



## Inside Rokita's AG nomination win

With Sen. Houchin organizing an unprecedented virtual convention, Rokita upends Hill on third ballot

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The historic parallels between Todd Rokita's 2002 Indiana Republican Convention victory for the secretary of state nomination and his successful 2020 bid for attorney general are vivid. In both efforts, he was one of four candidates, trailed on the first two ballots, then scored a come-from-behind victory on the third.



But the 2002 and 2020 efforts were about as different as a Volkswagen Beetle and a Boeing 747, or as Rokita told Howey Politics Indiana on Tuesday, "The dynamic was 180 degrees different." In 2002, Rokita and his floor team included Bob Grand, Dan Dumezich, Sue Ann Gilroy and Greg Zoeller. They secured the nomination in an



old-fashioned floor fight at the Indiana Convention Center after a year of personal appeals in delegate living rooms and front porches. They exploited a post-first ballot errant flier from front-runner Richard Mourdock to win the nomi-

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## Pence's very different July

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – During a hot July four years ago, Donald Trump rescued then Indiana Gov. Mike Pence from what many believed would be a career-ending loss to John Gregg. And now, four years hence, it is Vice President Pence who is tied inextricably to the flagging fortunes of America's most conspicuous pandemic victim, President Trump.



Vice presidents must become team players, echoing their boss. But what Vice President Pence faces now is a pandemic that is becoming the gravest crisis facing the nation since World War II. The emerging consensus is that with Pence at the helm of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, the federal response has



**"As we look out and factor everything that's happening, it's a very volatile environment out there. Not just in our state, but surrounding our state, around the country. So we're going to lock in at 4.5 and we'll be here for at least another two weeks."**

- Gov. Eric Holcomb



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**Kokomo, IN, 46904**  
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**Jack E. Howey**  
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 1926-2019



been botched. It took Trump nearly two critical months to acknowledge this health crisis wasn't a "hoax" dreamed up by Democrats and the news media. The federal response has been punted to the 50 states in what every other country has deemed to be a national crisis.

**With U.S. deaths** approaching 140,000 in just five months, on Tuesday, Italy reported 114 new cases, Germany 276, and the United States 67,400.

At critical junctures, Pence has misled the American people. In an April 24 interview with Geraldo Rivera, he said, "If you look at the trends today, that I think by Memorial Day weekend we will have this coronavirus epidemic behind us."

On June 15 in a conference call with governors, Pence urged them to reopen their economies, telling them to "encourage people with the news that we're safely reopening the country." He dismissed the notion of community spread. "The president often talks about embers," Pence said, adding that "despite a mass increase in testing, we are still averaging roughly 20,000 cases a day, which is significantly down from six weeks ago."

On June 16 in a Wall Street Journal op-ed, Pence wrote: "In recent days, the media has taken to sounding the alarm bells over a 'second wave' of coronavirus infections. Such panic is overblown. Thanks to the leadership of President Trump and the courage and compassion of the American people, our public health system is far stronger than it was four months ago, and we are winning the fight against the invisible enemy. We've slowed the spread, we've cared for the most vulnerable, we've saved lives, and we've created a solid foundation for whatever challenges we may face in the future. That's a cause for celebration, not the media's fear-mongering."

This past week, Pence has been trying to convince Americans that it is safe for schools to reopen.

"Getting our kids back into schools is the right thing to do academically, but it's also the right thing to do for our children," Pence said at LSU's Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge, where 30 football players had to be quarantined due to a COVID outbreak.

Trump's handling of the pandemic has been universally panned, with 67% in an ABC/Ipsos Poll disapproving of his leadership; 71% of

U.S. parents polled in an Axios-Ipsos Coronavirus Index say it'd be risky to send children back to school in the fall.

**While Lake County's 16** districts will fully reopen, Washington Township MSD in Indy and Portage schools have opted for a virtual format, Warren Township MSD is delaying its school year by two weeks, while Elkhart and Fort Wayne schools are giving parents options for in-person or online instruction.

The Hill analyzed: "The coronavirus is spreading at ever-faster rates in a broad array of states, putting the U.S. on the precipice of an explosion of illness that threatens to overwhelm the nation's health care system." CNN analyzed: "There is no plan. As the U.S. plunges into an ever deeper coronavirus morass, setting record new infection rates and the death curve begins to rise again, there's no prospect of the nightmare

ending for months. Delusion dominates an administration that perversely claims the United States is the world leader in beating this modern day plague."

This comes as medical systems are becoming overwhelmed in Sunbelt states that heeded Trump and Pence's urging to reopen their economies without achieving CDC guidelines for doing so.

John M. Barry, author of "The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History," said this week that "the most important lesson of 1918, one that all the working groups on pandemic planning agreed upon: Tell the truth. That instruction is built into the federal pandemic preparedness plans and the plan for every state and territory."

**When that trust was** violated in 1918 in a number of communities, Barry explained, "Trust in authority disintegrated, and at its core, society is based on trust. Not knowing whom or what to believe, people also lost trust in one another. They became alienated, isolated. Intimacy was destroyed."

And that's where America stands today, politically divided over a concept as simple as wearing a face mask to protect those nearby. I've witnessed this divide repeatedly in my travels between Nashville and Indianapolis. In blue areas, Hoosiers are wearing masks; in red areas, not so much.

Peter Nichols writing in *The Atlantic*, said that while Donald Trump rescued Pence from a possible defeat in 2016, it may be Pence who will bail out Trump in 2020. "Their fates, at this point, are wholly entwined," Nichols writes. "Pence would have trouble winning in 2024 if voters repudiate Trump in November. Yet even if he runs after a second Trump term, he'd surely be tarnished by the rolling tragedies of 2020. For three years, Pence largely sidestepped Trump's unending dramas. Not so with the pandemic. Trump pulled Pence from the bubble wrap and plunked him into a crisis, making him the head of the coronavirus task force overwhelmed by COVID-19's relentless spread.

"Now Pence is forever tied to the government's botched response," Nichols continued. "And that's something he'll need to defend and explain as the current campaign ramps up, and if he ever runs for the higher office he's long prized. If there's an organizing theme to Pence's vice presidency, it's that he must never offend a man whose emotional antennae quiver at any slight. That means he's perennially validating a president who insists the pandemic is under control when reality screams that it's not."

**Pence's Trump administration** portfolio has been troubled. Trump and Jared Kushner handed Pence the presidential transition the day after the election (after tossing Gov. Chris Christie's transition binders in a Trump

Tower dumpster) and that's when the Russian probe seeds were sown that defined the first two years of the Trump presidency.

In March 2017 after insisting there was massive vote fraud, Trump charged Pence with heading the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity. By the time it disbanded just months later, Maine's Democratic Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap echoed sentiments by another commission member, Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson, saying, the effort was "glaringly empty," adding, "It's calling into the darkness, looking for voter fraud. There's no real evidence of it anywhere."

On the plus side, Pence did successfully launch the U.S. Space Force.

While Mike and Karen Pence have deemed running for reelection a paramount component to his political future, the more savvy move would have the vice president begging off the ticket. That would save him from Trump's culture wars that have entered racist territory (i.e. defending the Confederate flag and statues; his "white power" video retweet; his equating the Black Lives Matter movement to "new far-left fascism") in what will likely be the nastiest campaign this century. GOP Senate candidates this cycle are touching none of those hot buttons.

At this writing, Trump and Pence are facing a landslide loss. That could change if this cycle's "October surprise" includes a coronavirus vaccine and a distinct jobs rebound. But right now, all signs are pointing to a tumultuous autumn of second economic shutdowns and school closures. The science will prove or disprove the notion of safely reopened schools and universities, and the viability of college and pro sports by Labor Day.

**Losing vice presidents** don't do well on their own, as Richard Nixon, Hubert H. Humphrey, Walter Mondale and Al Gore can attest. Aside from HHH's taint from the Vietnam War (which cost 58,000 American lives), none of them faced the pandemic millstone that is Pence's legacy. Look no further than former Vice President Dan Quayle, who was actually the more effective campaigner during President George H.W. Bush's failed reelection bid in 1992. When Quayle entered the 2000 presidential race, he found virtually no traction and quickly faded.

After Pence delivered his Republican National Convention acceptance speech in Cleveland four years ago, I observed in the July 21, 2016, edition of HPI: "The Indiana RNC delegation, once decidedly anti-Trump, has come around to the Trump/Pence ticket. Most have signed on for the favorite son. But make no mistake, how this all ends, whether it is on Nov. 9 if the ticket loses, or into what will almost certainly be a controversial presidency if he wins, is a mystery wrapped in an enigma. Mike Pence has entered the twilight zone." ❖



## Rokita, from page 1

nation on that third ballot as delegates bled away between rounds.

