

Biden's agenda and Indiana needs

HPI analyzes Dem's agenda; Harris's ideological moorings

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With Joe Biden accepting the Democratic presidential nomination tonight, Howey Politics Indiana reviewed his campaign's policy positions. We will do the same with President Trump and Vice President Pence next week during the virtual Republican National Convention.

Two areas that could have a major impact in Indiana are his proposed pandemic response, and how the former vice president and senator will approach the epidemic that has receded from public view over the past six months, the one dealing with opioids.

On the pandemic, Biden said, "This is an evolving crisis and the response will need



to evolve, too, with additional steps to come so that we meet the growing economic shocks. We must prepare now to take further decisive action, including direct relief, that will be large in scale and focused on the broader health and stability of our economy."

He added, "The American people deserve an urgent, robust, and professional response to the growing public health and economic crisis caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Continued on page 3

Holcomb and race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – By any measure, Gov. Eric Holcomb's mid-day address on Tuesday was extraordinary. Stating that Indiana stands at an "inflection point" and promising Hoosiers that he is prepared to become a racial "barrier buster," the governor traced the nation's racially charged lineage from Thomas Jefferson's "Declaration of

Independence" to the Civil War, the Jim Crow era leading up to the civil rights movement, and the current Black Lives Matter movement.

That it came a week before the virtual Republican National Convention with President Trump emanating a series of racial dog whistles ranging from his defense of Confederate statues to equating a Black Lives Matter mural as a



"Donald Trump hasn't grown into the job because he can't. This president and those in power - those who benefit from keeping the things the way they are - they are counting on your cynicism."

- Former President Obama, addressing the DNC last night



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



"symbol of hate," to Patricia and Mark McCloskey (the St. Louis couple pointing guns at a group of black protesters) receiving invitation to address the RNC, is fascinating timing.

By Wednesday, Holcomb's bold move brought criticism from his right and left flanks. While most of the Indiana press equated Holcomb's address to simple policy – Indiana State Police to be equipped with body cameras – there was something far deeper here.

Holcomb began with a statement, saying racism is "another kind of virus that is equally voracious and it's in turn forcing us to a reckoning as a state and nation – one that's built on 'equality for all.'"

"Our country is unique in that we were founded on the promise that all men were created equal – as our Founders wrote: 'endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights ... among them Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,'" he continued. "And yet, it's just a fact, the concept wasn't put into practice even before the ink was dry. Quite the contrary. Laws were established that classified African Americans as 'property' and prevented women from voting. There's nothing equal about that."

Holcomb mentioned the Civil War which cost the lives of 24,000 Hoosiers, then said, "Over the ensuing decades, anti-slavery states like Indiana still attracted those who thought their birthright gave them the right to carry out heinous acts of violence against those who didn't look or pray the way they did. Lynching and burning down houses of worship were their means of sending messages of 'how it would be.' Jim Crow laws kept people of color separate, prevented them from voting and denied them equal treatment under the law.

"It's in this environment that we've seen a number of unarmed Black men and women killed, cul-

minating in an officer kneeling on the neck of Mr. George Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds until his last breath was snuffed out," Holcomb said. "I admit, I can't put myself in a Black person's shoes, can't fully appreciate the everyday indignities and slights our friends and associates have had to deal with, let alone the fear of some things I've never had to think about. So, I've spent considerable time since Mr. Floyd's death connecting with and listening to



Black leaders and stakeholders, one conversation leading to the next, and the next and the next."

It took a good several minutes before Holcomb delivered policy. He announced he was creating a cabinet level chief equity, inclusion and opportunity officer; would outfit all "front line" Indiana State Police troopers with body cameras by next spring; and directed the State of Indiana's Management Performance Hub to create a Public Disparity Data Portal to show how state programs are working. Holcomb will require a third-party review of state police and law enforcement academy curriculum and training at the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA). He also committed to working with the state legislature to add more civilian representation to the ILEA Training Board.

"To those who feel impatient and that we're not moving fast enough on this journey, I get it," Holcomb said. "Protesting is a cherished right that Americans have fought and died for. To those who subscribe to the late John Lewis's, 'Getting into

some good trouble, I get it. But John Lewis also knew the key to driving change was nonviolence.

"So, I say, if you want change, don't throw a brick; use a brick to lay a foundation for something better," Holcomb said. He quoted Martin University President Sean Huddleston: "While Black lives matter, Black livelihoods matter, too."

