the murder rate is lower in El Paso because the community is made up of Mexican-Americans, the offspring and descendants of immigrants. He said, as he has before in debates, he believes if he's elected president, the government will buy back military-style rifles. "When we wrote the 2nd Amendment, it took three minutes to reload a musket. It took three minutes in 2019 to kill 22 people with an AK-47, a weapon designed for war." ❖

# Departing legislators & their super PACs

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — The trend in turnover in the Indiana General Assembly has been due to death, assuming another elected office, or appointment to another post. We now have 32 of the 150 members of the General Assembly who were appointed to either the House or Senate.

That increased by seven since 2018 with the resignations of Sens. Luke Kenley, David Long, Brandt Hershman and Randy Head, along with State Reps. Joe Taylor, Dave Frizzell and Kevin Mahan.

But the other trend is the establishment of what can be considered leadership PACs when powerful legislative leaders depart with big war chests.

When Kenley resigned in July 2017, his campaign committee had a \$173,689 balance. When Sen. Hershman resigned on Dec. 22, 2017, his campaign account had \$247,925. By the end of 2018, Kenley's committee reported \$155,485 and Hershman had \$222,187.

Senate President David Long left on Nov. 6, 2018, and had a massive \$650,691. He spent \$193,340 promoting other Senate candidates and posted a 2018 year-end balance of \$462,650. Sen. Head had a 2017 ending balance of \$63,487 and when he resigned on July 29 of this year, he had a 2018 ending balance of \$81,221. He also owed \$31,185 to himself and his wife.

Of the most recent departures, Rep. Kevin Mahan exits with a relatively paltry \$40,203, with Rep. Frizzell having just \$15,538.

The difference is that Kenley, Hershman, and Long were all in leadership, thus generating much more campaign funds. They've gone on to the greener pastures of lobbying, and their leftover war chests still give them financial heft when it comes to the political future of the chamber.

The caucus system of filling vacancies was created in 1972 via constitutional amendment. It often gives exiting members the power of getting a chosen successor in office. Sen. Head, for instance, backed Cass County Commissioner Stacey Donato to succeed him. Rep. Kevin Mahan successfully backed Ann Vermillion.

For the record, here is the current list of 32 legislators who gained membership via caucus:

**1986: Speaker Brian Bosma**, replacing Rep. Gordon Lee Harper (resigned).

**1990: Rep. Vernon Smith**, replacing Earline Rogers (elected to the Senate).

**1991: Rep. Vanessa Summers**, who replaced the late Rep. Joseph Summers.

**1997: Sen. Tim Lanane**, who replaced Sen. Bill McCarty (gubernatorial appointment).

**2004: Sen. Dennis Kruse**, who replaced the late Sen. Bud Meeks.

**2005: Sen. Vaneta Becker**, who replaced Sen. Greg Server (gubernatorial appointment).

**2005: Sen. Karen Tallian**, who replaced Sen. Rose Antich-Carr (assumed another office).

**2006: Sen. Jean Breaux**, who replaced Sen. Billie Breaux (assumed another office).

**2007: Sen. Ed Charbonneau**, who replaced Sen. Vic Heinold (resigned).

**2007: Rep. Greg Steuerwald**, who replaced Rep. Matthew Whetstone (resigned).

**2007: Rep. John Bartlett**, who replaced Rep. Mae Dickinson (resigned).

**2008: Sen. Travis Holdman**, who replaced the late Sen. David Ford.

**2008: Rep. Heath Vannatter**, who replaced Rep. Jim Buck (elected to the Senate).

**2010: Rep. Bob Morris**, who replaced Rep. Randy Borrer (resigned).

**2014: Rep. Holli Sullivan**, who replaced Rep. Suzanne Crouch (appointed state auditor).

**2014: Rep. Christopher Judy**, who replaced Rep. Kathy Heuer (resigned).

**2014: Rep. Donn Schaibley**, who replaced Rep. Steve Braun (gubernatorial ap-

pointment).