### Sen. Houchin organizes

Over the past two months, it was State Sen. Erin Houchin who organized and executed a 51-day campaign for Rokita with a group of volunteers that included Jody Smith, Joan Bonnet, Mary Martin, and Pat Brown, who made the hundreds of phone calls necessary in this virtual convention during a pandemic. There would be no arm twisting and personal appeals between ballots. They condensed into these phone calls a pitch on mail-in ballots where delegates had to pick a first choice, then designate second and third choices in one fell swoop. While the secretary of state seat was open in 2002, this year he was challenging embattled incumbent Attorney General Curtis Hill a day after he returned from a 30-day suspension ordered by the Indiana Supreme Court's Disciplinary Commission.

Houchin met Rokita 20 years ago when she was an intern for then State Sen. Connie Lawson and Rokita was a young secretary of state employee working in Government Center South. "I don't want to gloss over the fact that 51 days when you're trying to reach over 1,800 delegates, there are a lot of factors going into that, but the organization that was required to go from a dead stop, when the rest of the field was already down the road, was pretty phenomenal," Rokita said. "I know a lot of delegates, but a lot of them were also new. I'm sort of a household name in terms of conventions. We needed to be organized with the right system to handle all that information to get it back out. That was no easy feat."

He said that Houchin was one of just a few people he knew who had the organizational skills the task demanded. Eleven years ago, Houchin won the 9th CD Republican chair when she was nine months pregnant, winning the chair on Saturday and delivering her son, Graham, the following Monday. "I had done legislation with her at the federal level and at the state level," Rokita said. "She's as serious as a heart attack when she puts her mind to something to get it something done, and I realized the sheer organizational skills that would be needed to pull this thing off. That all pointed me to Erin Houchin."

The other key person was Brent Littlefield, who was in charge of messaging and mail. "Brent worked hand in hand with Erin," Rokita said.

"The strategy is always we wanted people to vote

for Todd on the first ballot," said Houchin. "It's how we drafted the strategy: Reach as many delegates as we can, give them our message and give them a reason to choose Todd as their first choice.

"But we were also not shy about asking delegates to mark Todd as their second or even third choice," Houchin said. "We knew going into this it would be a significant challenge to get to over 50% on the first ballot against an incumbent. The nature of the ranked choice gave us an argument to make Todd a second or third choice. That ultimately results in our ability to take over on the third ballot and secure enough votes to win."

### Hard press on Hill voters

While his volunteers were dialing for delegates, Rokita made calls himself, met delegates in local parks, and participated in Zoom forums. "If they were a Hill voter, we made a hard press: 'Hey, you really need to think this through because he is not going to make it through November.' Look at this objectively in a dispassionate way. He was a Titanic ready to happen," Rokita said of his pitch

to delegates. "And then if you were a Westercamp or Harter supporter, we acknowledged that. They were in it for a long time. That credit should be given, but that doesn't mean they can win in the fall. They were both good guys, but if you're set on them, come back home if they don't make it."

Hill was leading on the first two ballots (655 to 479 for Rokita on first ballot; 701 to 601 on the second), with John Westercamp dropping out after the first ballot and Decatur County Prosecutor Harter exiting following the second. Both Rokita and Houchin said their second and third ballot strategy had been to appeal to Westercamp and Harter supporters. Rokita won with 52.15% of the vote.

That was the other significant part of the strategy, to deny Hill a first-ballot victory. "Our data, because we were making so many calls, was showing it was clearly a race between Rokita and Hill," Houchin added.

"Throughout my political career I've been underestimated," said Rokita, who served two terms as secretary of state and four terms in Congress before he lost the 2018 U.S. Senate primary to Mike Braun. "I wasn't planning to come in second on the first two ballots; we were always planning to win. It's a matter of confidence the delegates have in you. You can move up or down as the ballots go forward. These delegates know me and trust me, even if I wasn't their first choice. If their first choice goes away, they know they could always come home to me."

"I felt pretty good," Houchin said of heading into the count last Friday at Republican State Committee head-



quarters. "But you never know. I wouldn't have wanted to be any of the other candidates. I felt good about where we were. I felt confident if we could hold the incumbent from winning on the first ballot, that we would win on subsequent ballots. That's what we did with the counts; are we preventing the incumbent from winning on the first ballot? If not, the election is over on ballot one. At the same time, conventions can be crazy things. The numbers I was predicting from the get-go came very close to where we ended up."

### Abrupt end for Hill

Hill's loss probably ends a statewide career that had him leading the ticket in 2016, to speculation at the 2018 Republican Convention that he would challenge Gov. Holcomb's renomination this year, to his virtual convention loss last Friday. Hill, who defeated former attorney general Steve Carter in a three-ballot 2016 convention showdown, didn't call Rokita following the vote.

"I have heard from his supporters, from the Jim Bopps of the world and many others," Rokita said. "They said, 'Hey, we understand. The seat needs to remain in Republican hands.' The governor's supporters need to know he has an ally in that office and not a guy who will be having press conferences against him every other day, or a liberal Democrat who will be running for governor in 2024."

Rokita said that prior to declaring his candidacy, he had a conversation with Gov. Holcomb, who had called for Hill to resign in July 2018 after allegations of sexual harassment surfaced. "We had a very good conversation. I said, 'Governor, I don't need to do this. I've had a political career and I'm doing interesting things in the private sector on health care, which is going to be a huge issue in this campaign."

"My question for him was 'Do you have some grand plan that if I got in, it would mess that up. Just tell me and that will weigh heavily on the decision I am making.' He said, 'No absolutely not. You'll be a strong candidate.'"

Rokita had opposed Holcomb for the 2016 gubernatorial nomination after Gov. Mike Pence left the state ticket to run with Donald Trump on the national ticket. Rep. Rokita finished a distant third in the Republican Central Committee caucus to Holcomb and U.S.

Rep. Susan Brooks, with Holcomb winning on the second ballot.

### Gubernatorial springboard?

There is some speculation that Rokita will use the attorney general's office as a springboard to the 2024 gubernatorial nomination, should he defeat Democrat nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel in November. Should Weinzapfel win, he would potentially become the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination in 2024.

After Weinzapfel was nominated in a 47-vote virtual convention victory over State Sen. Karen Tallian in June, Rokita said, "Indiana Democrats have nominated a true liberal in Jonathan Weinzapfel, who will promote abortion, support job-killing red tape, and will continue his record of back door tax increases. Having faced off against him as I successfully implemented the nation's first voter ID law, I know he is a fierce advocate for his liberal causes. As our next Republican nominee for attorney general, I would look forward to a robust debate on these issues."

Weinzapfel reacted to Rokita's nomination, saying, "Hoosier voters will have a clear choice in this election. Our governing philosophies, priorities and values couldn't be more different. This will be a spirited campaign and I'm looking forward to it. Hoosiers are dealing with a lot right now: A global pandemic, racial injustice and an economic slowdown just to name a few things. They need someone in their corner, someone to fight for them, not for a political agenda."

On Tuesday, he called on Rokita to commit to pulling Indiana out of a federal lawsuit that would end Obamacare. "Hoosiers are worried about the health and safety of their families, their jobs, if their kids can return to school, paying their bills and so many other things. They shouldn't have to worry about losing health care coverage in the middle of a pandemic too," said Weinzapfel, a former two-term Evansville mayor. "Congressman Rokita should put his D.C. talking points aside and join me in urging Curtis Hill to drop this lawsuit. And, if Curtis Hill won't do it, Congressman Rokita should join me in pledging to remove Indiana from it if



**Todd Rokita at the 2018 Republican Congress of Counties. Curtis Hill is congratulated by former attorney general Steve Carter in 2016. (HPI Photos)**

elected."

Rokita has experience in running in a blue wave election. He won reelection as secretary of state in 2006

against Democrat Joe Pearson with 51% of the vote that came as voters reacted negatively to the Iraq War, with Democrats picking up three congressional seats in Indiana. He had defeated John Fernandez with 53% in 2002.

As for a 2024 gubernatorial candidacy, Rokita said, "It's way, way too early for that. Never say never, but I'm not running for attorney general to run for governor. I'm interesting in the attorney general's office at this juncture because of issues such as health care. I'm very, very interested in tackling those issues. I haven't looked beyond that."

**HPI General Election Horse Race Status:** Leans Rokita.

### Hill plans to address 'racial unrest'

Attorney General Hill told Republican supporters that he plans to "directly address and help fix the current racial unrest, the lawlessness that is spreading, and the terribly disturbing direction we see of our politics and of our culture."

"From the bottom of my heart, I first want to thank the grassroots Republicans throughout Indiana who have shown steadfast support over these past four years," Hill wrote to supporters following his nomination loss. "I especially want to thank you and all friends and staff that have stood strong with me these last two years, including through this convention process. You have seen through the political manipulations and walked with me on a just path. Most important to me is to thank my family – my wife Teresa and our wonderful children – for their continued belief in me. Your love means much more to me than anything in the political world. I have and will always hold my head high. My faith in God allows me to do so."

