

GOP House majority seems safe

6 tossup races mark HPI's first fall general election forecast for Indiana House

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Sixteen Indiana House seats make the first Howey Politics Indiana general election competitive list, with six tossup races. As in the summer of 2016, the speculation at this writing is whether a Democratic wave is setting up and if it does, how far down ballot does it reach?

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden had a 15% lead in an ABC/Washington Post poll over the weekend. But New York Times Upshot columnist Nate Cohn explained, "After a quarter-century of closely fought elections, it is easy to assume that wide leads are unsustainable in today's deeply polarized country. Only Barack Obama in 2008 managed to

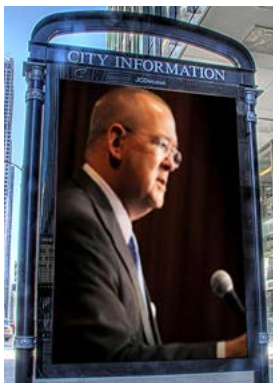
win the national vote by more than 3.9 percentage points. The other big leads all proved short-lived."

School reopening dilemma

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – With some reluctance I write about the decisions that grip some 30,000 school districts across the country. I am hesitant because I don't wish to be prescriptive about the most contentious issue of in-person versus remote learning. In our republic, decisions of this nature are inherently local. As both a parent and keen observer of schools, this suggests to me that school districts are trying to address issues as completely and thoughtfully as possible.

What I wish to do with this column is outline the very high stakes of this decision and walk through how the rest of us might make that decision simpler.



Speaker Todd Huston faces a rematch with Democrat Aimee Rivera Cole.,

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"We're asking our kids and their teachers to mask up, and our kids should not be getting mixed messages throughout the day."

- Gov. Eric Holcomb, announcing a face mask mandate that will begin next Monday, after state COVID positivity rates increased from 3.6% to 8%.



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



Both the decision to hold in-person classes and the decision to go online have enormous costs. The landscape for decision making is tough.

Indiana has about 1.1 million kids in grades K-12 spread across almost 300 school corporations. Of these, about 7% or more have no internet at home, and many more have intermittent service or slow download speed. All told, somewhere between one third and one half of Hoosier kids face real learning obstacles with online instruction.

It should be obvious that the school closing in March was most damaging to those students who were already the most vulnerable. It is likely the learning gap between the poorest and most affluent students grew more last year than at any time in American history. This is a strong argument for opening schools, but there is more.

If schools do not re-open, we will extend the single worst labor supply shock in U.S. history. By my count, 7% to 10% of workers are either single parents or one partner of a dual income couple with children age 5 to 12 years. Many, perhaps most, of these workers will be unable to work if schools don't re-open. The loss of this many workers alone is enough to push us right to the brink of a depression.

The cost of opening is also profound. The global pandemic remains with us. Caseloads and deaths grow at a rate suggesting emerging problems this summer and fall. It is nearly certain that re-opening schools will increase the mortality and morbidity of COVID-19. I don't know by how much, but it will not be trivial. I am certain that by late August we will have news and social media reports of COVID spread among teachers, staff and children. COVID deaths among teachers and students are inevitable.

Principals and school boards face enormous pressure as the disease spreads. As the academic year approaches there are no happy

choices, only grim ones. But, there is at least one action we can all take to ease this burden on teachers and school administrators. We can create a culture of compliance with the wearing of masks.

It must be said that the anti-mask animus of the past few months is fueled by President Trump and aided by confused statements by the CDC. From the beginning, his mockery of mask wearing and magical thinking about COVID turned an ordinary public health matter into a bizarre statement of personal politics. This deeply immoral approach has



been carried into every corner of the nation by a vast propaganda operation. It is more inexplicable than anything I have seen.

Mask wearing should be an uncontroversial issue. As one of my kids' teachers noted, schools have dress codes covering the length of shorts, the covering of shoulders and the wearing of identification cards on a lanyard. How then, she asked, can masks be provocative? They cannot be, and all of us have a moral and practical duty to our communities to change this dangerous gambit.

Today, school boards across America wrestle about re-opening decisions simply because they fear anger toward masks and other basic public health measures. This is simply crazy. If you care about the economy and about student learning and health, wear a mask.

I know that elected leaders from school boards to governors worry about the inevitable backlash if they mandate the wearing of masks.

In this climate of fear, no one wishes to be first to announce tough restrictions. This leaves school boards hesitant to take actions that would calm parents and teachers. Fixing this requires action at the state level. It is telling that 18 out of 24 states with Democratic governors have statewide mask requirements, but only two out of 26 with GOP governors have them. Even accounting for differences in disease spread, this is a stunning indictment of political courage.

As I said at the outset, I support strong local control of schools, but on this matter, it is too late. The president has already intervened in local decision-making about school re-opening and the wearing of masks. Undoing the damage of the Trump Administration will require better state leadership.

The choices of how and when to re-open schools are the most consequential decisions almost any current

elected official has ever made. It quite literally balances risk of death alongside that of economic depression and a lost generation of vulnerable students. This is a decision environment combat leaders face.

As we thank school leaders for their service, we must also ensure we do everything we can to allow them to focus on the task at hand. This must be a decision about how best to educate children while satisfying the needs of public health. It must not be about dodging the political ire of a collapsing political movement. ❖

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Indiana House, from page 1

That includes Democrat Mike Dukakis's double digit lead over Vice President George H.W. Bush in 1988 that turned into a third consecutive Republican term in the White House.

It would take a Democratic wave on par with landslide years of 1964 and 1974 to put much of a dent in the Republican super majority. Even in that extreme scenario, it is hard to see the GOP losing the majority outright. The 2011 reapportioned maps have proven to be historically durable for the Grand Old Party.

Our list of 16 House races includes the open seats of Republican Reps. Brian Bosma, David Wolkins, Woody Burton and Ron Bacon, and Democrat Rep. Mara Candalaria Reardon. All are expected to remain with their current party.

The six tossup races include three rematches: Rep. Dale Devon against Democrat Dr. Donald Westerhausen, Rep. Chris Chyung against former Republican Rep. Hal Slager, and Rep. Lisa Beck v. former Republican Rep. Julie Olthoff.

All of these tossup races come in suburban districts, which could be impacted if Biden does defeat President Trump in a landslide. But as 2016 taught us, strange things have occurred in the Trump era, particularly with Vice President Mike Pence on the ticket. What was speculated as a Democratic wave year in June and July four years ago turned into a GOP wave that pulled in Gov. Eric Holcomb after an unprecedented 100-day campaign, and preserved the Republican legislative super majorities.

It doesn't help that Democratic gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers posted a measly \$72,300 cash on hand on his mid-year report, compared to \$8 million for Gov. Eric Holcomb.



Even if the Trump slump persists, Republicans appear to have Holcomb as a down-ballot bulwark.

There are two big differences between 2016 and 2020. First, Hillary Clinton is not the Democratic nominee. She stoked real hatred among the Republican base and turned off many independents, who decided to take a roll of the dice on Donald Trump.

Secondly, the pandemic and accompanying economic meltdown have dramatically altered the landscape. If Trump had managed to get the pandemic under control with jobs returning, it might have aided and abetted a Trump/Pence comeback. Instead, a resurgent Part 2 of the first wave is dogging Trump, winnowing his own prospects.

Wave years have impacted the Indiana General Assembly before. The 1964 LBJ landslide took a House majority away from the GOP, giving Democrats a 40-plus seat majority. The 1974 Watergate mid-term election gave Senate Democrats their first and only majority for a mere two years in the last half century.

Following the 2018 and 2019 mid-term and municipal cycles, Democratic gains in Hamilton County have boosted Democratic prospects in the 5th CD and in legislative races. HPI includes the two Republican speaker districts – HD37 of current Speaker Todd Huston and HD88 of former speaker Brian Bosma – because they appeared to be trending Democratic.

But HPI believes it would take a 1964 or 1974 tsunami to dislodge those seats from the GOP majorities. Indiana Republicans are cognizant of the trends and will commit all resources to hold those seats.

Here is our first fall Indiana House forecast. All other seats not listed here are considered safe for their current parties:

HD4: Rep. Ed Soliday (R) v. Valparaiso

Councilwoman Deb Porter. **2018 Results:** Rep. Soliday (R) 14,791 (53.5%), Frank Szczepanski (D) 12,862 (46.4%). **2016 Results:** Soliday (R) 17,198, Pamela Fish (D) 14,247. **2020 Analysis:** Rep. Soliday is a frequent presence on our autumnal Horse Race list and he always seems to coast home. He makes this list because he comes in close to our 2,500-vote plurality in his last race. But we see him in danger only if a national Democratic wave develops that impacts down ballot races. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Soliday.