**2014: Rep. Tony Cook**, who replaced Rep. Eric Turner (resigned).

**2015: Rep. Randy Lyness**, who replaced Rep. Jud McMillin (resigned).

**2015: Rep. Jeff Ellington**, who replaced Rep. Matt Ubelhor (resigned).

**2016: Sen. Andy Zay**, who replaced Sen. Jim Banks (elected to Congress).

**2017: Sen. Victoria Spartz**, who replaced Sen. Luke Kenley (resigned).

**2017: Rep. Shane Lindauer**, who replaced Rep. Mike Braun (resigned to run for the U.S. Senate).

**2017: Rep. Stephen Bartels**, who replaced Rep. Lloyd Arnold (gubernatorial appointment).

**2018: Sen. Brian Buchanan**, who replaced Sen. Hershman, (resigned).

**2018: Sen. Justin Busch**, who replaced Senate President Pro Tem Long (resigned).

**2018: Rep. Ross Deal**, who replaced Rep. Joe Taylor (resigned).



**2019: Rep. Dollyne Sherman**, who replaced Rep. Frizzell (resigned).

**2019: Rep. Ann Vermillion**, who replaced Rep. Mahan (resigned).

**2019: Sen. Stacey Donato**, who replaced Sen. Head (resigned).

## Mayors

### Fort Wayne: Henry, Smith debate

Mayor Tom Henry and challenger Tim Smith went head to head in their first mayoral debate before the November election. A lot was covered between the two tonight but the biggest issue that came up was that of Red River's trash pick up troubles, something the whole city has been affected by (WANE-TV). Smith says that the issue lies within



the contract, and if he were at the table he would take a more aggressive approach. "I'm going to invite Red River back to the negotiating table," said Smith. "If they say no, then I'm going to start imposing the fines to the maximum allowed under the contract which we can do and the mayor hasn't." Henry argued that it isn't the contract at fault at all. He said that the company needed more drivers with a CDL license. At around 3%, Fort Wayne has a low unemployment level with competitive employers and Red River was not prepared for that. "Everybody competes for everybody," said Henry. "We literally have more jobs than we have qualified people to fill. And that's the situation that Red River found themselves in."

The safety of the city was another big topic of the night. Smith alleges that Fort Wayne is not the safest it could be, citing the 46 murders that happened in the city last year. He says that in office, he would re-institute community oriented policing (C.O.P.) programs by moving officers from behind desks to street duty. "Officers are assigned smaller geographic territories," said They park their cars, the meet the residents, they meet the businesses, they build relationships. Relationships yield trust, trust yields witnesses, and witnesses are what we need to solve crimes." But Henry said that the C.O.P. program never went away, the city just changed their approach to better prepare for emergencies. "The C.O.P. programs hasn't gone away, we just quit having beat cops walking up and down streets because they got too far away from their cars and if there was an emergency, they couldn't get back in time," said Henry. "They have all kinds of activities and school programs and so on. So we're more active than ever."

### Kokomo: Virgin leaves mayoral race

Just days before a much-awaited forum, Kokomo's mayoral race has shrunk from three candidates to two – sort of (Myers, Kokomo Tribune). Libertarian Michael Virgin, who began a longshot mayoral campaign this spring, has announced his "formal withdrawal" from a race that also includes Republican Tyler Moore and Democrat Abbie Smith. Instead, Virgin has asked his supporters to vote for Moore, a candidate Virgin calls "very similar" to himself who wants "many of the same things" for Kokomo. Virgin's decision, also motivated by a personal job opportunity, was first announced on his campaign's Facebook page and website Friday. What he is calling his withdrawal, however, will not keep Virgin's name off ballots this fall.

The Professional Firefighters of Kokomo Local 396 PAC endorsed Moore. "The Professional Firefighters of Kokomo PAC proudly endorses Tyler Moore for Mayor of Kokomo. Moore's public safety platform shows he wants to partner with the Kokomo Firefighters and make the long-needed changes that the citizens and firefighters deserve."