Hill continued: "Truly we are all at a time in our lives for which none of us were prepared. There is a hate spreading that is touching all of us in all walks of life but it is most easily spread, unfortunately, through political deception.

"My challenges are nothing compared to what we are all facing as a society, as a country and throughout the world." ❖

## Clickable Paid Advertisement

**FALL IS COMING!**

**Our Students Need Online Options Now.**

By Letrisha Weber, Chair, Public School Options - Indiana Chapter

The last few months of at-home learning have given most parents a newfound respect for classroom teachers. But soon, many Indiana teachers will be returning to their school buildings for the new school year. Have their schools taken the necessary measures to both protect students and staff and ensure quality instruction? That remains to be seen and, for many parents, the uncertainty is too much to bear.

**While we still have time, we need to be preparing additional choices for parents who may not be comfortable sending their children back to school.** That includes removing barriers in the law and providing adequate funding to make as many "online seats" at virtual schools available as possible.

As the parent of students who attend online schools, I can attest to the fact that these schools, some of which have been operating for more than a decade, are not merely ready to meet the challenge; they are ready to thrive. **Parents deserve to have more access to these experienced options**, especially as traditional schools scramble to find the right equipment and retrain their faculty.

A recent National Coalition for Public School Options poll found that **up to one in five students who attended brick-and-mortar schools in March are unlikely to return in the Fall.** That means roughly 10 million K-12 students will depend on educational options, including full-time online schools. When we have that many students depending on getting their education over the Internet, **we must not let online learning become an afterthought.**

For some, online learning just makes the most sense. The poll cited above also found that **80 percent of parents were satisfied with online transition**, and **40 percent would consider continuing online this fall.** Shouldn't they be able to make that choice for themselves? **As demand for online learning grows, legislation must change with it.** We need to do away with arbitrary barriers that make it difficult for parents and students to make an informed and fair choice in the age of the coronavirus.

**The knowledge and experience that online schools have is important to parents, and we need our leaders to recognize the good they can do for our students.** Instead of restricting access to online learning, legislators should work to expand resources for full-time online schools. Unless we take action now, our nation's online learning options will inevitably fall behind what's needed.

# About that ‘rigged’ virtual A.G. race

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS — Supporters of ousted Attorney General Curtis Hill are crying foul and claiming the Indiana Republican Party’s virtual nomination process was “rigged.” Well, with the votes now counted and the results announced, we can finally admit the obvious: They are right.



The process was “rigged.” How could we be so oblivious to what was so obvious?

On April 29, Indiana Republican Party Chairman Kyle Hupfer emailed the party’s entire listserv – comprising tens of thousands of active Hoosier Republicans – to inform them that the State Committee, a group with equal representation from each and every congressional district in Indiana, met earlier

that day to discuss and debate temporary rules allowing the convention to be conducted virtually if and when pandemic limitations required that course of action. When there was no unanimity in their candidate choices (some would later cast their lot with attorney John Westercamp, others with Decatur County Prosecutor Nate Harter, yet others with former Congressman Todd Rokita, the eventual winner, and at least one with incumbent Curtis Hill), these State Committee members did pass the temporary rules unanimously without a single vote of dissent.

Approximately two weeks later, on May 12, came news that the convention would, in fact, take place virtually in an effort to give delegates a guaranteed voice rather than potentially delegate the nomination to State Committee. The notification, a video and graphic sent via email and posted on Facebook three times that day, included critical ballot deadlines and a step-by-step guide on how the voting would be conducted utilizing a third-party accounting firm and tabulation machines provided by the very same company used by dozens of county clerks in the state.

**State party then uploaded** a 5-minute and 34-second video on June 4, two days after the primary in which most delegates were elected (some were later appointed by county chairs to fill vacancies), detailing every step in the voting process. The video was re-posted on Facebook multiple times, including on June 5 and June 24, as well as being included in weekly blast emails every Friday before ballots were due. It was also played live

during the statewide broadcast of the state convention on June 18, a broadcast that was made available on-demand online by WISH-TV and the Indiana Republican Party. Oh, and the party paid to target Facebook ads to delegates with the video, too.

Around June 22, just as planned, ballots began to arrive in delegate mailboxes. And this is where the “rigging” went next level. Inserted in the packet was a list of instructions on how to correctly fill out and return the enclosed ballot. We’re talking how to rank candidates, what ranking meant, how to properly fill in the Scantron-style bubbles and even the type of writing instrument that should be used to ensure a ballot would be counted.

**But in their quest for “deceit,”** the party went further. A website they launched ([www.indiana.gop/state-convention](http://www.indiana.gop/state-convention)) included – you’ll never believe this – a list of delegate names and counties for every ballot received. Reminders to check the list were blasted out to delegates on June 26, July 1, July 2, July 6 and July 7. Those who sent in a ballot and did not see their name were encouraged to call the party immediately to troubleshoot the issue.

As if that’s not enough, each campaign – all four of them – was invited to multiple meetings with Indiana Republican Party leadership throughout the process, including the evening before the votes were tallied, to ask questions and see how things would flow with their own eyes. As one of those campaign representatives courageously posted on Facebook following the final meeting, “State Party has done a fine job ensuring a safe, fair and legitimate convention vote for attorney general...there is simply no way for this vote to be altered or stolen.”

He was the canary in the coal mine – why didn’t we listen to him?

**Finally, in perhaps** their most overt act of electoral mayhem, the party assembled two dozen volunteers to assist in the counting of all 1,757 ballots (a record 98.5% return rate), welcomed three individuals from each campaign to serve as watchers of the process and then – this one still blows my mind – released a full and complete accounting of all votes cast, including undervotes, overvotes and

exhausted ballots.

Yup. It was totally “rigged.” ❖



**Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokesman for former director of national intelligence and U.S. senator Dan Coats. Currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group in Indianapolis. He is also an Atlantic Council Millennium Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations term member and author of the 2014 book, “The War on Millennials.”**

# The INGOP's 'ABC coalition'

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – It wasn't the governor who defeated Curtis Hill, though he was not a Hill advocate. It was not the state chairman or the party organization.



It took a strong candidate like Todd Rokita to win, but it was not Rokita who defeated Hill.

The winner at the 2020 Republican Convention was the ABC coalition: Anybody But Curtis. In spite of an extraordinary record, in my opinion, and his campaign skills, ultimately his personal behavior defeated him. Been there, done that.

Conspiracy theories are the mainstream these days, on the left and the right. And theo-

retically, a state convention – a virtual state convention at that – should be a political boss's dream. But it is not even clear that they even control delegates anymore, who used to be handpicked to reflect the local party's convention goals.

Grassroots organizations matter much less in congressional races and certainly are not as relevant in statewide races. They become media hooks for television cameras, newspaper stories, and radio clips. Of course, none of them is as relevant any more either. Money matters. Lots of it. Self-funders are increasingly important.

But if there is anyplace that the older system should matter, it should be in a convention especially if there is not a clear delineation of who is the Trumpiest. This was not a primary, or incumbent Attorney General Curtis Hill likely would have won. Nate Harter and John Westercamp would have been irrelevant. AG is not usually a contest people would spend their personal wealth to win.

**It was clear that** Gov. Holcomb and the entire Republican state GOP leadership did not like Curtis Hill. This was not new, and his personal problems were just the last straw. Some was just typical political rivalries, some was due to the fact that Hill is just not a great team player, and there were also differing views about the role of an attorney general and a governor.

Another way to view the role conflicts is to observe how Attorney

General Jeff Sessions and President Donald Trump defined the role of AG differently. Is the post independent or is the AG the legal arm of the governor? Indiana just resolved a similar superintendent of public instruction debate by removing it as an elective office to an appointed one.

Another common expression among delegates was this: If you disliked Gov. Holcomb, you loved Curtis Hill. If you were a Holcomb fan, you were an ABC. But if that had been the only criterion, Hill would have easily lost. Instead it was very close, meaning that many supporters of the governor also backed Hill.

**My operating assumption** had been that the candidates had been generated by the state GOP and the governor's allies, hoping they could control a convention. That appears to have been a bit of a stretch. More likely, Adam Krupp and John Westercamp saw an opportunity to run for the post when Hill was weakened but before the court ruled against him on the sexual misconduct charges. They were not going to win unless they were the only candidates and Hill cratered. As is evident from the convention voting, the attorney general was competitive to the end even against a very strong candidate.

When Nate Harter filed to run against his former boss, Krupp dropped out and endorsed him. To Hill supporters, Harter became the Benedict Arnold of Indiana. Westercamp, who declared against Hill even before the court ruled, was also not popular among Hill supporters. This was not just whispered.

This becomes important when you don't win on the first ballot.

Harter was publicly endorsed by the majority of district chairmen and more state legislators. At the end of the day, not only didn't it get him the nomination, or even second place, but he only edged last place Westercamp by 38 votes.