HD5: Rep. Dale Devon (R) v. Dr. Donald Westerhausen (D). **2018 Results:** Rep. Devon (R) 11,713 (51%), Westerhausen (D) 11,240 (49%). **2016 Results:** Devon (unopposed). **2020 Analysis:** This is a rematch from 2018 and is worth keeping a close eye on because HD5 is a classic "suburban" district wedged between South Bend and Elkhart. If the 2nd CD race between U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski and Democrat Pat Hackett comes into play, HD5 could be impacted by a national wave. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.



HD7: Rep. Ross Deal (D) v. South Bend Councilman Jake Teshka (R). **2018 Results:** Rep. Joe Taylor (D) 11,267 (51.7%), Troy Dillon (R) 10,540 (48.3%). **2016 Results:** Rep. Joe Taylor (D) 12,164, Justin Chupp (R) 11,633, James Gillen (L) 1,471. **2020 Analysis:** This will be the first general election for Rep. Ross Deal, who was chosen by caucus to replace Rep. Taylor right after the 2018 election. He faces Republican Councilman Teshka, who is a former St. Joseph County Republican executive director who was appointed by caucus to fill the council seat vacated by Dave Varner. "This is not something that was on my family's radar," Teshka told the South Bend Tribune. "We've spent the better part of two weeks wrestling with this as a family. We've got two young kids (ages 2 and 4). To run back-to-back campaigns, that's tough on our family, and then if you win, what's that look like? Taking me out of the house for a majority of the week for three months out of the year. We're people of faith and we've prayed real hard on it, and we feel this is something we're being called into." Teshka, 31, has been business development officer at Goshen-based Interra Credit Union, and before that he

was regional sales manager for Best One Tire & Service. If elected to the Republican-led House, Teshka, the sole Republican on the council, said he would be an "independent voice in the majority." HD7 has been extremely competitive over the past two cycles. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD12: Open seat. Mike Andrade (D) v. Tom Wichlinski (R). **2018 Results:** Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon (D) unopposed. **2016 Results:** Reardon (D) 15,969, William Fine (R) 13,236. **2020 Analysis:** With Rep. Reardon opting for an unsuccessful 1st CD race, Democrat Mike Andrade will face Republican Tom Wichlinski. Andrade won the Democratic primary with 70% of the vote. Wichlinski ran unopposed. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Andrade.

HD15: Rep. Chris Chyung (D) v. Hal Slager (R). **2018 Results:** Chyung (D) 12,468 (50.2%), Slager (R) 12,386 (49.8%). **2016 Results:** Slager (R) 16,150, Tom O'Donnell (D) 13,580. **2020 Analysis:** Republican Hal Slager is back for a rematch with Rep. Chyung and this race is expected to be another nailbiter. Slager's legisla-

tion in 2018 set up the South Shore's West Lake corridor, which is now underway. Chyung won the seat at age 25, proving to be a tireless campaigner. He has pressed the Holcomb administration to release COVID-19 nursing home data. "I'm

glad that the governor has finally decided to release this critical data to the public," Chyung said. "Hoosier families were literally left sitting by the phone hoping for an update on the loved ones they've gone months without seeing. It should have never been left up to the staff, who are under immense pressure just caring for their patients, to make these calls." Expect the federal and state pandemic response to be an issue in this campaign. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD18: Open seat. Winona Lake Councilman Craig Snow v. Chad Harris (D). Retiring State Rep. David Wolkins, who won the seat with 76% in 2018. **2020 Analysis:** Republican Craig Snow will face Democrat Chad Harris, chairman of the Wabash County Democratic Party. Snow won the nomination with the endorsements of Warsaw Mayor Joe Thallemer and Wabash Mayor Scott Long. Thallemer and Long said they need somebody in the Statehouse who will listen to and consider supporting a range of issues important to cities and towns. "I truly feel like he's got the skills and intelligence to really make a difference," Thallemer

said. Harris is a shipping clerk for Automated Egg Producers. "I decided to run for state rep this year because I believe it is important to have a choice," said Harris. Wolkins won the seat with 76% of the vote in 2018. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Snow.

HD19: Rep. Lisa Beck (D) v. Julie Olthoff (R). **2018 Results:** Beck (D) 12,249 (50.5%), Rep. Olthoff (R) 12,998 (49.5%). **2016 Results:** Olthoff (R) 15,218, Rep. Shelli Vandenberg (D) 14,885, Evan Demaree (L) 1,288. **2020 Analysis:** This will be a rematch in a truly competitive district that has changed parties over the



last two cycles. Olthoff (right) is president of VIA Marketing of Merrillville, while Beck is a deputy with the Lake County prosecutor's office. Rising from a trial attorney to the administrative deputy prosecutor, Beck proved to be a strong advocate for victims' rights and a keen administrator of public programs. She introduced a drug initiative community policing program into high-crime neighborhoods in Lake County. She was instrumental in creating the Lake County Sexual Assault Response Team to ensure that victims receive justice. In 2012 she started her own private law practice. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD35: Rep. Melanie Wright (D) v. Yorktown School Trustee Elizabeth Rowray (R). **2018 Results:** Rep. Wright (D) 12,799, Ben Fisher (R) 12,465 (49.3%). **2016 Results:** Rep. Wright (D) 15,630, Bill Walters (R) 14,119. **2020 Analysis:** This will be a battle between educators in what has been a tossup district. "As a state representative, I will focus on directing more education



dollars into our classrooms like I have done while on the Yorktown school board and championing proposals that help bring more high-paying jobs to district 35," Rowray (pictured right) said in a news release. Backed by the Indiana State Teachers Association and others, Rep. Wright

defeated longtime Rep. Jack Lutz, R-Anderson, in the 2014 election. Wright told the Muncie Star Press that she again plans to give priority to advocating for working families, local control for education and partnerships between the state and local government to make communities stronger. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD37: Speaker Todd Huston (R) v. Aimee Rivera Cole (D). **2018 Results:** Rep. Huston (R) 16,913 (54.3%); Cole (D) 14,141 (45.5%). **2016 Results:** Rep. Huston (R) 22,362, Mike Boland (R) 12,581. **2020 Analysis:** This is a rematch in a district that is trending Democratic and falls within the footprint of the competitive 5th CD between Democrat Christina Hale and Republican State Sen. Victoria Spartz. Huston became speaker of the House after being unanimously chosen by the House Republican caucus to succeed Speaker Brian Bosma this past session. Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer has told HPI defending Speaker Huston will be a top priority for the party this cycle. Huston is a former chief of staff to Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett and played a crucial role in the education reforms of 2011 under Gov. Mitch Daniels. Cole is a Fishers attorney has served multiple-year terms of various local school-related boards in Fishers and as a founding member of the Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary in Gary. "I want to make every Hoosier city and town a place where residents can earn a fair living wage and afford safe housing," said Cole. "Democrats won four local council seats in Hamilton County in 2019," said Cole. "District 37 is ready for change. We've seen this manifest in the election results during the last two cycles, and I hear it every day when I meet with residents." In an historical footnote, Speaker J. Roberts Dailey lost HD37 in 1986. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Huston.

HD39: Rep. Jerry Torr (R) v. Ashley Klein (D). **2018 Results:** Rep. Torr (R) 18,861 (57%), Mark Hinton (D) 14,207 (43%). **2016 Results:** Rep. Torr (R) 22,362, David Russ (D) 12,638. **2020 Analysis:** Democrat Ashley Klein easily defeated 2018 nominee Mark Hinton in the Democratic primary. She is a real estate agent with F.C. Tucker in Carmel. "Carmel needs a leader who will advance the values and interests of this welcoming and dynamic community; and a legislator who will bring a fresh voice to issues we all care about: Increasing resources for education, protecting the environment and improving Indiana's aging infrastructure," said Klein. "I am a leader who will fight to represent my constituents first and work across the aisle to strengthen our communities to achieve these mutual goals." Torr has held the seat since 1996 and is national account manager at Near North Title Group in Carmel. During the 2005 legislative session, Rep. Torr authored the Daylight Savings Time (DST) bill that called for Indiana to finally observe DST. In 2005, Rep. Torr also authored the Health Insurance Waiver Act, allowing health insurers to issue policies to individuals who would otherwise be denied coverage due to one or two minor pre-existing conditions.

Horse Race Status: Leans Torr.

HD58: Open seat. Michelle Davis (R) v. Cindy Reinert (D). **2020 Analysis:** In an open seat being vacated by retiring State Rep. Woody Burton, Republican Michelle Davis will take on Democrat Cindy Reinert. Burton defeated Reinert 63-36% in 2018. Davis is the dean of high school students at Central Nine Career Center, before becoming the director of the adult education program, overseeing a 67% funding increase. She won the primary with the endorsement of Rep. Burton. Reinert is a lawyer and businesswoman who said, "HD58 deserves a representative who cares about funding public education, advocating for veterans, commonsense healthcare, and continuing to fight the opioid epidemic." **Horse Race Status:** Safe Davis.