"I agree, on both accounts," Holcomb said. "Another theme I heard is best captured by what Martin Luther King called 'the fierce urgency of NOW' – that we need to use this moment as an opportunity to forge a new, more inclusive future. We cannot lose this opportunity to act constructively. Dennis Bland, president of the Center for Leadership Development, told me, 'Change is going to happen. The key is to shape change.'

"That's what I and my team intend to do: Shape change," Holcomb said.

The skepticism came from all sides. Indianapolis Councillor Ali Brown called the "sudden policy rollout about ending systemic racism is welcoming," but added Holcomb resorted to closed-door meetings "when Hoosiers needed to see unity on all sides."

State Rep. Cherish Pryor of the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus added, "It's a start. I'm pleased to see him publicly commit to bettering the lives of Black and brown Hoosiers, but words cannot stand without action. Bill after bill has been filed in the General Assembly with the hopes of improving the lives of Black Hoosiers and addressing the root cause of the challenges facing our community. Sadly, they have either failed or received little to no support from the Republican Party."

Democrat operative Brandon Evans observed, "Quoting John Lewis while actively suppressing the Black vote in Indiana is rich ... real rich."

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers reacted with six words: "Much too little, much too late."

Conservative activist Monica Boyer posted on Facebook, "I am sitting here getting my hair done watching Facebook light up with vile ANGER against the stupidity of our Governor!!!!!! VERY STUPID MOVE Governor. You don't lecture these Hoosiers about things you literally have no idea about. A Democrat Governor is about to be elected in November."

Brad Rataike, a long-time Holcomb ally who worked for two years in the Trump White House, told HPI, "There is definitely something broader than just the body cams. This is the first time in my lifetime that I remember a sitting governor tackling the issue of race head on. We've seen candidates in elected office talk about 'Black agendas' but this is not a Black agenda, this is an attempt to shift how Indiana looks at workforce development and Black employment. You don't make a statewide address about something like this and forget about it two weeks later.

"It would have been easy for Eric to have just waited this year out and never done anything to rock the boat, but the guy who gave the speech today isn't a guy running for reelection, it's a guy who has already started governing in his second term," Rataike continued. "The conversations he has had in order to develop this speech are with some people who may never have spoken with the governor's office before."

My take?

Holcomb is a student of history. He realized the Trump reelection campaign will likely be incendiary. He took seriously the need to begin a conversation on a subject that has become a searing topic across his state; his nation. He also wanted to set his own tone. And he's willing to spend part of his accrued political capital to do so. ❖

Biden/Harris, from page 1

Public health emergencies require disciplined, trustworthy leadership grounded in science. In a moment of crisis, leadership requires listening to experts and communicating credible information to the American public. We must move boldly, smartly, and swiftly."

"Biden understands that this is a dynamic situation," the campaign said. "The steps proposed are a start. As the crisis unfolds, Biden will build on this policy to address new challenges."

The Biden pandemic plan calls for:

- **Restoring trust, credibility, and common purpose:** Biden believes the U.S. must immediately put scientists and public health leaders front and center in communication with the American people in order to provide regular guidance and deliver timely public health updates, including by immediately

establishing daily, expert-led press briefings. This communication is essential to combating the dangerous epidemic of fear, chaos, and stigmatization that can overtake communities faster than the virus.



Restore the White House National Security Council Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense: This was established by the Obama-Biden Administration and eliminated by the Trump Administration in 2018.

Testing: Make testing widely available and free. Ensure that every person who needs a test can get one, and that testing for those

who need it is free. Establish at least 10 mobile testing sites and drive-through facilities per state to speed testing and protect health care workers. Starting in large cities and rapidly expanding beyond, the CDC must work with private labs and manufacturers to ensure adequate production capacity, quality control, training, and technical assistance. The number of tests must be in the millions, not the thousands.

■ **Communication:** Provide a daily public White House report on how many tests have been done by the CDC, state and local health authorities, and private laboratories. Expand CDC sentinel surveillance programs and other surveillance programs so that we can offer tests not to those who ask, but also to those who may not know to ask, especially vulnerable populations like nursing home patients and people with underlying medical conditions.