Todd Rokita was not exactly the fair-haired boy of the state party leaders either. As Brian Howey points out in this week's Howey Politics Indiana, a critical point in Rokita's political career was when he finished as the third choice of the state central committee as the 2012 gubernatorial nominee to replace vice presidential nominee Mike Pence. Rokita also lost the 2018 Senate nomination to Mike Braun.

After the Supreme Court's Disciplinary Commission held against AG Hill, Rokita announced for AG. To be fair, it is not clear that prior public endorsements held as much sway after Rokita entered. Some leadership people don't change



public endorsements (I was not one of those people) when situations change. Some go silent, or change behind the scenes. It likely happened in this race.

**The strategy that** State Sen. Erin Houchin outlined for Brian Howey in this issue was both hard and soft. First and foremost, like all good inside campaigns, you contact those who actually can vote. In 2002, as noted in a Howey Politics review of the secretary of state race in 2013, Rokita "drove 70,000 miles, attended 130 Lincoln Day Dinners, 1,500 meetings with individual delegates, and shook half a million hands." This time Rokita mostly Zoomed around the state. And, as Houchin noted, worked the phones along with his key allies.

Secondly, you need to know how to count. One time in my first congressional term, my fellow Class of '94 conservative trouble-makers were causing a ruckus about something. They were about to have a meeting with Majority Leader Dick Arme y.

Arme y saw me in the hallway just off the House floor, and literally pulled me by my shirt into the room, then sat me down next to him. I objected all the way in, insisting that I had nothing to do with this argument. Arme y said: "I know, but you are one of them and you can count."

**It is amazing how many** politicians cannot count well in this type of contest. "Good luck," "I wish you the best," and even "I'll be cheering for you" means they are not voting for you. They tell you if they are voting for you. You count by "yes" votes. These races are not the era of good feelings.

Rokita repeated exactly what he did in 2002, updated for COVID-19 conditions. Make sure you are number two but focus on the final ballot. In 2002, on the first ballot Rokita trailed Richard Mourdock 720 to 670 with Mike Delph receiving 341 votes and Dr. John McGoff 197. The second ballot Rokita trailed Mourdock 827 to 813. On the final ballot, Rokita won by 847 to 753. Second choices matter.

It appears the Hill people had a single slot strategy: List Hill and only Hill. Rokita worked to make sure he was the last man standing going into the final ballot, and then rounded up the ABC coalition. On the second ballot, assuming the Hill voters remained loyal (remember, no delegate could see the emerging patterns in a virtual convention – they voted every ballot at the beginning), the Westercamp voters broke 122 for Rokita, 105 for Harter and 46 for Hill. On the third ballot, the 432 Harter voters broke 75% for Rokita. Rokita received 272 to 100 for Hill.

Head-to-head by ballot, it was Hill 655 to Rokita 479, then Hill 701 to Rokita 601, with a final vote of Rokita 873 to 801 for Hill. He did it again. In this case, history didn't just rhyme, it repeated itself. The biggest difference was that in a virtual convention only 76 ballots dropped off whereas in 2002, at a live convention, 328 had left by the final ballot.

**I once counted votes in** a critical race for Republican leader of the House to replace Denny Hastert. I nominated my friend John Shadegg, with Paul Ryan and Pete Hoekstra doing the seconds. We knew we were the outsiders. Whip Roy Blunt was the presumed leader with John Boehner on his heels. We knew every vote we had, around 45 as I recall. We also knew their second choice. Blunt led the first round and only needed a couple of votes to win. All of our votes went for Boehner and he narrowly became the next leader of the House Republicans. Counting is important.

In modern Indiana GOP history, there is no better convention vote counter than Todd Rokita because he is a throwback politician. He actually talks to voters and listens. And, as Brian Howey has outlined today, he, Houchin and their team had a clear strategy. At the end of the day, round up the ABC voters from wherever they were located and have them on the final ballot. ❖

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



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# Myers' paltry \$300k makes it hard to take his candidacy seriously

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With double digit unemployment surpassing that of the Great Depression, 2,500 Hoosiers dead from the pandemic, the state facing a partial reopening of schools and potential economic shutdown, and a Democratic tsunami taking shape nationally to dislodge a controversial Republican president, it might be presumable that Gov. Eric Holcomb would be vulnerable.

But when the Democratic gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers filed his mid-year finance report, he posted a mere \$301,604, and \$72,310 cash on hand. By comparison, Gov. Holcomb had \$8 million cash on hand after raising \$1.48 million during the second quarter, and Democratic attorney general nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel had \$722,364 cash on hand (Republican nominee Todd Rokita posted \$18,277).

At this point in 2016, Democratic nominee John Gregg had raised \$8.6 million (\$2 million more than his entire 2012 campaign), with the Democratic Governors Association poised to pump in \$500,000. Gregg was able to begin his TV ad campaign in May. Gregg's still open account has \$360,882.82.

Myers's large contributions in June included \$2,000 in-kind from the American Federation of Teachers, \$1,000 from Corey Thomas of Boston, \$2,000 from Reed Tuckson of Georgia, and \$1,000 from James Gaither of California. Louise Phanstiel of New York gave \$10,000.

"We are pleased to show progress in our fundraising numbers," said Myers' campaign manager Zakiya Thomas, who quickly changed topics. "A quick glance through Gov. Eric Holcomb's campaign contributions show he's in lockstep with special interests, corporate polluters and big business. In the midst of record unemployment and long lines at food pantries, Gov. Holcomb continues to rake in money from corporations seeking giant bailouts on the backs of Hoosiers."

Boiled down, Myers is not only not in the game,

he's nowhere near the field of play.

While Myers has the ability to self-fund, he told HPI and the IndyStar when he announced his campaign a year ago that he would not go that route but reported a \$97,646 loan from himself. **HPI Horse Race:** Safe Holcomb.

## Firefighters PAC endorse Holcomb

The Indiana Professional Firefighters PAC announced their endorsement of Gov. Holcomb for a second term. This is the organization's first gubernatorial endorsement since 2008. "There's no doubt that Gov. Holcomb has always put the public safety of all Hoosiers first," said Thomas Hanify, president of the Indiana Professional Firefighters PAC. "He's stood with Indiana firefighters as we stand with Hoosiers, focusing on education, training and safety standards, and retirement and disability benefits. We're proud to call Gov. Holcomb a friend of Hoosier firefighters, and know that he's the right person to continue leading Indiana for the next four years." Holcomb said, "Our Hoosier firefighters are the original essential workers. No matter the situation – whether it's floods, tornados, blizzards, earthquakes, or a global pandemic – our firefighters are always there for us. I am profusely grateful for them and their support, and I'll work to continue to earn that support every single day."

## Congress

### 5th CD: Hale posts \$514k

Christina Hale's Democratic 5th CD campaign announced raising \$541,000, and will report \$726,000 cash on hand. The campaign received almost 9,500 contributions, 94% of which were \$100 or less. "This campaign is powered by grassroots supporters who believe we need more problem solvers in Washington," said Hale. "Hoosiers want leaders who will work across the aisle to lower health care costs and expand economic opportunity for everyone. I have a proven record of working with both parties to get things done, and I'll continue doing just that in Congress." This strong fundraising quarter continues a wave of momentum for Hale. The Republican campaign of State Sen. Victoria Spartz has not released her second quarter numbers. **HPI Horse Race:** Leans Spartz.



## Presidential 2020

### Trump demotes Parscale

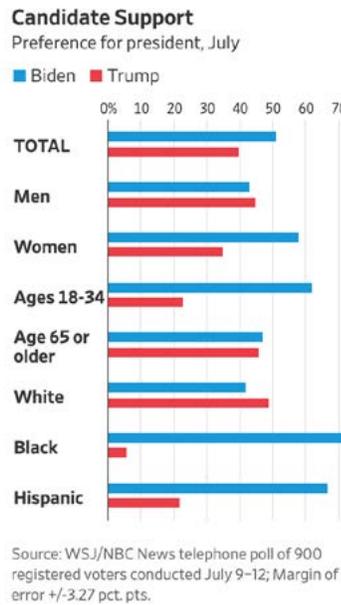
President Donald Trump has orchestrated a shakeup of his struggling reelection campaign with less than four months to go, elevating Bill Stepien to campaign manager and demoting Brad Parscale, who had been serving in that role (Politico). Trump posted to Facebook on Wednesday eve-

ning that Parscale will remain on the campaign as a senior adviser. The move comes amid falling poll numbers and mounting worries over the president's political prospects, with Trump himself expressing concern that he's losing to Joe Biden. Parscale has been under the microscope in recent weeks, particularly following Trump's half-capacity rally in Tulsa, Okla. Parscale was blamed internally for the rally after boasting beforehand that over 1 million people had signed up to attend. In private, the president repeatedly criticized Parscale for the episode.