**Horse Race Status:** Leans Moore.

### Hogsett addresses downtown shootings

It's not the first time violence has erupted in Downtown Indianapolis, but after six people were shot in the heart of the city over the weekend, everyone is asking city leaders 'what's next?' Mayor Joe Hogsett went door-to-door Wednesday along the 2000 Block of North Harding Street to get a pulse on what's on the minds of people who call this neighborhood home (Sanches, [WRTV](#)). "I am outraged, but I choose the term saddened and deeply disappointed at the tragedy that occurred this past weekend," Mayor



Hogsett said. The Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police has complained that the juvenile justice system is broken with officers repeating the same offenders. The

Mayor weighed in: "Our juvenile system, in my estimation, is the need of an upgrade," Mayor Hogsett said. "I hope over the next few years, we are given the opportunity of a new juvenile justice center that will be more juvenile focused."

### Indianapolis: Merritt reacts to shootings

At a press conference Sunday at the site of last night's tragic violence, the Steak 'n Shake restaurant on West Maryland Street in downtown Indianapolis, mayoral candidate Jim Merritt expressed his outrage over Mayor Hogsett's lack of leadership on the issue of violent crime in our city. Merritt's official statement is as follows: "The

violence that happened again in downtown Indianapolis last night is unacceptable. Even more, I am enraged that Mayor Hogsett has not uttered a word about this and other acts of senseless violence in our City. He hides in the shadows. Where is the outrage? Our city is lacking leadership or a plan under Joe Hogsett. We can do better and we must do better. This is why I have shared my public safety plans and initiatives throughout this campaign and will hold Joe Hogsett accountable for his failures. I love Indianapolis. Our City deserves better, our neighbors deserve better, we all deserve better and that is why, without apology, I will keep shouting that Dancing Joe is no longer good enough."

**Merritt begins TV ads**

Sen. Merritt's mayoral campaign began running TV ads on Tuesday titled "Business is Booming," citing the Hogsett administration for a high crime rate, crumbling roads and insider sweetheart deal. The ad shows a criminal bashing in car windows and politicians slipping envelopes of money in a smoked fille room.



**Horse Race Status:** Safe Hogsett.

**Governor**

**Myers backs UAW strikers**

Dr. Woody Myers says he is backing UAW workers in their strike against General Motors. "We are a stronger nation because of our unions and the exceptional work ethic of our union brothers and sisters. I have worked with union leaders to improve benefits for working families throughout my career – including District Council 37, SEIU 1199, the Teamsters, and when I led health care programs for Ford Motor Company, the United Auto Workers and their many local affiliates," Myers said. "That is why I stand with UAW members today as they push General Motors' leadership hard for better wages and benefits, now that GM has recovered economically and regained profitability."

**Myers skeptical of Owens candidacy**

A young tech business executive's jump into the Indiana governor's race could lead to a big shake-up in the campaign. Josh Owens became this past week the second Democrat who's formally entered the 2020 race seeking to unseat Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb (AP). Woody Myers, health care business executive and former state health commissioner, is the other declared Democratic candidate so far for the May 2020 primary. Holcomb's campaign declined to comment on Democratic gubernatorial candidate Josh Owens, while the Myers campaign voiced skepticism

about his entry into the race. "We look forward to hearing how and why Josh now wants to serve everyday Hoosiers," Myers spokeswoman Kate Shepherd said. "We have not yet seen him on the campaign trail nor seen him actively engaged with our Democratic Party."

**McCormick won't rule out governor run**

Jennifer McCormick will be Indiana's last elected superintendent of public instruction, but that doesn't mean her last election is behind her (Schneider, Statehouse File). In an interview recently, McCormick said she isn't taking anything off the table, including a run for governor. "I don't want to be governor today," she said, emphasizing the word "today." "But I would never rule anything out." Also on the table for this Republican, a run for lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket. "I wouldn't rule anything out," she repeated when asked about that possibility.