HD70: Rep. Karen Engleman (R) v. Kent Yeager (D). 2018 Results: Rep. Engleman was unopposed. **2020 Analysis:** Yeager, a former agriculture liaison to U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, is a former public policy advisor to the Indiana Farm Bureau. Engleman is assistant majority caucus chair. In 2018, Governing Magazine honored Engleman as a Public Official of the Year for her legislative efforts on sexual harassment prevention. She authored a law requiring at least one hour of annual sexual harassment training for all members of the Indiana General Assembly. Before elected to the legislature in 2016, Engleman served three terms as Harrison County auditor and spent seven years as Crandall clerk-treasurer. This has been a reliable Republican district, but Yeager is a high-profile challenger and this race could be an outlier if a massive Democratic national wave develops. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Engleman.

HD75: Open seat. Warrick County Councilwoman Cindy Ledbetter (R) v. John Hurley (D). **2020 Analysis:** In an open seat being vacated by State Rep. Ron Bacon, who defeated Hurley 61% to 38% in 2018, Councilwoman Ledbetter defeated Warrick County Republican chairman Michael Griffin in the GOP primary. Ledbetter is a nurse practitioner who specializes in mental

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THE NEW NORMAL!

Parents Deserve Real Options For Their Children

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

The issue of "school choice" has always been a controversial one. But now, with the uncertainty of the pandemic and the "new normal" in all facets of our daily lives, it's never been clearer that **students and their parents deserve real options.**

Today, **online learning is seen as a viable option by parents** looking for a safe alternative for their families. While online learning is new to most, many children like mine have been attending established virtual schools with professional, highly trained educators for years and feel it is the right choice for us in the best of times.

Regardless of the preventative measures a school district puts in place, **any number of parents will simply feel uncomfortable sending their children back to a traditional classroom** this year. Many schools don't have the resources or the protocols to ensure safety for all their students and staff in a classroom setting. At the same time, many districts currently can't provide the technology resources, don't have enough teachers trained to teach online, or lack a good system to deal with items like individualized learning plans.

A recent nationwide survey by the National Coalition for Public School Options suggests that **up to 10 million students - or about one in five - may be displaced this fall** because their parents have deep concerns about the safety, quality and potential disruptions of their children's education amid the ongoing health crisis. Already, we're seeing school systems delay the start of their school year throughout Indiana.

Parents' concerns are valid for the beginning of this school year - and well into the future. We don't know if or when the pandemic will end. We don't know what other health or safety challenges may arise with in-classroom teaching. All we know is that **children deserve the opportunity to an uninterrupted education** that prepares them for a life that's successful and fulfilling.

Legislators and policymakers need to offer options both immediately and for the long term. Virtual schools should be empowered for the leadership role we need them to take in the coming school year and in the future. This is the new normal. **We encourage legislators to fully embrace the technology that exists, provide equality in access and funding for all options, and help teachers help students reach their full potential.**

health. She has over 30 years of medical, business, and administrative experience. Her medical experience includes psychiatry, case management, emergency care, intensive care, geriatrics and home health. Hurley is a technology education instructor at South Spencer High School who describes himself as a political moderate. He is affiliated with the Indiana State Teachers Association, the National Education Association, the Indiana Farm Bureau, Leadership Spencer County, and is a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association. "I am in my eighth year as a career and technical educator," Hurley said. "Every day I see the consequences the decisions in Indianapolis have had on students and their families. Essential programs and personnel have disappeared due to funding cuts at schools statewide. Workers have lost protections, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Our rural communities are shrinking. Hoosiers need someone that has experienced the impacts from the legislature first-hand to represent their interests. I will be not only a vote, but also an advocate for public schools, working families, and rural values."

Horse Race Status: Likely Ledbetter.

HD81: Rep. Martin Carbaugh (R) v. Kyle Miller (D). **2018 Results:** Carbaugh (R) 10,504 (53.7%), Kyle Miller (D) 9,069 (46.3%). **2016 Results:** Rep. Carbaugh (R) 13,918, Bob Haddad (D) 8,919. **2020 Analysis:** Miller will have a rematch against Rep. Carbaugh. Miller of Fort Wayne explains, "We have to ensure that families across Fort Wayne are given the tools to succeed. We must make sure that everyone, regardless of ability or economic status, has access to the best that public education has to offer. We absolutely must ensure that child care is affordable for every family. My goal in life and my goal as a representative would be to take care of 'the least of these'. Some measure our success in Indiana by the amount of cash we have in the bank. That's not how I measure success. I measure success in the number of children we are able to send to good quality, public schools. I measure success in Hoosiers' access to quality, affordable health-care. I measure success in the number of people that I am able to help live better lives." Carbaugh has held the seat since 2012 and chairs the House Insurance Committee. His top priority is to create and bring jobs to Indiana by concentrating on reducing regulations in Indiana that hinder workforce progress and supporting a competitive tax code. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Carbaugh.

HD88: Open seat. Chris Jeter (R) v. Pam Dechert (D). **2018 Results:** Rep. Brian Bosma (R) 18,825 (55.5%), Poonam Gill (D) 15,099 (44.5%). **2016 Results:** Rep. Bosma (R) 24,463, Dana Black (D) 13,039. **2020 Analysis:** Former House Speaker Brian Bosma announced he was retiring and will resign the seat next week. Republican Chris Jeter won the Republican primary over Deputy Fishers Mayor Leah McGrath, who had been endorsed by Gov. Eric Holcomb. Jeter is a Fishers lawyer and Iraq war veteran who has been endorsed by Right to Life of Indiana

and has been campaigning on a "pro-life, pro-2nd Amendment and Pro-Trump" agenda. Dechert's professional and volunteer work focuses on helping nonprofits raise money,



advocate, and effectively meet their missions. She's spent the majority of her career at Blackbaud, the leading cloud software company powering social good. "I decided to run for office because the issues I heard from my friends, neighbors and in the community weren't being addressed at the Statehouse," Dechert said. "Now more than ever, our state needs to work for everyone. I will be that voice, that leader, speaking for everyday people and families making their home in our state. As a wife, mother, professional and community leader; I will lead and fight for our Home, our Indiana." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Jeter.

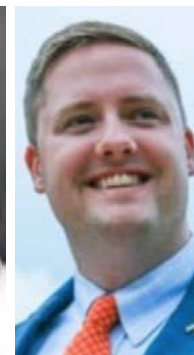
HD89: Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer (R) v. Mitch Gore (D).

2018 Results: Rep. Kirchhofer (R) 10,455 (50.5%),

John Barnes (D) 10,237 (49.5%).

2016 Results: Rep. Kirchhofer (R) 13,678, Rachel Burke (D) 11,356.

2020 Analysis: Kirchhofer is Marion County Republican chair running in a district that is trending Democrat. Gore



is a captain with the Marion County sheriff. He says he focuses on economic development, expanding community services, and bringing slumlords to justice. He says he "fights every day to keep our neighborhoods safe and to meaningfully reform our broken criminal justice system." Kirchhofer, who chairs the House Public Health Committee, is risk manager for Franciscan St. Francis Health. She has served two terms as chair of the Perry Township Government Board and vice president of the Beech Grove Redevelopment Commission. She has also served on the Indiana Paralegal Association board of directors and the Marion County Citizens Police Complaint Board. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

In next week's Howey Politics Indiana, we'll provide our first Indiana Senate autumn forecast. ❖

5th CD becomes the marquee Indiana race; 2nd & 9th outliers

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Despite the potential for a Democratic wave election in November, only one Hoosier Democrat in a competitive district holds a cash-on-hand lead on their Federal Election Commission mid-year report.

Christina Hale, running in the open 5th CD, posted \$726,339 cash on hand in her race against Republican State Sen. Victoria Spartz. It comes as the Cook Political

Report joined Sabato's Crystal Ball in moving that race to "Tossup," apparently based on an internal Hale poll showing the Indianapolis Democrat with a 51-46% lead. That same poll showed Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden with a 53-43% lead over President Trump, who carried the district by 12% in 2016. The Hale campaign did not release top lines or cross tabulations, including party sampling size.

Howey Politics Indiana lists the race as "Leans Spartz," in what has been a Republican stronghold, awaiting independent polling. A CBS Battleground Tracking Poll this last week had President Trump leading Joe Biden 54-44% in Indiana, and an internal Indiana Republican Party poll earlier this spring had Gov. Eric Holcomb with a 40% lead over Democratic nominee Woody Myers, with Holcomb having an \$8 million to \$72,300 cash-on-hand advantage.

For Hale to prevail, she will need a good percentage of ticket splitters. Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer told HPI in June, "I think it is still clearly a Republican district. The governor polls very strong in the 5th." But, he adds, "It's going to be the area of focus. We have strategized on that, as well as some of the legislative races in the district.

Hale has out-raised Spartz \$1,469,371 to \$1,289,091 for the cycle. Spartz has loaned her campaign \$900,000, and she spent \$1,119,100 to win a crowded Republican primary on June 2. She had \$169,991 cash on hand

as of June 30.