### Biden leads by 11% in NBC/WSJ Poll

Former Vice President Joe Biden's lead over President Trump reached double digits this month as Mr. Trump's approval rating declined amid widespread disagreement with his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new

[Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll](#). Less than four months before the November election, 51% of voters said they would vote for Mr. Biden if the election were held today, with 40% backing Mr. Trump. Mr. Biden's lead over the president rose to 11 percentage points from 7 percentage points last month, as both candidates saw growth in the share of voters who view them very negatively.



In NBC/WSJ swing state polling, Biden leads in Arizona 51-45; in Florida 50-43%; in Pennsylvania 50-42%; in Wisconsin 48-42%; and in Michigan 48-42%.

But Mr. Trump maintained the backing of a majority of voters on the economy, with 54% approving of his handling of the matter, a record high in the poll. The U.S. economy officially entered a recession in February after the pandemic forced wide swaths of the economy to shut down, triggering millions of job losses. While activity showed signs of rebounding in May, economists expect the outlook could deteriorate as a wave of new cases forces states to pause or reverse reopening plans. The president's overall job-approval rating dropped 3 percentage points over the last month. Forty-two percent of voters approved of Mr. Trump's performance, with 56% disapproving—his lowest job-approval rating since April 2018. The right/wrong track number was 19/72%.

Peter Hart, a Democratic pollster who worked on the survey, said Mr. Trump faced the most challeng-

ing environment for an incumbent since Jimmy Carter in 1980 and Lyndon Johnson in 1968. Mr. Carter lost and Mr. Johnson decided not to run for re-election. "President Trump has hit the trifecta in the misery market. The three key indicators—job rating, personal feelings, attitudes on re-election—are all deeply submerged underwater," Mr. Hart said. "They represent the best measure of the standing and political strength of an incumbent president."

### Biden has 15% lead in Quinnipiac Poll

As coronavirus cases surge and states rollback reopenings, former Vice President Joe Biden opens up his biggest lead this year over President Donald Trump in the race for the White House. Registered voters back Biden over Trump 52-37%, according to a [Quinnipiac University national poll](#) released today. This compares to a June

18th national poll when Biden led Trump 49-41%. Since March, Biden's lead had ranged from 8 to 11 percentage points. Independents are a key factor behind Biden's widening lead as they now back him 51-34%, while in June, independents were split with 43 for Biden and 40% for Trump. There is also some movement among Republicans as

they back Trump 84-9%, compared to 92-7% in June. Democrats go to Biden 91-5%, little changed from 93-4% in June. "Yes, there's still 16 weeks until Election Day, but this is a very unpleasant real time look at what the future could be for President Trump. There is no upside, no silver lining, no encouraging trend hidden somewhere in this survey for the president," said Quinnipiac University Polling Analyst Tim Malloy.

Two-thirds, 67-30%, say they do not trust the information President Trump is providing about the coronavirus. Conversely, nearly two-thirds, 65-26%, say they trust the information Dr. Anthony Fauci is providing about the coronavirus.

Voters now give Biden a slight lead over Trump in a direct match up when it comes to handling the economy. Voters say 50-45% that Biden would do a better job handling the economy, a reversal from June when Trump held a slight lead 51-46%. ❖

Battle for the White House			
RCP Poll Averages			
Election 2020	Biden	Trump	Spread
RCP National Average	48.7	40.1	Biden +8.6
Betting Odds	59.1	37.0	
Electoral College	222	115	
Battlegrounds			
	Biden	Trump	Spread
North Carolina	47.3	45.3	Biden +2.0
Florida	49.2	42.8	Biden +6.4
Wisconsin	47.8	41.8	Biden +6.0
Pennsylvania	49.3	41.5	Biden +7.8
Arizona	47.2	44.6	Biden +2.6
Congress			
	Dems	GOP	Spread
Battle for Senate	46	47	
U.S. House	214	190	
Generic Ballot	49.0	40.5	Dem +8.5
Dem Delegates: Biden 2633, Sanders 1071			
Electoral College Map   Latest Polls   Election Calendar			

# President Trump's speeches are fascinating

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – President Trump's speeches are fascinating. I watched all of his speech at that Tulsa rally, all one hour and 40 minutes of it. Fascinating speech.

On the July 4th weekend, I watched all of the president's Mount Rushmore speech, this one short by his standards, only 40 minutes, but long on his declaration of a cultural war against teachers, journalists and corporate executives promoting "a new far-left fascism that demands absolute allegiance." Fascinating speech.



Some family members and friends to whom I send text messages to alert them of a Trump oration in progress say they can't stand to listen to him. I can. It's fascinating.

You don't have to agree with all, many or any of the things said in order to be intensely interested in hearing and analyzing the content and likely reaction of the nation to pronouncements by the president of the United States.

I recall hearing from people who said they couldn't stand to listen to another president, Barack Obama. That made no sense. Neither does refusing to listen to the current president.

In listening to President Trump, it's fascinating to figure out which remarks were written by speechwriters and read from a teleprompter and which are spur-of-the moment thoughts that arise as he rallies a crowd with his unique style of speaking. It's clear that Trump wasn't reading from a script when he said in Tulsa that all that coronavirus testing leads to troubling statistics about so many infections.

"When you do testing to that extent you are going to find more people, you are going to find more cases," Trump said. "So, I said to my people, 'Slow the testing down please.'"

Members of his administration, aghast, rushed to say he was just joking, just kidding. Then Trump undercut them, saying he wasn't kidding, even if he didn't formally order a cut in testing.

Also, it's clear that Trump was sticking to words of the speechwriters at Mount Rushmore. Proof was in the way Trump mispronounced some of the words written for him. "Totalitarianism" became something like "totallie-tario-tism." They shouldn't put in big words. In reciting a line about the Nobel Peace Prize, he called it "Noble" instead of

"Nobel." Hard to figure that one out. But fascinating.

Twice he mispronounced the first name of Ulysses Grant and mumbled and bumbled elsewhere, undercutting his campaign attacks on Joe Biden as the one who stumbles with words. Will voters care about a stumbles issue? Trump apparently feared that they might, dedicating such a long segment of his Tulsa speech to explaining why he walked unsteadily down a ramp after his graduation speech at West Point. He wasn't slipping. It was slippery shoes.

**It's fascinating to analyze** where Trump is directing his remarks, his appeal. No doubt about it. He's appealing to his base, trying to get those folks angry and motivated to fight "a merciless campaign to wipe out our history, defame our heroes, erase our values and indoctrinate our children."

He tells of children "taught in school to hate their own country." Wow! The teachers do that?

While he railed against taking down monuments, his speechwriters were careful not to mention specifically Confederate monuments. In a tweet, however, the president made clear his view on Confederate symbols, calling it a blunder for NASCAR to ban Confederate flags at events.

Strange that he chose to spend a news cycle going after driver Bubba Wallace rather than Joe Biden? Very strange. But reading words in a tweet isn't the same as watching the president speak strange words live before a responding crowd. It's fascinating to see his expressions, hear his tone of voice and figure out what comes from speechwriters and what comes from the heart. And whether he is motivating or turning off more voters. That's fascinating. ❖

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

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

# This is a testing time for all of us

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – A few weeks ago, The New York Times ran an article noting that with the U.S. preoccupied by the coronavirus pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests, and massive unemployment, “its competitors are moving to fill the vacuum, and quickly.”



Russia, China, North Korea, Iran. All are testing how far they can go, seeking to exploit our weaknesses and fill the vacuum they perceive in world leadership. Our allies, meanwhile, are expressing dismay at the U.S.’s inability to come to grips with the pandemic – symbolized most acutely by the prospect that Americans will be barred from traveling to a partially reopened

Europe this summer – and at our withdrawal from world organizations, treaties, and involvement in places where we have traditionally been central to keeping the peace.

There are good reasons we have turned inward. As a nation, we have botched the response to the coronavirus, as its recent sharp upward trajectory illustrates. We are still feeling our way through the economic impact, with every likelihood that millions of people will be struggling for a long time. And, of course, street protests, concern about policing, and turmoil over the nation’s racial practices are occupying many people’s attention.

Any one of these things would have been enough to try us as a country; all together make this a desperately difficult time. We’ve been through times like this in the past, and no doubt will again in the future, but at this moment, our mettle is being tested as it rarely has been. The country won’t be out of control if each of us steps up to the challenges we see in our own neighborhoods and our nation.

**Oddly, I find something** bracing about this. Not long ago I was meeting with a group of young graduate students, who asked what troubled me most about the problems we confront, and the word that instantly came to mind was “complacency.” As Americans, we have a tendency to feel that we’ve always come through hard times and always will. The result is often a sense that we can leave things to others; to our leaders, to our nonprofits, churches, and community groups, to our more involved neighbors. We ourselves don’t set out to do the things we know need to be done.

But here’s the thing about a representative democracy like ours; it doesn’t work unless citizens do their part, and I include our leaders in this. At its heart, it asks of us that we find a niche where we can improve things.