**Statewides**

**Hill blasts impeachment inquire**

Attorney General Curtis Hill's reelection campaign called the U.S. House impeachment inquire "a circus side show." Hill said, issued the following statement regarding Speaker Nancy "Speaker Nancy Pelosi's decision to open an impeachment inquiry into President Trump is a blatant disservice to the American people and a desperate attempt to overturn the 2016 election," Hill said. Hill faces a Republican challenge from Zionsville attorney John Westerkamp. Democrat State Sen. Karen Tallian is also running.

**Local**

**Marion Co. Prosecutor: Mears v. Moriarty**

With the resignation of Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry due to health reasons, a caucus race is shaping up between interim Prosecutor Ryan Mears and Indianapolis attorney Tim Moriarty.

Mears has served as chief trial deputy in the Marion County Prosecutor's Office since 2015 and has 12 years of experience as a deputy prosecutor. As chief trial deputy, he worked to reduce recidivism through diversion programs and Marion County Problem Solving Courts such as the Veteran's Court and Behavioral Health Court. "In the past four years as chief trial deputy, I have worked with local officials and community members to bring new expectations of balance and fairness to criminal justice in our county," Mears explained. Moriarty says he has the support of U.S. Rep. André Carson, Mayor Joe Hogsett, Clerk Myla Eldridge, City-County Council President Vop Osili, Council Public Safety Chairman LeRoy Robinson, Center Township Trustee Eugene Akers and Constable Mark "Tony" Duncan. "Over the last four years, I've had the honor of working with elected officials at the local and federal level to move Marion County forward through holistic reforms to our criminal justice system," Moriarty said Wednesday. ❖

# Why Pete loves Iowa

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Why Iowa?

Why would Mayor Pete Buttigieg already be opening 20 campaign offices there, with 100 organizers, and with further expansion likely before the Iowa caucuses next Feb. 3?

Why, in a state with demographics not typical of the nation’s population, are these caucuses – meetings where a show of hands rather than ballots can determine the count – so darn important?

Credit or blame goes to Jimmy Carter.

Carter, who began his presidential quest as a former Georgia governor with little national name recognition and seemingly no chance for the White House, spent two years campaigning in Iowa, attracting the attention of the national news media and drawing other contenders into the suddenly important 1976 Iowa caucuses.



When Carter won and gained momentum to go on to win the Democratic nomination and the presidency, the caucuses were established firmly

as the first test with voters for presidential candidates – an important first test determining nomination finalists if not the eventual nomination winner.

New Hampshire still has the first presidential primary, coming eight days after the Iowa caucuses next February.

The caucuses differ from the more familiar primaries in which voters cast secret ballots in other states. Iowa caucus participants, openly backing their choices, have to attend in person and, in most cases, stick around in these “neighborhood gatherings” as groups are formed to indicate support for candidates. Negotiating often goes on to win over those left in smaller groups.

**Defenders of the Iowa** caucuses say they attract very dedicated voters who have studied the candidates, often meeting the contenders in events held for months all around the state. Critics say it’s too small a sampling of party activists on which to base such importance.

After Iowa and New Hampshire come crucial tests in South Carolina, Feb. 29, and on Super Tuesday, March 3, with big states having a voice.

Iowa winners don’t always go on to capture the nomination. Often they do, sometimes because there is an overwhelming favorite at the start.

Iowa is certain to provide a boost in the polls for the winner and perhaps for some others with significant vote percentages. Those who do poorly

usually drop out officially or are dropped out anyway in terms of funding, national media attention and standing in the polls.

It’s a long time until the caucuses. A lot can happen before then. But even now, speculation is that Joe Biden will have his frontrunner status damaged if he doesn’t win in Iowa and Elizabeth Warren will need to finish ahead of Bernie Sanders to claim the status of leading progressive contender.

Mayor Pete?

Well, of course he wants to win. But since he still is regarded a longshot, an impressive top-tier finish would enable him to continue on as a serious contender. A win? That could bring another impact of Jimmy Carter dimensions.

Where do they stand now?

**A David Binder Research poll** of likely participants in the Democratic caucuses conducted last week showed these percentages: Biden 25%; Warren 23%; Buttigieg 12%; and Sanders 9%. The only others with any significant percentages were Amy Klobuchar, 8%, and Kamala Harris, with 5%.