The 5th CD fits the emerging profile of a competitive suburban district and is expected to be the only Indiana congressional race to have both parties actively involved. If Hale wins in November, it would be the only CD to change parties under the current maps from the 2011 reapportionment. Having no seats change parties with a particular set of maps has never happened in Indiana's two centuries of statehood.

The Cook Partisan Index rates the 5th CD +9 Republican, with Trump carrying it 52.6% to 40.9% in 2016, and Romney carrying it 57.5% to 40.7% in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Spartz.

HPI is keeping an eye on the 2nd and 9th CD as potential outliers if a Democratic wave develops. Both are listed as "Likely Republican."

In the 2nd CD, Republican U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski sits on a \$1,109,878 war chest after posting \$1,725,188 for the cycle. Democratic nominee Pat Hackett has posted \$487,260 for the cycle, \$319,235 spent and had \$169,223 cash on hand after winning a contested primary. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 2nd CD as +13 Republican. Donald Trump carried the district over Hillary Clinton 58.9% to 35.9% in 2016; Mitt Romney carried it over President Obama 56.1% to 42.1% in 2012. The 2nd had a competitive history prior to the 2011 maps. After Democrat Tim Roemer upset U.S. Rep. John Hiler in 1990, it stayed in Democratic hands until he retired and Republican Chris Chocola defeated former congresswoman Jill Long Thompson in 2002 and Joe Donnelly in 2004, before Donnelly won the rematch during the 2006 Democratic wave year. In the face of redistricting in 2011, Donnelly

opted for the U.S. Senate race, and Rep. Walorski won the seat on her second try after losing to Donnelly in 2010. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Likely Walorski.

In the 9th CD, Republican U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth has posted \$876,439 for the cycle, spent \$297,669 and had \$586,096 cash on hand. Democrat Andy Ruff has posted \$48,822 for the cycle, spent \$24,412 and had \$24,410 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 9th +13 Republican. Trump won it 60.8% to 34% for Clinton in 2016; Romney carried it 57.1% to 40.7% in 2012. Like the 2nd CD, the 9th changed parties frequently prior to the 2011 maps, with Republican Mike Sodrell holding it for a term before Democrat Baron Hill reclaimed it during the 2006 wave election. In 2010, Republican Todd Young reclaimed it for the GOP in the Tea Party wave



V25, N41 **HPI** 200 **HOWEY** POLITICS INDIANA Thursday, July 9, 2020

Hale, Spartz play to 'local' politics

Two legislators squaring off in Indiana's new battleground, 5th CD

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana's once reliably red 5th CD has been thrust into the 2020 limelight, ostensibly as an evolving suburban district in an election shaping up as a referendum on President Trump.

But in talking with Democrat nominee Christina Hale and Republican State Sen. Victoria Spartz this week, both insist they will be emphasizing local issues. "Every-

body, certainly in a presidential year, likes to talk about the top of the ticket," Hale said in a Zoom interview with HPI Wednesday afternoon. "It's generally the most exciting race. But our campaign is local. I'm talking to people here, about the issues here, the problems we face



Republican 5th CD nominee Victoria Spartz (left) and Democrat Christina Hale are facing off in the newly competitive 5th CD.

Continued on page 3

Safely reopening schools

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Everyone – from Gov. Eric Holcomb to parents, teachers, students and employers – yearns to reopen schools and universities within the next three to four weeks. But parents are consumers, and most want schools to reopen when it is safe to do so.

On Tuesday, President Trump injected politics into the equation that is being debated by thousands of school trustees, administrators, state and local health officials. "We hope that most schools are going to be open," Trump said at the White House. "We don't want people to make political statements or do it for political reasons. They think it's going to be good for them politically so they keep the schools closed. No way,



"I'd like to go, but I'm not booking my airline flight yet."

- Gov. Eric Holcomb, asked Wednesday if he was going to the Republican National Convention in Jacksonvill in August. He said he wasn't going to take his eye off the pandemic ball.



election. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Hollingsworth.
Here is how the other six Indiana CDs shape up:

1st CD: Democrat nominee Frank J. Mrvan has raised \$300,306, spent \$271,612 in his primary defeat over Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and several other candidates, and had \$28,694 cash on hand. His Republican rival, perennial candidate Mark Leyva, has not filed a FEC report. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 1st +8 Democrat, with Clinton carrying it 53.8% to 41.3% in 2016; while Obama won it 61.2% to 37.4% over Romney in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Mrvan.

3rd CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Jim Banks has raised \$777,556 for the cycle, spent \$525,350 and had \$263,715 cash on hand. Democratic nominee Chip Coldiron has raised \$9,580, spent \$5,270 and had \$4,393 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates it +18 Republican. Trump carried it over Clinton 64.7% to 29.9% in 2016; Romney had 62.5% to 35.7% for Obama in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Banks.

4th CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Jim Baird has raised \$244,672 for the cycle, spent \$142,310 with \$212,163 cash on hand. Democrat Joe Mackey has raised \$18,672, spent \$18,450 and had \$439 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 4th CD +17 Republican. Trump carried it over Clinton 63.9% to 30% in 2016 while Romney carried it over Obama 60.8% to 36.8% in 2012. **Horse**

Race Status: Safe Baird.

6th CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Greg Pence has raised \$1,972,892 for the cycle, spent \$1,838,148 and had \$335,269. Democratic nominee Jeannine Lee Lake has not made an FEC filing since December 2019, when she reported \$722 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates it +18 Republican. Trump carried it 67.5% to 27.3% for Clinton in 2016; Romney carried it 60.4% to 37.3% over Obama in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Pence.



U.S. Reps. Greg Pence, Jim Baird and Larry Bucshon at Gov. Holcomb's 2019 reelection kickoff in Knightstown. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

7th CD: Democratic U.S. Rep. Andre Carson has raised \$713,918 for the cycle, spent \$622,241 and had \$942,174 cash on hand. Republican Susan Marie Smith posted \$32,367 for the cycle, spent \$15,570 with \$16,796 cash on hand. This is the only other Democratic district in Indiana, with the Cook Partisan Index rating it +11 Democrat. Clinton carried it 58.2% to 35.7% for Trump in 2016; Obama carried it 62.9% to 35.4% for Romney in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Carson.

8th CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon reported \$709,310 raised for the cycle, \$683,660 spent and had \$259,881 cash on hand. Democratic nominee Thomasina Marsili has posted \$35,765 for the cycle, spent \$25,426 and had \$10,339 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates the not-so-bloody 8th CD +15 Republican. Trump carried it 64.4% to 30.% for Clinton four years ago; Romney carried it 58.4% to 39.6% for Obama in 2012. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Safe Bucshon. ❖



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Holcomb and Trump come around on masks

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — A day after Gov. Eric Holcomb had to tamp down rumors relegating COVID-19 as a “hoax” and conspiracy, and President Trump finally asked “everybody” to wear a face mask, Indiana became the third state headed by a Republican governor to mandate the now controversial facial coverings.

“We’ve arrived at this juncture because over the past several weeks, a few things have happened,” Holcomb said at his weekly press conference. “There has been a rise of COVID positivity across the state from a low of just 3.6% a month ago to where we find ourselves today with a seven-day average rate of just over 7%. The last couple of days it rose to 8%.

“As a lagging indicator, our overall hospitalization has increased from about 600 a day at the end of June to about 800, where we are now,” Holcomb continued. “Some counties in the past that had never been a blip on the radar screen for positive tests are reporting regular double digits of positive cases now, counties like Clark and Dubois, Kosciusko, Posey. And, lastly, if you tuned into national news, our surrounding states are all experiencing increases in positive cases as well. We have, as Hoosiers, worked very hard to get to where we are today. Businesses are open and operating at various levels of capacity. We’re eating in restaurants and working in all sorts of facilities both large and small, and we want to keep it that way. We want businesses to stay open. We don’t want to dial it back or put it in reverse or, as some are, shutting down again.

“Face coverings can and will help us blunt this increase,” Holcomb said.

On Sunday, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear sounded similar alarms. Ohio is “headed in the wrong direction” toward Florida’s status as a U.S. epicenter of the pandemic. “We are at the point where we could become Florida” DeWine said on NBC’s “Meet The Press.” “Where you look at our numbers today versus where Florida was a month ago, we have very similar numbers.” Beshear called Sunday’s 979 cases in Kentucky “a wake-up call.”

Indiana’s intensive care unit bed availability had declined to 37% on Tuesday, compared to 41% on June 1.

On Tuesday, Democratic gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers said at a virtual press conference, “I am very afraid, given the numbers that I’m seeing today, that Indiana is going to move the direction of Arizona, California, Florida and Texas.”

That same day, Holcomb responded to the COVID conspiracy rumors on Facebook, which consigned the

pandemic as a “hoax” in the parlance of President Trump in March and April, as well as speculation that masks deprive people of oxygen and raise carbon dioxide levels (they don’t, as any surgeon will tell you).

Holcomb delivered a harsh reality check for Hoosiers. “The earth is not flat, we did land on the moon, and this pandemic is real,” he said. “It is not just affecting our economy, it is not just putting lives on hold, it is taking lives. We just have to accept reality, and the sooner everyone does, the sooner we’ll get through this.”