It’s disheartening to see recent polls that suggest huge percentages of Americans believe things in the country are out of control – 80% of respondents in a recent NBC News/Wall St. Journal poll – but it’s heartening to know there’s something we can do about it. The country won’t be out of control if each of us steps up to the challenges we see in our own neighborhoods and our nation.

**I began my political** career because I felt like I needed to do something to help my community in southern Indiana and didn’t know where to start. So, I asked my precinct committeeman, who enlisted me to go door to door to try to get voters involved. That led eventually to Congress, and ultimately to a committee chairmanship trying to resolve some of the country’s knottiest foreign affairs challenges. You never know where these things are going to lead.

My point in saying this is that we can all start somewhere. We are divided as a nation on political, economic, and racial lines. We face the existential challenge of climate change. Many of us on both the right and the left worry about a lack of moral perspective in how we approach our problems.

**All of these are ripe** for actions that we, as individuals, can take. If you’re white, for instance, how much time have you spent talking to Black people or Latinos about the hostility and difficulties they face? Making the effort to understand as best you can is an important step toward recognizing how deep-seated these problems are, and at the same time how they might be overcome.

This time of testing is an opportunity. It’s a chance to shake off the complacency we’d settled into, and to exercise the gift that our system gives us, the ability to make a difference. ❖

**Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.**

# Trump's strategy aims to widen differences

By KELLY HAWES

ANDERSON — One of President Donald J. Trump's latest campaign ads features a call going to voicemail. "You have reached the 911 police emergency line," the voice says. "Due to defunding of the police department,



we're sorry but no one is here to take your call. If you're calling to report a rape, please press 1. To report a murder, press 2. To report a home invasion, press 3. For all other crimes, leave your name and number and someone will get back to you. Our estimated wait time is currently five days. Goodbye."

Of course, getting rid of police departments is not what reform advocates are suggesting,

but our president never lets a few facts to get in his way. He's the law and order president. Joe Biden is soft on crime.

"Chicago and New York City crime numbers are way up," the president tweeted; "67 people shot in Chicago, 13 killed. Shootings up significantly in NYC where people are demanding that @NYGovCuomo & @NYCMayor act now. Federal Government ready, willing and able to help, if asked!"

At a time when many Americans are advocating structural reform, our president stands up for the status quo.

"Our nation is witnessing a merciless campaign to wipe out our history, defame our heroes, erase our values and indoctrinate our children," he said in a speech at Mount Rushmore on the eve of Independence Day. "Angry mobs are trying to tear down statues of our founders, deface our most sacred memorials and unleash a wave of violent crime in our cities."

**The president warned** of a "left-wing cultural revolution." "They think the American people are weak and soft and submissive," he said. "But no, the American people are strong and proud, and they will not allow our country and all of its values, history and culture to be taken from them."

When someone tore down a statue of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, the president tweeted a link to a Breitbart story. "This shows that these anarchists have no bounds!" he wrote. It didn't seem to occur to him that those tearing down the statue of a man who fought to end slavery might not be on the same side as those tearing down tributes to generals who fought to preserve that institution in the Civil War.

The president made clear where he stands on race in a message targeting the lone Black driver in NASCAR's premier series. "Has @BubbaWallace apologized to all of those great NASCAR drivers & officials who came to his aid, stood by his side, & were willing to sacrifice everything for him, only to find out that the whole thing was just another HOAX?" the president tweeted. "That & Flag decision has caused lowest ratings EVER!"

**He was wrong.** The networks airing the races say the ratings are actually going up. And this was no hoax. There really was a noose found hanging in Wallace's garage, even if it didn't turn out to be the hate crime NASCAR had feared. Fellow drivers have spoken publicly in support of Wallace. Our president opts instead to defend the Confederate battle flag, a symbol of the Ku Klux Klan.

The president lashed out when New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced plans to paint "Black Lives Matter" on Fifth Avenue in front of Trump Tower. He called it "a symbol of hate" and said it would amount to "denigrating this luxury Avenue."

The president's goal, it seems, is to stoke fear. Fear of the other. Fear of the future. Fear of upending the status quo. Americans should reject his efforts. They'll have a chance to do that in November. ❖

**Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at [kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com](mailto:kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com). Find him on Twitter @Kelly\_Hawes.**

# Where do we shop?

By MORTON J. MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS — Let's go shopping. The most recent data (2018 from the Census Bureau's County Business Patterns) tell us that Indiana supported more businesses



associated with autos than food. The count was 8,700 to 3,600. Restaurants are not included; no one I know says, "Let's go shopping at Swill Burger."

Yes, it's distressing. Auto and truck dealers, parts suppliers, and gasoline stations are more than twice as common as places to buy food. Of course, this Covid-19 has restaurants now specialized in take-out food, thus again destroying our

carefully constructed statistical structures.

**Indiana has 571,000** business establishments, of which one in nine (10.9%) is engaged in retail trade. Oh, we did in 2018, but how many will we have in 2021?

Now, when you think of a retail establishment, your mind is influenced by some movie depicting Holly-

wood's imagined golden era prior to WWII. Yes, there's Judy Garland falling for Van Johnson under the eye of jolly S.Z. Sakall in the music instrument store.

Or do you think of a neighborhood store, one of a well-advertised national chain where the manager is invisible and the staff pleasant, but clueless about the merchandise.

**Surprisingly, two-thirds** of all Hoosier retail "establishments" are known to the Census Bureau of "non-employer" entities. No one is employed by them, but they sell directly to the public. These shops are hard to find open because they have no staff to help you when the proprietor is away. It's why you'll find many junk shops (excuse me, antique stores) closed as you cruise through small towns.

We must also include those who are attempting to sell you via the telephone, internet or at a neighbor's house, calling for Avon or pitching Tupperware. Even Hoosier Red Skelton was a door-to-door Fuller Brush man.

No, your barber and/or beauty shops do not fall into the retail group. They are primarily selling services, not merchandise. They are classified as personal care services along with your diet and weight reducing centers.

We've seen many changes over the decades in retail trade as firms expand the lines of goods they carry. What used to be the drug store added a soda fountain (for a while) and now is classified as a health and personal care store, if you include booze and products "As seen on TV" among your personal care items.

Perhaps the most noticeable retail trade change has been the expanded range of the department and grocery stores. Both were themselves aggregations of earlier independent units transformed into the general merchandise stores, including warehouse clubs and supercenters.

**And even these** behemoths are being challenged by on-line shopping. When 100 years ago the local merchants feared A&P as well as Sears, today the name Amazon strikes terror into the hearts of all the bankers who lend to retailers.

Excuse me now; there's a package at the door. ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at [mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com](mailto:mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com). Follow his views and those of John Guy on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available or at [mortonjohn.libsyn.com](http://mortonjohn.libsyn.com).**

## Senators, please get back to work

By ERIN MACEY

INDIANAPOLIS — On the other side of COVID-19 - whenever that may be - we want to see Hoosier families rebuilding their lives on firmer ground than before. That means more families with stable housing, quality jobs, and emergency savings. As we continue to face the pandemic and its fallout, we should be doing all we can to ensure that no family is left behind — meaning no-one goes hungry, becomes homeless, or suffers material hardship because of COVID-19.



Yet here we stand on the brink of a precipice: The ongoing crisis has rendered our government's original consensus aid package insufficient. Without further assistance, Hoosiers are going to suffer even greater harm from the spread of the virus and the recession. The House has passed numerous bills that would provide another wave of relief for working families; why has the Senate refused to respond to these proposals?

**Will our senators choose** to take a big chunk of income from the more than 450,000 unemployed Hoosier

workers and their families by refusing to extend the extra \$600 in weekly unemployment payments before the end of July? Will our senators fail to close the loophole currently preventing more than 1.5 million workers from accessing the temporary paid sick or family leave established in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act? Will our senators allow dire economic circumstances to drive families to predatory lenders making the outrageous, triple-digit interest loans that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently declined to regulate?

**It seems unconscionable** to fail to act when they are clearly aware that these problems exist, yet despite record-high rates of unemployment and looming deadlines for assistance to run out, the Senate recently took a two-week holiday recess without taking action on any of these issues.

When senators return, it is critical that they continue pandemic unemployment compensation. Without it, workers who have lost jobs and do not have a job to return to or cannot return to work will receive, on average, just \$302 in weekly benefits — the equivalent of \$7.55/hour. Would any of our elected leaders trade places with these families? How will families afford the basics, let alone supply the level of demand our communities need to rebuild? In an economy that depends on consumer spending, the boost added by pandemic unemployment compensation is necessary to our recovery. In fact, the Economic Policy Institute estimates that continuing the \$600 weekly benefit would save over 50,000 jobs in Indiana.

When senators return, they must extend paid sick and caregiver leave to workers at companies with 500 or

more employees. The failure to address this gap in the last piece of COVID legislation has put workers at meat packing plants, big box stores, medical facilities, chain restaurants, and other high-traffic establishments in a terrible bind when they develop symptoms. As schools reopen, it is essential for parents to be able to keep a child with symptoms home and to care for children whose schools or day cares shut down — or, as at least one Indiana district has done, choose not to reopen.