It is interesting to note that Biden, despite critics hitting at his debate performances, actually improved by 8 points since a similar July poll. Warren was up by 3 points and Buttigieg was up 2. Sanders dropped 3 points and Harris dropped by a whopping 13 points.


The Iowa percentages aren’t the same as found nationally. Nor are there expectations that they would be the same. Buttigieg was at about double his national percentage.

Why Iowa? It’s established now, in all-out focus of the candidates and in news coverage as the first big voter test in the presidential selection process. Whether it should be is another question. ❖

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

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# Exploring the reality show 'Upside Down'

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – As a fan of the television series "Stranger Things," I've enjoyed seeing the program's vision of the "Upside Down" alternate dimension existing parallel to the human world. It's scary and dangerous and can be found pretty near to where you are standing. Of course, growing up, I closely followed the comic book adventures of Superman and its occasional tale of Bizarro World, a world where everything is pretty much backward from how it should be.



If President Trump gets his way, the United States will soon join the "Upside Down" and Bizarro World with the introduction of negative interest rates. Before we go charging off into the negative interest great unknown, we should all get a thorough education about what negative interest rates might mean.

Let's start with the situation of Bargersville, Indiana, retiree Elmer Toadsnuggle. Elmer has a small pension and Social Security. He scraped and saved \$100,000 prior to retirement and he's now shopping for a bank where he can buy one of those high interest certificates of deposit.

Being a sharp codger, Elmer goes to the same bank where 30 years previously he received a toaster and electric blanket for opening an account. Elmer is a little more than disturbed when he learns from a stern Susie No-manners, the teller, that not only will he not get a toaster nor an electric blanket, but he will have to pay the bank for storing his money for him. That's right, Elmer will pay .6% for the privilege of allowing the bank to hold his retirement funds. Elmer tells Susie what she can do with her negative interest rates and storms off looking for anyone else who might give him something for using his money.

**Then there's Mike Millennial.** Mike owes \$20,000 on a credit card and \$60,000 in student loans. He'd like to buy a new car and eventually own a home but interest charges are eating up much of his income. Mike wanders into the same bank that Elmer Toadsnuggle just stormed out of and sees a big sign at the entrance that says, "Be All You Want To Be, We'll Pay You To Borrow Money." Intrigued, Mike discovers that he can get a loan that will pay off his credit card and student loan debt and get loans that will allow him to buy a new car and a starter home. And the best part is that the bank will actually pay Mike for borrowing the money. As Mike pays down his principal on the loans, the bank will pay him a rate for borrowing the money.

Bizarro you say? Impossible you say? Ain't gonna

happen not no way, not no how! It might surprise you to learn that it is happening in other locales around the world.

In Japan, negative interest is charged on deposits. Ditto for Denmark and Switzerland. Germany is now selling 30-year bonds with a whopping 0% interest. That's right, you give your hard-earned Euros to Angela Merkel and she'll keep them safe for 30 years and not give you a single penny of interest on your funds. The European Central Bank has plans in place for a negative interest world across the board. If they need negative interest to keep their struggling economies afloat, you can count on them to use the scheme. Since most governments and central banks like to use the tail to wag the dog, what are they trying to accomplish?

**As you might expect,** negative interest greatly benefits those who owe money and those who would like to buy more stuff but don't want to pay interest. The winners in a negative interest rate world are generally the less thrifty and the lucky ones who just happen to need a new car, washing machine or a refinance on their 30-year mortgage. But the biggest winners in the negative interest world are governments. All government borrowing in the form of bonds can be refinanced at negative rates and, you guessed it, government can start borrowing to spend even more money. The sins of the father get buried in a sea of red ink.

If I was a Never Trumper, a Democratic candidate for president or a late night talk show host, I might be interested in the inherent conflict that the president might have with the Trump Corporation owing beaucoup billions at the same time that he is beating on poor Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell to drop rates into negative territory. I'll leave that issue to the press to explore.