On Wednesday he called his mask mandate that will officially begin next Monday “time sensitive” because “our schools are going back. It might be one of the most important reasons when you really stop to think about it for all of us to wear face coverings. We’re asking our kids and their teachers to mask up and our kids should not be getting mixed messages throughout the day. When they leave the school grounds, they need to see everyone is doing what they’re doing; that best practices are best for all by slowing or stopping the unknowing transmission of COVID-19.”

Indiana University’s Fairbanks School of Public Health’s latest study put the state’s infection rate at 2.8% and its asymptomatic carriers and spreaders at 40% of those tested. Some 2,600 Hoosiers have died since March.

Trump, and to a lesser extent Vice President Mike Pence, have been obstinant to less-than-emphatic examples of mask wearing. Both have appeared at indoor political rallies this summer where social distancing and masks were ignored.

At Tuesday’s revival of his coronavirus press briefings after a three-month hiatus during which infections rates exploded and swamped hospitals across early opening Sunbelt states, Trump finally said, “We’re asking everybody that when you are not able to socially distance, wear a mask. Get a mask. Whether you like the mask or not, they have an impact. They’ll have an effect, and we need everything we can get.”

The U.S. has seen more than 70,000 new documented infections a day this past week, compared to less than 200 a day for former hotspot Italy. The difference was that Italy endured a near total shutdown for three months, while Trump and Pence goaded Republican governors to reopen their states while ignoring CDC metrics.

It will go down in history as a profound missed opportunity and has cost them dearly as most national and swing state polls show them trailing Joe Biden by significant margins in the presidential race.

Holcomb had plotted his own course. Whether his mask mandate comes in time will be a future chapter. Asked if he wished he had done this two weeks ago, Holcomb responded, “It’s not that the voices got louder; it was the numbers got bolder,” Holcomb said. “We’re courageous enough to do the right thing. I don’t want us to be in that situation four weeks from now.” ❖



What happens to GOP after 2020 election?

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – At this point in the 2020 United States presidential election, it is beginning to look like the mountains of abuse heaped on President Trump by the national media, the leftist social media, every anarchist group known to mankind and even a few Republicans just might



be successful in defeating him and sending a third-rate Democrat to the White House.

If I were the type of person to sit around wearing a tinfoil hat and seeing multiple gunmen on the grassy knoll, I might just be a little cynical about the timing of a pandemic hitting when the United States' economy was the best that it had been in history, with record low unemployment across all dem-

ographics, increasing personal incomes and unheard of stock market valuations. Further, the attention paid to the coronavirus seemed to grow as the Democrat trumped-up impeachment fell apart in a dismal partisan failure.

No, I'm not going to be one of those people who see conspiracies wherever you turn. I merely want to ask the question, win or lose in November, where does the Republican Party go from here?

Should Donald Trump defy the current odds and big poll deficits and win a second term, what would the future hold for the Republican Party?

First, I believe that no one would expect a Trump victory to be greeted with a massive hands-across-America moment with Nancy Pelosi and Mitch McConnell leading a chorus of "Kumbaya." No, we would just see the launching of Trump Destruction 2.0.

The Trump enemies list would expand, the press would turn even more vitriolic, if that is even possible, civil insurrection encouraged by Democrat and Marxist operatives would grow and we would see the commencement of the second impeachment of Donald Trump, this time for something hidden in his tax returns.

Unfortunately, Trump's hold on the Republican Party would quickly begin to unravel as 2024 potential candidates scrambled to break out of the pack. It would be nice to think that Mike Pence's able and loyal service to

Donald Trump would be rewarded with an unobstructed path to the Republican nomination, but I believe that this thought is pure folly.

Already we are beginning to see some of the potential 2024 candidates poke their fingers into the air, checking for the direction of the wind. Other than confirming conservative judges to the courts, it may be very difficult for Trump to herd the Republican cats in any direction. The Romneys, Snows, Murkowskis and their like would be less likely than ever to support the president's agenda in a second term.

The prospect of a presidential defeat in November begs even more troubling questions for the future of the Republican Party. The question that bothers me the most is exactly what does the Republican Party stand for?

I'm not talking about the articles of the Republican platform. We all know that that document is for public consumption and is rarely adhered to by Republican elected officials. I once thought that I knew what it meant to be a Republican. I'm no longer as sure as I once was.

Unfortunately, it is beginning to look to me like the national Republican Party is made up of hundreds of self-centered opportunists who are far more interested in building their own careers than in building a successful and vibrant political party. The hard-working men and women who do the work of building the Republican Party frankly deserve more from those we elect than what we are getting.

A prime example of a perceived desertion of Republican values was the recent highly public proposal by Sen. Mike Braun to roll back the qualified immunity status enjoyed by our brave law enforcement officers. Sen.



Braun's proposal might have made him the darling of the "Morning Joe" crowd but it certainly left most grass roots Republicans scratching our heads and asking, "Wasn't this the guy who told us he was a conservative?"

Republicans also used to talk a good game when it came to our ugly national debt and staggering and unsustainable budget deficits, but now we go along with just about every expenditure, bailout and government largess

with little consideration to the long-term implications. For this deficit spending, I give President Trump full responsibility. He sets the tone for spending and deficits and in this area he has done us a disservice.

If Republicans lose in November, we will have a very short period of time to come to Jesus and determine what our party is going to be going forward. We will need to make some very difficult decisions about our future. It will be time to dust off the report compiled by Reince Priebus after the 2012 election and take it seriously.

The Republican Party needs to expand to embrace increased participation by people of color, people of non-Christian beliefs and people who many practice alternative lifestyles. We should not be the American version of the Taliban. We should focus on the concerns and challenges faced by the majority of Americans and deliver solutions.

We need to cater to Joe Sixpack and not Goldman Sachs. What is good for Joe Sixpack should be good for everyone.

On a final note, there is absolutely no reason that we cannot maintain our principles and still perform in a manner that is loving and respectful of all Americans. We can disagree but there is no reason that we have to be disagreeable.

Win or lose in 2020, if we have a thoughtful, civil and reasonable platform, we can prosper as Republicans. It is going to take hard work to restore our party's focus and direction. ❖

Dunn is the former chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

Income differences across Indiana

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Recently, we examined the median incomes of all households in the nation and Indiana, with a special focus on Black households. Now, let's look more broadly within our state.

The Census Bureau provides median household income data for 2018. The racial or ethnic characteristic of a household is determined on the basis of the person responding for the household. Therefore, if a Black person answers, the household is considered Black despite the partner of that person being Asian. It's imperfect but has both statistical and practical validity.



The median, you will recall, is where half of all households are above and half below the reported number. The 2018 median income for all households in the state was \$55,746, ranging from \$94,644 (Hamilton County) to a low of \$42,217 (Blackford).

Black households (9.3% of all Indiana households) reported a median income statewide of \$32,290, going from \$83,588 (Putnam) to a low of \$20,271 (Miami). Counties with small minority populations may give rise to results with large margins of error.

Asian households (1.9% of Indiana households) recorded a statewide median of \$61,950, led by \$207,965 (Warrick) and trailed by \$15,036 (Monroe). We can speculate on reasons for these extremes; Warrick County may serve as the suburban home for Evansville and Gibson County workers, a concentration of professionals and

managers. Monroe County's status may reflect the Asian portion of the IU student body.

Neither the term Hispanic nor Latino refers to a race or an ethnicity, given the wide varieties of origin, languages, and cultures of these residents. It is more of a geographic identifier, similar to Eastern or Western European.

The median income of Hispanic/Latino households (5.0% of the Indiana's total) was \$38,292, with a high of \$94,911 (Jennings) and a low of \$ 24,222 (Knox). For the white not Hispanic/Latino households (82.3% of the total) the median was \$59,587, with Hamilton (\$95,981) and Blackford (\$42,650) in first and last positions.

Before anyone goes too far in giving sociological explanations for these results, remember factors other than race and ethnicity also determine income. Households with multiple earners are likely to register more income than those with only a single labor force participant. If Mom, Dad, and a grown child are all working full-time at \$15 per hour, the annual household total would be \$90,000 (\$15 x 3 x 2000 hrs.).

The types of businesses offering employment and the willingness/ability to commute affect the income received. Large, unionized employers will draw workers from other places, spreading higher wages over multiple counties. By contrast, counties with employers serving only the local population typically show lower income figures.

As a salesman says on the train coming into River City at the opening of "The Music Man," "You gotta know the territory." ❖

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

A COVID constitutional attack in Michiana

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Our constitutional freedoms are under attack. We must unmask the perpetrators. And fight back.

Those plotters seek to undermine our right to free speech. They cite what some old judge once wrote about limiting what we can say: That you can't shout "fire!" in a crowded theater. You can. The 1st Amendment gives you the absolute right. Exercise it when the Morris is open again for plays.