**When senators return**, they should enact a usury cap of 36% or below so that lenders cannot capitalize on the hardships Hoosiers currently face, transforming desperation into profit. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s decision earlier this month to nix proposed ability-to-repay requirements for these lenders makes the issue all the more urgent. Otherwise, future stimulus funds and paychecks will get sucked into the pipeline from Indiana’s more than 250 payday loan storefronts to the out-of-state companies that operate them, or to online “tribal” lenders charging 300% APR or more.

Perhaps our senators could also look further

ahead, and take steps to ensure that more Hoosiers can weather future financial storms. They could explore expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit so that Hoosiers could build or rebuild savings, pairing these with Sen. Todd Young’s Refund to Rainy Day Savings Act, which uses tax time to encourage the establishment of emergency savings. These targeted credits would put money in the pockets of those who suffered serious income shocks or who worked in low-wage jobs, allowing them to build a financial buffer against future emergencies. Could we emerge from this crisis more resilient?

Hoosiers have lost far too many friends and neighbors to COVID-19. There is no need to sacrifice more Hoosiers to economic catastrophe and material hardship when we have the policy tools we need. When you get back from vacation, senators, please use them. ❖

**Erin Macey, PhD, is a senior policy analyst for the Indiana Institute for Working Families and the Indiana Community Action Association.**

## Electoral fringe expands as Indiana moves to ‘likely’ Trump

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — We are now about six weeks into a downturn in Donald Trump’s polling numbers.

It’s worth thinking about the ramifications of this change if it endures.

In the RealClearPolitics average of national approval polling, Trump went from about early December to late May without ever dipping below -10 in net approval (approval minus disapproval). He has spent every day since June 1 at or below -10 net approval, and he’s currently at about -15.

**Joe Biden’s** national polling lead over Trump during May was in the four-to-six-point range. That was a decent lead, but not one that suggested Biden was a towering favorite, particularly because Trump was able to win in 2016 without winning the popular vote. But since early June, Biden’s lead has ballooned to the eight-to-10-point range. He has also enjoyed healthy leads in many polls of the

most important swing states, like Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

The bottom line here is that the nation is in a state of terrible crisis, and the public has, at least for now, judged the president’s responses to both coronavirus and protests of racial inequalities in policing to be lacking.

**In an ABC News/Ipsos poll** released Friday, 67% of respondents disapproved of Trump’s handling of coronavirus and of race relations.

2020 is shaping up to be a bad year in American history, which Republican lobbyist Bruce Mehlman il-

lustrates in his latest look at the political environment. It is not the kind of year when one wants to be an incumbent running for reelection, and a majority of the public appears to believe that this president is not meeting the moment. A few weeks into the public health crisis, we explored the possibility of Trump being the second iteration of Jimmy Carter, whose reelection bid fell apart among myriad crises in 1980. Since then, the Trump-as-Carter scenario has grown even more plausible.

There is time for the situation to change — as we wrote a few weeks ago, we want to see where things stand after the conventions, around Labor Day. But Trump is extremely unlikely to win if the polls continue to look the way they

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### SABATO'S CRYSTAL BALL

State	Old Rating	New Rating
Alaska	Safe Republican	Likely Republican
Indiana	Safe Republican	Likely Republican
Kansas	Safe Republican	Likely Republican
Missouri	Safe Republican	Likely Republican
Montana	Safe Republican	Likely Republican
South Carolina	Safe Republican	Likely Republican
Utah	Safe Republican	Likely Republican



do now. And if these numbers represent a new normal, we need to account for the possibility that this election won't be particularly close, and that new states may come into play. In other words, if the national picture remains bleak for Trump, then the slippage he's seen from earlier this year wouldn't just be limited to a handful of swing states.

**Over the past few weeks**, there have been some interesting little nuggets here and there about the map expanding into red turf. The very well-sourced New York Times trio of Maggie Haberman, Jonathan Martin, and Alexander Burns recently reported that internal Republican data showed Trump with only a small lead in Montana and trailing in Kansas, two states that Trump carried by about 20 points apiece in 2016 (both have competitive Senate races, too).

Enterprising members of the #ElectionTwitter community spearheaded a fundraising campaign to poll under-pollled states: Public Policy Polling, the Democratic pollster, stepped up and polled Alaska and Montana on their behalf, with the money raised going to charity. Trump was up 48%-45% in Alaska and 51%-42% in Montana. (The #ElectionTwitter polling project remains underway, and we have supported them and we encourage others to as well at their GoFundMe page.)

Democratic pollster Garin-Hart-Yang had Biden up two points in Missouri, a 19-point Trump state; an earlier poll for Missouri Scout conducted by Remington Research, a GOP firm, had Trump up eight. On Monday, polling from Saint Louis University/YouGov had Trump up by a similar 50%-43% margin.

**A UtahPolicy.com/KUTV 2 News** poll of Utah had Trump up just 44%-41% there in late May, although the pollster (Y2 Analytics) later re-weighted the poll by education, which suggested a lead for Trump more in the six-to-10-point range, depending on which weighting was used (the Y2 post includes a thoughtful discussion of education weighting, an important factor in polling and something that might have contributed to some Democratic bias in state polls in 2016).

One other caveat comes from friend of the Crystal Ball Dan Guild, who has noticed that in the last three elections, some summer polling has seriously overstated eventual November Democratic performance in red states. That may be a factor now.

But Trump's position is weak enough in mid-July that we have to concede there are some signs of competitiveness in states that were not competitive in 2016. This sort of thing can happen when the overall election is tilted

toward one side over the other, which is the state of play at the moment and the advantage Biden currently holds.

If Trump were up by 10 nationally, we might be moving Safe Democratic states that Hillary Clinton won in the low double-digits, like Delaware and Oregon, into more competitive categories.

More to the point, we continue to rate states like Colorado, New Mexico, and Virginia as Likely, not Safe, Democratic. That's despite it being hard to imagine Trump carrying any of them, even if his position dramatically improves. So we're moving seven Safe Republican states to Likely Republican: Alaska, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, South Carolina, and Utah.

Do we think Biden will win these states? Not really. In all likelihood, these red states are going to vote for Trump, and not just by a few points.

But could one or more flip if Biden wins decisively in November? Possibly. Let's remember: A "Likely" rating still means we see one side — in this case, the Republicans — clearly favored in a state. We just don't feel 100% certain about these states in the event of a lopsided election.

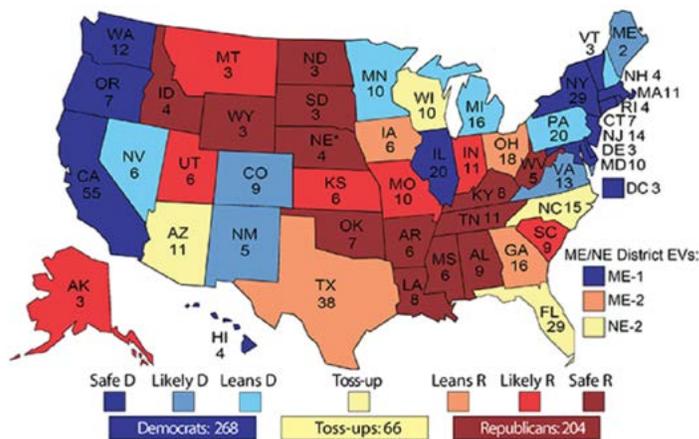
**Our current** electoral map represents something of a hedge between Trump cutting markedly into Biden's lead versus Biden maintaining his current edge or even expanding it. In the former scenario, all of these states we've moved into Likely Republican would move back into the Safe Republican camp, and states like Michigan and Pennsylvania

(which we rate as Leans Democratic) as well as Toss-ups like Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, and Wisconsin could all be on the razor's edge. These six states remain the core battlegrounds that seem likeliest, collectively, to decide the election.

In the latter scenario, where Biden continues to do very well, most or all of those core battleground states would be more like Leans Democratic (or even Likely, at least in some cases); Leans Republican states like Georgia, Iowa, Ohio, and Texas would be more like Toss-ups; and some of the states we've flagged in today's update could be in play. As it stands now, our ratings account for both of these scenarios.