The losers in the negative interest game are the savers and retirees who depend on interest for their retirements. They will simply be out of luck, much as they have for the past 10 years if they are bank certificate investors. The greatest threat to these retirees is not the negative interest but the real risk that they will venture into more risky investments in the hunt for ever more elusive yield. This was how junk bonds originally came into being and how those bonds came crashing down in the late 80s. It could happen again, but this time it would be much worse.

**There would be additional winners.** People who owned things financed by debt would find the value of their assets exploding. Every purchase would be more affordable and prices would rise. Negative rates would do nothing to reduce the wealth disparity in the United States and, in fact, would greatly exacerbate the situation as the rich would get richer and the poor would get relatively poorer. When I talk about the rich, I'm talking about the top 1% who own much of the hard assets in our country.

Just like every economic situation we've ever faced as a nation, there will be winners and losers. The

problem is that when the game begins, we won't know who will win or lose until the music stops playing. Musical chairs may be a fine parlor game but should only be engaged in by willing participants. A negative interest Federal Reserve policy would pull a significant group of participants into a game they can't understand and don't

want to play. The United States needs to take measured steps down this dangerous path. The downside could be huuuuge! ❖

**Dunn is the former Howard County Republican chairman.**

# How Indiana can advance

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Here's a simple fact. In 2017, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the average wage or salary (AW&S) in Indiana was \$46,897. At the same time, the figure stood at \$55,463 for the United States as a whole, or nearly 19% above Indiana's average.



It's easy to get into a tizzy about this. Loyalists would boast, "Our cost of living is lower than average." Rebels might quote me saying "What Indiana produces is less valued than what is produced on average in the U.S." However, right now, I would like to challenge that national figure.

The data for the U.S. include the District of Columbia, which is not a state. The AW&S for D.C. in 2017 was \$91,720, 65% above the national figure and nearly double Indiana's more modest level.

**D.C. is not like any state** in America. Many D.C. workers come from outside the district and take home their earnings to Maryland and Virginia. The district is well-stocked with attorneys, consultants, and well-paid executives of corporations and federal agencies. The compensa-

tion of the 545 elected members of Congress, while not stratospheric, does exceed the paychecks of their voters.

Many of the "ordinary" workers in the district are based in the suburbs, employees of firms located outside the district. Hence, their wages do not contribute to the \$91,720 average. They drive service trucks into the district to collect the laundry and to do the plumbing.

Indiana competes with other states for businesses and residents. The district is an outlier in the data, 38% higher than California, the leader among the 50 states.

**If we exclude the district** in the AW&S of the U.S., the national figure falls \$190 to \$55,453. This change is small because, despite its high dollar average, the district has less than 1% of the nation's jobs. That's unlike California, which does have high wages, but also has 14% or one of every seven U.S. jobs.

California has a dramatic impact on most national statistics, giving us a different view of America. Thus, the AW&S for the 49 states (excluding both California and the district) would be \$47,342, not \$55,463. That lower figure is just \$445 (less than 1%) above Indiana's figure.

By jingo, all we have to do is stop thinking of California and the district as part of the U.S. No one proposes separation from those two important parts of our country. What is needed is a fresh way of thinking about America. If that is achieved, Indiana could be almost average. How's that for Happy News? ❖

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**Marc Chase, NWI Times:** Be afraid, deadbeat public officials. Be very afraid. An important group of Region leaders and a state lawmaker show they're no longer willing to suffer freeloading no-shows who are elected by residents to lead county government offices, collect government checks and then don't show up to work. The Lake County Council and Indiana House Rep. Mike Aylesworth, R-Hebron, should be commended for responding to the shenanigans of absentee Lake County Recorder Michael Brown. They're executing a one-two punch for better government worth noting. Last week, the Lake County Council inserted a rather appropriate dollar amount for Brown's annual salary into the county's proposed 2020 budget. \$1. For the entire year. Which will be Brown's last as recorder because his term expires at the end of that year, and he's mercifully barred by state term limits from running again for that office for at least another election cycle. Aylesworth is taking the matter to the Indiana Statehouse. He's drafted a bill that would create a process by which county boards of commissioners and county councils in the state can recommend and then vote to remove elected county officials who go absent from their posts. If Aylesworth's bill becomes law in the 2020 legislative session, county commissioners in the state would be allowed to make the first play, recommending to their respective county councils that absentee elected recorders, auditors, treasurers, surveyors and coroners be removed from office "for failing to be physically present for at least one work day each month." ❖