An example of trampling on individual freedoms is the investigation right here in Michiana of a patriotic celebration by a few dozen exemplary young people at Diamond Lake on the 4th of July. Fake news

television and newspapers tell you there were many hundreds of those people packed tightly together at a sandbar, flaunting their contempt for concerns about that virus thing. You know, the alleged threat the discredited Dr. Fauci blabbers about to scare us. Just another fake news hoax.

Doctored visuals portrayed those young people as irresponsible, bumping, bouncing and breathing heavily in what one silly critic called "a COVID-19 petri dish." You'd think Diamond is a COVID's best friend.

Doctored visuals made it appear that nobody was wearing a mask. Many were, because of deep concern for parents, grandparents and classmates when some of them return to college. As they scatter to spread their freedoms, they will help to determine whether there is teaching in classrooms and college football this fall. They are important. But fake news even pretended that Diamond Lake residents didn't want them being patriotic at their pretty lake.

Duplicate imaging made it appear that the area was crowded, packed. Fake bikini images made it appear to be a beach party. Diamond in the buff. It was a patriotic event. With patriotic music. Nobody took a knee during the National Anthem.

As one self-identified organizer told The Tribune, the party was constitutionally protected by the U.S., Indiana and Michigan constitutions. He's right, even if he couldn't tell the snoopy reporter the exact constitutional wording. "It's in there," the young constitutional expert declared. "I don't know specifically, but playing music in a public space is constitutionally protected activity."

True, it's part of the 2nd Amendment to

the U.S. Constitution: "The right of the people to play music in a public space shall not be infringed." So, play music as loud as you want at 3 a.m. in a public street outside a hospital, nursing home or residence of any person with whom you disagree. It's constitutionally protected.

The Indiana Constitution also applies, even though Diamond Lake is in Michigan. Indiana's Article 7, Section 18, says: "There shall be no criminal prosecution in Cass County, Michigan, for any playing of music or other activities at a July 4 celebration."

The Michigan Constitution declares that Indiana will have that power. Neighborliness.

It's remarkable that the event organizer knew of this rare constitutional provision, one state giving away jurisdiction in a county to a neighboring state. He could someday be appointed to the Supreme Court in both states.

Don't let anyone infringe on your constitutional rights. They are absolute. Shout "Fire!" in a crowded theater if you want. You have freedom of speech. If some police officer tells you to drop your gun, don't do it. Cite your 2nd Amendment rights and point the gun at the cop. You have a right to aim anywhere you want.


Don't let any mayor, governor or health officer tell you what to do. You have a constitutional right to go in any store, restaurant or nursing home without a mask, even if you have a 103 temperature. You don't have to wear shoes, shirt or pants.

Be like the proud July 4 celebrants at Diamond Lake. Flaunt your contempt for those weeping about the welfare of others. It's all about you. About your rights. Your absolute freedom. ❖

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?

It's time to learn about our system from inside

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – I've spent a long time in politics, and over those years one thing has remained constant: There are a lot more Americans who criticize government than there are who serve and do something about it.



I'll admit, there have been times when I've felt a bit resentful. It's hard to enter the fray, be expected to listen patiently to criticism from all comers, and then look around to find that many of them are nowhere to be found when it comes to the hard work of improving our communities and our system.

But far more than annoyance, what I've felt is amazement at the immense but often un-grasped opportunity our system offers. This is especially acute these days, as millions of Americans take to the streets and to social media with passionate intensity, driven by deeply held beliefs or newfound conviction and a sense that it's time to weigh in. I agree — but then, I think it's always time to weigh in. That's what our system asks of us as citizens. And in particular, I'd argue that it asks us to do it from the inside, not just from the outside.

We desperately need citizens to enter the public arena, people who are not afraid to plunge in and try to improve our democratic institutions. To be sure, critics and ordinary engaged citizens have an important role to play in shaping the public discourse. But if at some point in their lives they and others do not also see a duty to serve, our nation is in trouble.

I know the arguments you can find against it. You have to compromise your values. It's thankless. The system turns you into a cog. You make yourself a target of scrutiny. You can't actually accomplish anything.

To all of this, I say: So? There is no question that our governing institutions need improving. But it's not going to happen unless people with the power to change them roll up their sleeves and set about doing so. And those people are the ones inside those institutions, who've learned how they work and who understand that actual change happens by dint of legislation, administration, and

the nitty-gritty details of reform.

There are plenty of other things you can do, too: Vote, spend time learning the issues you care about, make informed judgments about your elected representatives, get involved in organizations that advocate for the causes you value. But as writer Andy Smarick put it recently in *The Bulwark*, "[G]overning is formative. Knocking on doors as a candidate is not just about winning votes. Sitting through a long bill hearing is not just about following the legislative process. Taking part in public debates is not just about self-expression. Making a tough governing decision is not just about resolving a policy matter. Through these activities, the public servant listens to fellow citizens, learns of competing priorities, and witnesses principles in conflict."

In our democracy, these and other skills are vital — not just for public officials, but for any citizen who wants to be involved in the community. Listening to our peers, understanding their hopes, appreciating the differences among them, grasping why accommodation and compromise are crucial to resolving those differences, and learning how to accomplish them are part and parcel of making a representative democracy work. People who do this feel in their bones how hard it is to govern in a large, diverse republic, and why we depend on large numbers of ordinary people to step forward, find their niche, and participate on town boards, in state legislatures, and in Congress.

So, as I look about at the remarkable levels of public engagement in this intense political year, I find myself hoping that more comes out of it than simple public pressure. I hope that people who'd never considered it before decide it's time to step forward, serve in public office, and help their fellow citizens make this a better country. ❖

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.



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The Supreme Court ruling on native lands

By **KELLY HAWES**

ANDERSON — When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the eastern half of Oklahoma could be considered Native American territory, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz voiced alarm. “Neil Gorsuch & the four liberal Justices just gave away half of Oklahoma, literally,” he tweeted. “Manhattan is next.”



That’s absurd. What the court did was to force state and federal officials to finally deal with a promise they made to Native Americans almost 200 years ago. The case before the court involved Jimcy McGirt, an enrolled member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma who was convicted in 1997 of sex crimes against a child on Native American land.

McGirt argued the state lacked jurisdiction in the case and he should be retried in federal court.

The Supreme Court agreed. “Today we are asked whether the land these treaties promised remains an Indian reservation for purposes of federal criminal law,” Justice Neal Gorsuch wrote in the majority opinion. “Because Congress has not said otherwise, we hold the government to its word.”

That’s a statement Native Americans all over the country had been waiting to hear for a long time. Jason Salsman, press secretary for the Muscogee nation, described his reaction in an interview with the New York Times. “It made me cry,” he said. “It was a powerful moment, one I wasn’t ready for. It brought out emotions you didn’t know would be there. It was just a promise kept. We know the history of promises that have been broken. I still get chills thinking about it.”

For those unfamiliar with the history, members of the Muscogee, Cherokee, Seminole, Chickasaw and Choctaw nations were forced from their traditional lands in the Southeastern United States under the Indian Removal Act of 1830. When all was said and done, some 60,000 Native Americans had marched westward along what became known as the “Trail of Tears.” Thousands died.

Surviving members of the Muscogee nation settled on land they had been promised in Oklahoma, and that is what the Supreme Court recognized in its ruling.

“We do not pretend to foretell the future,” Gorsuch wrote, “and we proceed well aware of the potential for cost and conflict around jurisdictional boundaries, especially ones that have gone unappreciated for so long. But it is unclear why pessimism should rule the day. With the passage of time, Oklahoma and its Tribes have proven they can work successfully together as partners.”

The federal government had promised a reservation “in perpetuity,” Gorsuch wrote, and even though Congress might have diminished that sanctuary over time, it had never actually withdrawn the promise.

Salsman said the Muscogee nation wasn’t surprised by reactions like the one shared by Cruz. “There were a lot of scare tactics: We’re going to turn the prisoners loose, give us your tax dollars, your land is our land,” he said. “Nothing could be further from the truth.”

Within hours of the ruling, the state and all five Native American nations issued a joint statement. “The nations and the state are committed to implementing a framework of shared jurisdiction that will preserve sovereign interests and rights to self-government while affirming jurisdictional understandings, procedures, laws and regulations that support public safety, our economy and private property rights,” the statement read. “We will continue our work, confident that we can accomplish more together than any of us could alone.”

The ruling will have an impact not just in Oklahoma but in other parts of the country. At least 10 states have similar jurisdictional disputes. The decision in this case won’t resolve those fights, but it’s a good first step, a step that was long overdue. ❖

Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com. Find him on Twitter @Kelly_Hawes.