We think we'll get more clarity about which scenario is more likely following the conventions — whatever the conventions actually look like. Even with 2020's scaled down, undramatic, and overshadowed conventions, voters and media see them as departure points into the general election. Casting a ballot is no longer just on the distant horizon. It's a reality that will firm up people's choices -- and our ratings. ❖

**Map 1: Crystal Ball Electoral College ratings**



Safe D Likely D Leans D Toss-up Leans R Likely R Safe R  
 Democrats: 268 Toss-ups: 66 Republicans: 204

**Jeffrey Rosen, The Atlantic:** In 2007, at the end of his first term on the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Roberts told me in an interview for this magazine that he would make it his highest priority to protect the Court's institutional legitimacy. "There ought to be some sense of some stability," he said, "if the government is not going to polarize completely. It's a high priority to keep any kind of partisan divide out of the judiciary as well." Roberts said he would try to persuade his colleagues to put institutional legitimacy first by encouraging them to converge around narrow, bipartisan decisions to avoid 5-4 partisan splits. "I think the Court is also ripe for a similar refocus on functioning as an institution," Roberts emphasized, "because if it doesn't it's going to lose its credibility and legitimacy." In the Supreme Court term that ended on Thursday, Roberts decisively and impressively achieved his goal. At a time of greater partisan conflict between the president and Congress than any time since the Civil War, as Americans are questioning the legitimacy of all three branches of the federal government, Roberts worked to ensure that the Supreme Court can be embraced by citizens of different perspectives as a neutral arbiter, guided by law rather than politics. He helped persuade all but two of his colleagues to unite in two decisions ruling against President Donald Trump's efforts to fight subpoenas from Congress and the New York County district attorney. He also joined 7-2 majorities in two cases involving religious liberties and a 6-3 majority in a historic decision extending federal antidiscrimination protections to LGBTQ individuals. And, in cases where 5-4 splits were unavoidable, he joined the more liberal justices in voting to maintain an important precedent protecting abortion rights and in forbidding the president to repeal the "Dreamers" program without following regular administrative procedures. During this term, Roberts also presided neutrally over a presidential impeachment trial, and criticized both Trump and Senator Charles Schumer of New York for attacking judges in partisan terms. In the process, he became, as the Washington University law professor Lee Epstein told *The New York Times*, the most powerful chief justice since Charles Evans Hughes in 1937. By the end of the term, the Court had avoided 5-4 splits in many of the hot-button cases, and Roberts was with the majority in all of the 5-4 decisions but one. He achieved the goal he set for himself at the beginning of this tenure: resisting what he called the "personalization of judicial politics" by converging around legally narrow, bipartisan decisions, in the tradition of his own hero, Chief Justice John Marshall. ❖



demands by Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives to see the same records but said they must work through lower courts to narrow the scope of their inquiry. The justices came down unanimously against the president's claim that he had absolute immunity. They ruled, 7-2, that he couldn't stonewall the investigations into his business dealings. When the rulings came down, Trump went first to the place he always goes when he feels imperiled. Twitter. There, he lambasted everyone he thought wasn't doing a good job protecting him. The list was long. The Supreme Court itself — presumably including the two justices Trump nominated, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, both of whom lined up against him. The Senate Judiciary Committee, which is chaired by Trump's golfing buddy, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina. Fox News, which hasn't been genuflecting fast enough lately to suit the president. And on and on and on. ❖

**Stephen Goldsmith, Washington Post:** Last weekend, despite President Trump's later assertion to the contrary, television audiences increased substantially for NASCAR racing after the organization's recent banning of the Confederate battle flag. Instead of proudly celebrating the American experiment on the Fourth of July weekend by recognizing how far we still have to go, the president and many of his allies doubled down on divisive racial politics — a strategy that had long been evident but now has a fresh intensity. As a Republican former Indianapolis mayor and district attorney, and someone who helped design the "compassionate conservatism" platform that was a hallmark of George W. Bush's presidency, I lament that the party has abandoned its focus on identifying the United States' ills and finding solutions that work for everyone. Addressing systemic racism, police brutality and social inequities is vital to the nation's health and ethical standing, and yet on those subjects too many Republicans have been largely silent. No wonder the GOP has virtually disappeared from most major U.S. cities, and no wonder the 2018 midterms revealed the party's collapsing support in the suburbs. If my fellow Republicans and I are to reclaim our legitimacy as a national party, we must move away from the vitriol aimed at cities and show to Americans in urban and suburban areas that we are once more capable of governing with inclusivity, realism and pragmatism. Those should be the hallmarks of a post-Trump Republican Party. Bush's compassionate conservatism took such an approach. It was also evident during his father's presidency after the 1992 Los Angeles riots, when President George H.W. Bush called mayors together to meet with his secretary of housing and urban development, Jack Kemp, to improve urban policy. A remade GOP should offer a compassionate compact to the American public. Unapologetically standing strong against the destruction and anarchy of violent protests neither precludes supporting peaceful protests nor does it prevent addressing abuses in the justice system. ❖

**John Krull, Statehouse File:** Something about being told that laws and rules apply to him, too, unhinges Donald Trump. That's why he lashed out in every direction after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that, as president, he doesn't have absolute immunity from prosecution or investigation and that a New York prosecutor can look at his tax records. The court also refused to knock down the

## Holcomb delays move to Stage 5

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday said he would delay the state's full entry into Stage 5 of its pandemic recovery plan for at least two more weeks (Erdody, [IBJ](#)). The state will remain in Stage 4.5 of the Back on Track Indiana plan, he said, instead of jumping into Stage 5 on July 18 as scheduled. Holcomb, during a press conference, said the extension would last at least through the end of July. "COVID-19 is not going away any time soon," Holcomb said. This is the second time Holcomb has delayed entry into Stage 5 because of rising COVID-19 case counts. On July 1, he announced the implementation of Stage 4.5 from July 4-17 instead of making the full leap from Stage 4 to Stage 5. Indiana has seen cases rise by 4,307 over the past week, an average of 615 per day. That compares with an increase of 3,032 over the previous week, an average of 433 per day. "For the second week in a row, the number of positive cases has gone up," Indiana State Health Commissioner Kristina Box said. The amount of time it takes to process tests has also been lagging. OptumServe, the company the state has contracted with to provide testing, continues to not meet its contractual obligation to provide test results within a 48-hour window. Box said on Wednesday that the latest seven-day average turnaround time is 59 hours. "We know residents are experiencing longer waits to get their test results and that they don't know what to do in the meantime," Box said. "These are external factors that are beyond our control."



## HHS audit cites Verma violations

WASHINGTON — A top Trump administration health official violated federal contracting rules by

steering millions of taxpayer dollars in contracts that ultimately benefited GOP-aligned communications consultants, according to an inspector general report set to be released today ([Politico](#)). The contracts, which were directed by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services chief Seema Verma, were only halted after a POLITICO investigation raised questions about their legality and the agency had paid out more than \$5 million to the contractors. The 70-page HHS inspector general report — the result of a 15-month audit — calls on HHS and CMS to take nine separate actions to address the "significant deficiencies" that it identified. Those actions include conducting a review of all the department's contracts, and making a closer examination of whether CMS overpaid several of its contractors. The report paints a detailed portrait of Verma's use of federal contracts to install allies who managed high-priority projects and exercised broad authority within CMS, while circumventing the agency's career officials and funding projects that ethics experts have said wasted taxpayers' money.

## Fort Wayne, Elkhart give parents options

FORT WAYNE — Families in Fort Wayne Community Schools have two weeks to decide whether they will send students to classrooms in August (Slodoba, [Fort Wayne Journal Gazette](#)). That in-person instruction won't be daily for middle and high school students, however. They will instead come to school at least twice a week and will continue their lessons remotely on the other days, Superintendent Mark Daniel announced Wednesday during a news conference outside Grile Administrative Center. Students in all grades may also choose a fully remote learning option. FWCS will invest in equipment to ensure every family can access the internet, Daniel said. "We understand families and staff members have reservations about returning fully to the classroom

because of the many unknowns about COVID-19," Daniel said. Elkhart Community Schools parents will have two options for their children when classes resume next month amid efforts to contain the coronavirus, district leaders announced Tuesday night ([Elkhart Truth](#)). By a unanimous vote, the school board approved the school re-entry plan, paving the way for the start of school on Aug. 13. School buildings closed on March 13 with instruction completed online. The plan for re-entry offers two options: one offers some face-to-face, in-school instruction for students who can return to school and the other offers virtual instruction only.

## Braun says qualified immunity bill stalls

ANDERSON — With more than 40 local law enforcement officers in attendance, U.S. Sen. Mike Braun said his bill to change qualified immunity is going nowhere in Congress (de la Bastide, [Anderson Herald Bulletin](#)). Braun last month introduced legislation that would have changed the standard to limited immunity for criminal justice employees operating outside the law. He told the gathered law enforcement officials that the legislation was introduced so the issue would be discussed by members of the U.S. Senate. The bill was meant as a template to bring the issue up for discussion through the legislative process, he said. "Qualified immunity is not going anywhere," he said of the proposed bill. "It's a political issue."

## Major retailers to require masks

NEW YORK — Walmart will require customers at all of its US stores to wear masks beginning next week, becoming the largest retailer to mandate facial coverings as coronavirus cases continue to rise (AP). Other national chains made similar moves on Wednesday. Kroger and Kohl's announced they would start requiring all customers to wear masks.