**William Galston, Wall Street Journal:** Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced Tuesday that she would open an impeachment inquiry of President Trump. Although some of the facts surrounding Mr. Trump's call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky have yet to be nailed down, it appears that Mr. Trump has grossly abused the powers of his office and distorted American foreign policy in pursuit of personal political gain. Yet the evidence so far suggests that impeachment is not the best way to hold Mr. Trump accountable for these infractions. I confess that when I heard the first reports about Mr. Trump's conversation with the Ukrainian leader, it struck me as a scene from a mob movie: Nice little country you have here, Mr. Zelensky. It'd be a shame if anything happened to it. But as former federal prosecutor Renato Mariotti has argued, the president's conduct doesn't fit comfortably within statutory definitions of bribery or extortion. Besides, presidents often use levers of power, including foreign assistance, to induce other leaders to act in ways they might prefer not to. The real offense is distorting U.S. foreign policy to improve Mr. Trump's re-election chances, which he and his personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, appear to have done. If so, this would violate the spirit of the oath Mr. Trump swore when he assumed the presidency. Fortunately for them and for the country, there is a third choice, provided

by law: a resolution formally censuring the president. There is precedent. In 1834 the Senate censured President Andrew Jackson for withholding documents related to his defunding the Bank of the United States, one of the most hotly disputed decisions of his presidency. If inaction is dishonorable and impeachment futile, censure is the only course that makes both moral and political sense. ❖

**Michael Goodwin, New York Post:** For months, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi warned itchy Democrats against the perils of impeachment. She should have stuck to her guns. In surrendering to the radicals and the noisy drumbeat of their media handmaidens, Pelosi established a formal investigative process involving the top legislative committees. Yet she did something else, too, something far more monumental: She effectively committed House Dems to impeaching President Trump. Ironically, a full examination of the facts could make Joe Biden the first casualty of the impeachment jihad. He is already a weak front-runner and even if he did nothing legally wrong in dealing with Ukraine, the fact that his son was enriching himself by free-riding on the coattails of his father's job won't sit well with progressive voters, many of whom already dislike and distrust Biden. Put it this way: Would Hunter Biden have gotten that job if his father were not vice president? ❖

**Frank Bruni, New York Times:** President Trump deserves to be impeached. But the prospect terrifies me, and it should terrify you, too. That's not to say that it's the wrong move. Arguably, it's the only move, at least in terms of fidelity to the Constitution and to basic decency. From the moment that Trump stepped into the office of the presidency, he has degraded it — with words that a president has no business speaking (or tweeting); with ceaseless lies; with infantile and often unhinged behavior; with raging conflicts of interest; with managerial ineptitude; with a rapacious ego that's never sated; and with foreign dealings that compromise America's values, independence and interests. How can principled lawmakers not tell him, in the most emphatic manner available, that enough is enough. But there's no way to say what happens now that a formal impeachment inquiry is being opened. None. A pundit making confident predictions about the political fallout from the impeachment of Trump is a pundit far out on a slender limb. Any scenario is possible, including one in which impeachment redounds to Trump's benefit and increases the chances of his re-election, because he paints himself a martyr, eludes conviction in the Senate, frames that as exoneration and watches his fans mobilize and turn out as never before. And a second Trump term wouldn't just be the sadly suboptimal byproduct of a noble stand; it would be disastrous. Morally as well as practically, limiting this unfit, amoral, unsteady man's time in the presidency takes precedence over any small cluster of sentences written centuries ago. ❖