Alcohol manufacturers struggling

WTHR-TV

INDIANAPOLIS — It turns out we’re drinking more at home during the pandemic. A recent study found that 1 in 5 Hoosiers said they’re drinking more than they were before life changed in March. The freedom of working from home and the lack of being able to safely gather for an after work drink with coworkers may be part of the reason why beer, wine and alcohol sales are up. While retailers are getting a boost, that’s not necessarily the case for manufacturers. Wine makers like Easley Winery in downtown Indianapolis said the shutdown has been a struggle on the bottom line. “Just like everybody else, we had to pivot very quickly,” said owner Meredith Easley. “The last day we were open in downtown Indianapolis was March 17, which was Saint Patrick’s Day, so it was a really weird, surreal occurrence.” Other Indiana wineries reported similar struggles. The Brown County Winery said customer sales jumped 50 percent during the pandemic and retailer sales rose 5 percent, but the bottom line is still tugged down by the absence of their tasting room. Oliver Winery in Bloomington said they usually see thousands of people in its tasting room on summer weekends, but COVID-19 has also taken a toll. ❖

Time is now to address student voting this fall

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — The United States' 20 million college students are a significant voting bloc and have the capability of deciding elections.

For that to occur, first they must register to vote.

The best way to do this, and then to get these college students to actually vote, requires direct outreach. Traditionally, that occurs on-campus -- something that COVID-19 has made particularly challenging this year.

"Dorm Storms" of registering student voters in their residence halls will not be happening.

For this year's coronavirus campaign, new ways must be undertaken to find, register and educate these voters, and then to make sure their vote counts when they do so.

Given a recent survey finding that Joe Biden holds a 34-point advantage over Donald Trump with 18-29 year olds, if the 2020 presidential race is just as close in key states as the one in 2016, fewer students voting could keep the former vice president from winning a race he otherwise would have.

In 2016, over 50 colleges had more students than the presidential margins in their states.

Certainly, fewer college students voting could create the potential for dozens of down-ballot races to be influenced.

Not enough resources are being allocated to find ways to ensure students are registered to vote, and follow through on voting. There is a danger that we might not even reach the previous 48% threshold of college students who voted in 2016.

The impact of a lack of students voting this November does not end in 2020.

Many college students register and vote during the one presidential election while they are at school. As voting in college leads to the habit of a person continuing to vote onwards, this will impact our civics for years to come.

Much needs to be done, and the window closes soon.

Expat voting provides a roadmap

One group of U.S. citizens always faces the challenges that this year's college students face when it comes to registering and voting -- Americans living abroad.

Expatriates always have to register remotely, get an absentee ballot, and ensure the ballot is received by Election Day.

This year, college students face the same challenges in needing to learn how to register remotely and then

properly vote away from (or at) their family residence.

How do they register? In which state do they even register? Then, how do they vote? What do they need to do to request an absentee ballot, receive it, and return it so it arrives before the deadline?

Many 18-22 year olds, in college or not, have no clue.

When the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University asked youth if they could register to vote online in their state, one-third said they did not know, and one-quarter who said yes were incorrect. In addition, only 24% reported having voted by mail before.

A 2018 Fairfax County (Virginia) focus group found many college students who went so far as to take the initiative to register and get an absentee ballot simply failed to send it back

because they did not know where to get stamps.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program provides voting assistance for U.S. service members, their families and overseas citizens.

Vote From Abroad, a non-partisan platform, helps U.S. expatriates by providing the information necessary for filling out federal forms related to voting overseas.

In fact, many U.S. citizens living overseas can even go to the U.S. embassies and consulates in their country and use the diplomatic pouch for free mail service from embassies and consulates to a U.S. sorting facility.

In their own way, colleges and universities, political parties, and NGOs such as the non-partisan Campus Election Engagement Project need to help college students do just the same -- and they need to be adequately funded to do so.

Obstacles exist for students

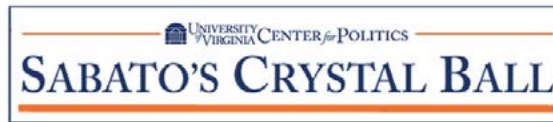
The United States Postal Service has been a hallmark of American society. Now we face a pair of unpredictable challenges to the postal system: a pandemic that brings operational and financial challenges coupled with presidential threats to the wellbeing of the Postal Service.

The understandable delays in the delivery of ballots due to COVID-19 could trigger a higher than normal incidence of mishandled or misplaced ballots. Voters will need to send in their ballots earlier this year than usual. They need to know that.

An NPR analysis found at least 65,000 absentee or mail-in ballots have been rejected this primary season because they arrived past the deadline.

Imagine how many ballots will arrive late when all 50 states and the District of Columbia vote on the same day, especially with some college students needing to mail their ballots from out of state.

Even when these ballots are received in a timely manner, mail-in ballots can be thrown out by a challenge from election officials with relative ease if they are marked incorrectly or if the signatures do not match -- tactics used



for a century in parts of the country to keep Blacks from voting in the face of federal civil rights laws guaranteeing the vote.

Local election officials can be biased against college students as well. As former Ohio Gov. Dick Celeste (D) explains, these administrators sometimes sought to put obstacles in the students' way when it came to registering and then voting. The attitude was, "We don't want kids who don't pay taxes and won't stay here once they graduate voting in our town."

The same discrimination can occur with mail-in ballots that look like they are from a young person -- especially one voting out of state. These ballots could be disproportionately discarded at higher rates for perceived discrepancies in their signatures without proper oversight.

The parties need to be prepared to deal with these specific challenges come Election Day.

And it's not just the presidency that could be impacted.

The Crystal Ball downgraded the reelection chances of Rep. Peter DeFazio, a 17-term Democratic congressman in Oregon whose district contains Eugene (University of Oregon) and Corvallis (Oregon State University), because if those students don't vote, his chances for reelection drop.

With fewer student voters, swing districts across the country might end up being red instead of blue.

The time is now

The integrity of the American electoral process requires ensuring the newest generation of voters register and then vote -- and have their votes counted.

These vitally important voters have already been tested more than they could have possibly bargained for in the pandemic era and their inability to vote, or a mishandling of their votes when they do so, could easily alienate them for years to come.

We already know most schools will not allow the same type of interaction as in the past in terms of registering students to vote, if they are open at all.

What are we waiting for?

Joe Biden recently said that thinking about access to voting keeps him up most at night: "Making sure everyone who wants to vote can vote. Making sure that the vote is counted, making sure we're all trusting in the integrity of the results of the election."

We need a focused effort to tackle these challenges. That starts with a comprehensive plan to identify and address each and every potential pressure point in our system. And it must also include a focused educational effort to fully inform students, election administrators, and the general population to support those undertaking these initiatives.

And it needs to start now.

The Senate math, 2020-2024

As the nation gears up for a highly competitive

cluster of Senate elections in 2020 — with handicappers rating as many as 10 seats competitive between the parties this fall — it may seem a little crazy to start focusing on the Senate races that will be on the ballot in 2022. But doing so can provide some valuable context about the longer-term partisan balance in the Senate.

As outlined by the Constitution, the Senate is divided into three roughly equal groups, with one of those groups facing elections each cycle. Class II, as it's known, faces the voters in 2020. Class III faces voters in 2022. And Class I, having just been elected in 2018, will not face the voters again until 2024. (Special elections to fill vacancies can temporarily add to the elections for a given class.)

In recent decades, the partisan leanings of these groups have tended to diverge, putting one party or the other on the defensive each election cycle.

Class I has become the Democrats' most problematic class.

For one thing, it currently includes 23 Democratic incumbents (if you count Independent Sens. Angus King of Maine and Bernie Sanders of Vermont), compared to just 10 for the Republicans. And even after losing seats in Florida, Indiana, Missouri, and North Dakota in the 2018 elections, the Democrats will still need to defend seats in 2024 in such solidly red states as Montana and West Virginia, as well as seats in the battleground states of Arizona, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

Indeed, were it not for the pro-Democratic election environments of 2006, 2012, and 2018, the Democrats probably would have lost several of these seats to the GOP already, undercutting any hope of securing majority status in the near future.

The better news for the Democrats is that Class II, which is facing elections this year, is much more favorable to their party.

The Democrats' only incumbent worries for 2020 are in Alabama, a solidly red state where Doug Jones won a fluky special election in 2017, and possibly Michigan, where the low-profile Gary Peters faces the voters for the first time as an incumbent.

By contrast, the GOP must defend the seats held by Cory Gardner in increasingly blue Colorado, plus seats in presidential battlegrounds such as those held by Susan Collins of Maine, Thom Tillis of North Carolina, Joni Ernst of Iowa, and David Perdue of Georgia. Additionally, appointed Sens. Kelly Loeffler of Georgia and Martha McSally of Arizona are defending their seats in special elections (and their seats will be back on the ballot in 2022).

So if Class I leans Republican and Class II leans Democratic — at least as far as the politics of today go — then what about Class III, the senators scheduled to face the voters in 2022?

In relatively good news for the Democrats, the GOP will once again be playing defense. Only one seat so far is currently on track to come open due to a retirement next cycle — the one held by Richard Burr (R-NC). ❖

Thomas Friedman, New York Times: I have zero tolerance for any American protesters who resort to violence in any U.S. city, because it damages homes and businesses already hammered by the coronavirus — many of them minority-owned — and because violence will only turn off and repel the majority needed to drive change. But when I heard President Trump suggest, as he did in the Oval Office on Monday, that he was going to send federal forces into U.S. cities, where the local mayors have not invited him, the first word that popped into my head was “Syria.” Listen to how Trump put it: “I’m going to do something — that, I can tell you. Because we’re not going to let New York and Chicago and Philadelphia and Detroit and Baltimore and all of these — Oakland is a mess. We’re not going to let this happen in our country.” These cities, Trump stressed, are “all run by very liberal Democrats. All run, really, by radical left. If Biden got in, that would be true for the country. The whole country would go to hell. And we’re not going to let it go to hell.” This is coming so straight from the Middle East Dictator’s Handbook, it’s chilling. In Syria, al-Assad used plainclothes, pro-regime thugs, known as the shabiha (“the apparitions”) to make protesters disappear. In Portland, Ore., we saw militarized federal forces wearing battle fatigues, but no identifiable markings, arresting people and putting them into unmarked vans. How can this happen in America? Authoritarian populists — whether Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Vladimir Putin in Russia, Viktor Orban in Hungary, Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland, or al-Assad — “win by dividing the people and presenting themselves as the savior of the good and ordinary citizens against the undeserving agents of subversion and ‘cultural pollution,’” explained Stanford’s Larry Diamond, author of “Ill Winds: Saving Democracy From Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency.” In the face of such a threat, the left needs to be smart. Stop calling for “defunding the police” and then saying that “defunding” doesn’t mean disbanding. If it doesn’t mean that then say what it means: “reform.” Defunding the police, calling police officers “pigs,” taking over whole neighborhoods with barricades — these are terrible messages, not to mention strategies, easily exploitable by Trump. ❖

Damon Linker, The Week: Is Trump a tyrant? Or does he just play one on Twitter? The debate over these questions goes back to the earliest days of the Trump administration. Though I’ve gone back and forth during the past three and a half years, I’ve usually sided with the skeptics. Trump talks (and tweets) like an autocrat. He clearly would love to control the country like a dictator. He may well be preparing a sizable segment of the population for an authoritarian future. But Trump himself is, if anything, an unusually weak president, with very few accomplishments, most of them enacted with executive orders that quite often get ignored by executive branch depart-

ments and agencies or shot down by the courts, and all of which will be vulnerable to reversal by Trump’s successor. The most blatant example of the Trump presidency is happening right now — with the Department of Homeland Security deploying on the streets of American cities (Portland in recent days, perhaps Chicago and elsewhere by next weekend) what The New York Times calls “officials from a group known as BORTAC, the Border Patrol’s equivalent of a SWAT team, a highly trained group that normally is tasked with investigating drug smuggling organizations.” These federal agents — driving unmarked vans, wearing battle fatigues without badges, lacking training in crowd control, sometimes responding to protesters with violence — sweep up people on the street and lock them in vehicles without arrest or explanation. But this isn’t something that concerns either the president or Chad Wolf, the acting secretary of homeland security, both of whom have declared their intent to continue deploying a quasi-military force against American citizens on the streets of American cities. As Wolf said on Fox News on Monday, “I don’t need invitations by the state, state mayors, or state governors to do our job. We’re going to do that, whether they like us there or not.” Those words — spoken by an unelected official who, like so many members of the Trump administration, has been appointed by the president in an “acting” capacity in order to circumvent the process of Senate confirmation — should send chills down the spines of every American. ❖

Peter Wehner, The Atlantic: The most revealing answer from Donald Trump’s interview with Fox News Channel’s Chris Wallace came in response not to the toughest question posed by Wallace, but to the easiest. At the conclusion of the interview, Wallace asked Trump how he will regard his years as president. “I think I was very unfairly treated,” Trump responded. “From before I even won, I was under investigation by a bunch of thieves, crooks. It was an illegal investigation.” When Wallace interrupted, trying to get Trump to focus on the positive achievements of his presidency — “What about the good parts, sir?” — Trump brushed the question aside, responding, “Russia, Russia, Russia.” In a single term, Trump has reshaped the Republican Party through and through, and his dispositional imprint on the GOP is as great as any in modern history, including Ronald Reagan’s. I say that as a person who was deeply shaped by Reagan and his presidency. My first job in government was working for the Reagan administration, when I was in my 20s. The conservative movement in the 1980s, although hardly flawless, was intellectually serious and politically optimistic. And Reagan himself was a man of personal decency, grace, and class. While often the target of nasty attacks, he maintained a remarkably charitable view of his political adversaries. “Remember, we have no enemies, only opponents,” the former Indiana governor Mitch Daniels, who worked for Reagan, quotes him as admonishing his staff. ❖



Dr. Birx warns Indy to take action

INDIANAPOLIS — Dr. Deborah Birx, a leader of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, warned state and local leaders in a private phone call Wednesday that 11 major cities are seeing increases in the percentage of tests coming back positive for COVID-19 and should take “aggressive” steps to mitigate their outbreaks ([Center for Public Integrity](#)). The cities she identified were Baltimore, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Miami, Minneapolis, Nashville, New Orleans, Pittsburgh and St. Louis. The call was yet another private warning about the seriousness of the coronavirus outbreaks given to local officials but not the public at large. It came less than a week after the Center for Public Integrity revealed that the White House compiled a detailed report showing 18 states were in the “red zone” for coronavirus cases but did not release it publicly.



Chicago on edge as it awaits fed troops

CHICAGO — Amid a surge in gun violence and protests sparked by the death of George Floyd, the nation’s third-largest city is on edge, awaiting possible greater tension in the form of a plan by President Donald Trump to dispatch dozens of federal agents to Chicago ([AP](#)). The White House plan emerged days after a downtown protest over a statue of Christopher Columbus devolved into a chaotic scene of police swinging batons and demonstrators hurling frozen water bottles, fireworks and other projectiles at officers. Then, on Tuesday in another neighborhood, a spray of bullets from a car passing a gang member’s funeral wounded 15 people and sent dozens running for their lives. Tension in the city has climbed to a level that, if not unprecedented, has not been felt in a long

time. “I’ve never seen things worse in this city than they are right now,” said the Rev. Michael Pfleger, a Roman Catholic priest and longtime activist on the city’s South Side.

Hill says Holcomb oversteps authority

INDIANAPOLIS — The governor of Indiana does not have the authority to order Hoosiers to wear masks in public places, and he most certainly does not have the power to make not wearing a mask a criminal offense (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). That’s the official opinion of Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill in letter issued Wednesday night in response to a request by five Republican state lawmakers for Hill’s assessment of the Republican governor’s mask order set to take effect Monday. Hill writes that while Indiana’s governor has broad

authority to restrict personal liberties and business operations under the state’s Emergency Management and Disaster Law, the statute “does not provide that a governor may issue a mandate on wearing masks.” “Without properly delegated authority from the General Assembly, the proposed order would not have the force and effect of law,” said Hill. “The General Assembly would need to specifically and clearly allow for a mask mandate by law.”

Indy 500 releases Aug. 23 safety plan

INDIANAPOLIS — Indianapolis Motor Speedway officials released an 88-page health and safety plan Wednesday that has been approved by the Marion County Health Department for the 104th running of the Indianapolis 500 ([WRTV](#)). Speedway leaders also announced a local blackout of the Aug. 23 race will be lifted, allowing it to be broadcast live in Central Indiana for the first time since 2016. Capacity at the race will be limited to 25% across the grandstand, infield and suites throughout the facility. The race will begin later this year with

the green flag set to fly at 2:30 p.m. Masks will be required throughout the Speedway, both indoors and outdoors.

County bans visits to nursing homes

EVANSVILLE — The Vanderburgh County Health Department has new recommendations regarding visitation at long-term care facilities ([WFIE-TV](#)). For months, visitors were not allowed in Indiana due to the pandemic, but many facilities have been allowed to relax rules in recent weeks. With a surge in COVID-19 cases, the Vanderburgh County Health Department and the Indiana State Department of Health recommend the discontinuing of in-person facility visitation at this time.

AP poll shows 10% back school opening

BOSTON — Only about 1 in 10 Americans think daycare centers, preschools or K-12 schools should open this fall without restrictions, according to a new poll from [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs](#). Most think mask requirements and other safety measures are necessary to restart in-person instruction, and roughly 3 in 10 say that teaching kids in classrooms shouldn’t happen at all.

Pence urges schools to reopen

COLUMBIA, S.C.— If his kids were elementary, high school, or college-aged, former Indiana Governor and Vice President Mike Pence says he would send his kids back to school during the coronavirus pandemic ([WIBC](#)). Pence is supposed to address the reopening of schools Friday night in Indianapolis in a meeting with leaders of higher education at Mar-ian University. When he was in South Carolina Tuesday, Pence said there are “real costs” to keeping kids out of class and children have a lower risk of catching the respiratory illness.