## Visclosky backs impeach inquiry

GARY — U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky has announced his support for Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's call for an official impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump ([NWI Times](#)). "As Chairman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I am greatly concerned that the conduct of the President continues to threaten the safety and security of our nation and our allies," Visclosky said. "Given the seriousness of the President's actions, I believe that the Speaker's announcement is warranted. It is imperative that as the inquiry moves forward, Congress does not lose sight of its duty to address the pressing needs of the citizens of our nation. These priorities include creating more opportunities for good-paying jobs, providing affordable health care options, decreasing the cost of prescription drugs, and ensuring that the dignity of all workers and individuals is recognized." Trump pushed Ukraine's president to open a corruption investigation into Democratic rival Joe Biden, according to a rough transcript of a phone call released by the White House on Wednesday.



## Indiana GOP reacts to inquiry

INDIANAPOLIS — Here is how Indiana members of the congressional delegation are reacting to the impeachment inquiry: Rep. Jackie Walorski: "This impeachment obsession does a disservice to the American people, who deserve a Congress focused on working together and solving problems. I'm going to keep my focus entirely on growing our economy, expanding jobs and opportunity for Hoosiers, and finding commonsense solutions to the challenges working families face." U.S. Rep. Jim Banks tweeted, "Growing up, my parents taught me not to give my opinion on matters I know nothing about,

else I'd look foolish. @SpeakerPelosi announced an impeachment inquiry based off a rumor yesterday. Now we've seen the transcript, the rumor has been proven false. House Dems look foolish." U.S. Rep. Greg Pence tweeted, "Pelosi's #ImpeachmentAgenda puts a partisan power grab above the American people. @HouseDemocrats were elected on a promise to fix our infrastructure, improve vets care & healthcare costs. It seems their #ImpeachmentAgenda is more important than the American people." Republican Trey Hollingsworth said in a statement that "House Democrats are consistently putting false claims and endless impeachment drama ahead of real solutions for American families." He calls the transcript House Democrats' "revenge on the 62 million Americans who voted for President Trump and who are relying on him and Congress to focus on real, day-to-day issues for American families and businesses."

## Trump draws Pence into scandal

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that reporters should ask Mike Pence to release details of his conversations with Ukraine, seemingly drawing his vice president into the scandal that has engulfed the administration ([Politico](#)). "I think you should ask for Vice President Pence's conversation, because he had a couple of conversations also," Trump said at a news conference on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. "I could save you a lot of time. They were all perfect. Nothing was mentioned of any import other than congratulations. The word is they're going to ask for the first phone conversation," Trump said at the news conference. "You can have it anytime you need it. And also Mike Pence's conversations, which were, I think, one or two of them. They were perfect. They were all perfect."

## Lee Hamilton talks impeachment

TERRE HAUTE — Lee Hamilton is very familiar with the process of impeachment. Hamilton was a Democratic member of the U.S. House who voted in 1998 against the articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice that emanated from that president's handling of sexual misconduct allegations (Greninger, [Terre Haute Tribune-Star](#)). The House did send those impeachment charges onward to the Senate, which refused to convict Clinton. Regardless of the Senate's leanings or how it might eventually hold on allegations against a president, the House is duty-bound to take seriously the task of investigating alleged misdeeds by the chief executive and, if need be, drafting and voting on articles of impeachment, Hamilton said. "My feeling is that Congress now has the obligation, the House initially, to develop articles of impeachment," Lee said Wednesday from his office at Indiana University. "This is a very serious business. You are trying to remove from office a person who was elected by the American people and you don't do that lightly," Hamilton said of President Donald Trump.

## Madison Mayor Welch dies

MADISON — The mayor for the southern Indiana city of Madison has died after an apparent sudden illness ([CBS4](#)). City officials say Mayor Damon Welch awoke with health complications early Wednesday and was rushed to Kings Daughters Hospital in Madison, where he later died. Welch was a Republican who was first elected mayor in 2011 and re-elected in 2015 to lead the 12,000-person city. He wasn't seeking a third term in this year's city election. Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb released a statement calling Welch a "tireless public servant who was passionate about his city."