■ **Cost barriers:** The Biden Plan calls for an emergency paid leave program that will ensure that all workers can take paid leave during the COVID-19 crisis. It calls for passage of the Healthy Families Act with the addition of an emergency plan that will require 14 days of paid leave for those who are sick, exposed, or subject to quarantines – while also ensuring that employers will not bear any additional costs for such additional leave in the midst of this crisis. This emergency plan will provide reimbursement to employers or, when necessary, direct payment to workers for up to 14 days of paid sick leave or for the duration of mandatory quarantine or isolation.

■ **Unemployment insurance:** The Biden Plan calls for expanded and broadened unemployment benefits that ensure our unemployment benefit policies are responsive to the depth and nature of this health and economic crisis. That means more support for state offices that will face far higher demand. Current UI rules rightly require recipients to be actively looking for work. The nature of the COVID-19 crisis means, however, that many who lose their jobs will be prevented from looking for work due to public health rules related to containing community spread. The Biden Plan will ensure that workers who lose jobs but cannot meet search requirements due to this public health crisis are not denied benefits.

■ **Support for child care and remote student learning:** Potential school closings will create significant cost issues for parents seeking child care and for schools and educators seeking to continue teaching remotely, including online. The Biden Plan will expand assistance to federal child care centers and assistance to schools – particularly Title I schools – for those facing schools facing extra costs, including efforts to continue

remote education or remote activities normally done after school.

■ **State and local emergency fund:** In addition to these federal initiatives, governors and mayors can access funds through the State and Local Emergency Fund to cushion the economic impacts in their communities.

■ **International engagement:** Biden calls for the creation of a permanent facilitator within the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General for response to high consequence biological events, as recommended by experts, to facilitate crisis coordination among health, security, and humanitarian organizations. He also calls for fully resourcing the World Health Organization, especially its Contingency Fund for Emergencies. President Trump announced last spring he was pulling the U.S. out of WHO.

Opioid crisis

Indiana has been hard hit by the opioid crisis, which has faded from public view during the pandemic. In Indiana, there were 1,104 drug overdose deaths involving opioids in 2018. Indiana providers wrote 65.8 opioid prescriptions for every 100 persons compared to the average U.S. rate of 51.4 prescriptions during 2018.

Biden’s approach is centered on protecting the Affordable Care Act. “Biden will tackle this crisis by making sure people have access to high quality health care – including substance use disorder treatment and mental health services,” the campaign says. “That’s what Obamacare did by designating substance use disorder treatment and mental health services as essential benefits that insurers must cover, and by expanding Medicaid, the nation’s largest payer for mental health services which also plays an increasingly growing role as a payer for substance use disorder services.”

His plan will:

■ Hold accountable big pharmaceutical companies, executives, and others responsible for their role in triggering the opioid crisis.

■ Make effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services available to all, including through a \$125 billion federal investment.

■ Stop overprescribing while improving access to effective and needed pain management.

■ Reform the criminal justice system so that no one is incarcerated for drug use alone.

■ Stem the flow of illicit drugs, like fentanyl and heroin, into the United States, especially from China and Mexico.

■ Ensure local communities have a sufficient supply of overdose prevention drugs: Biden will expand grants to states for the purchase of Naloxone to be distributed to local community actors called upon to respond to overdoses, including first responders, public health providers, and the staff at homeless shelters and public libraries.



Marijuana reform

Biden is taking a similar stance to that of Gov. Holcomb on marijuana reforms. "As science ends up with more conclusive evidence regarding the impact of marijuana, I think he would look at that data. But he's being asked to make a decision right now. This is where the science guides him," Stef Feldman, Biden's policy director, told *The Atlantic*. "When he looked to put down his position on marijuana in writing for the purposes of the campaign, he asked for an update on where science was today. He didn't ask for an update on what views and science said 20 years ago. He wanted to know what was the best information we know now. And that is what he made his decision on."

The *Atlantic* reported that Biden would likely decriminalize personal use and would move marijuana off the Schedule 1 narcotic list.

Health care

Biden lists the March 2010 passage of the Affordable Care Act as a career highlight. The campaign points to 2016 when the number of uninsured Americans fell 40%, from 44 million to 27 million. Since 2016, the number of uninsured Americans has increased by roughly 1.4 million. As president, Biden would stop this reversal of the progress made by Obamacare. "And he won't stop there," the campaign says. "He'll also build on the Affordable Care Act with a plan to insure more than an estimated 97% of Americans." Here's how:

- **Medicare insurance option:** If your insurance company isn't doing right by you, you should have another, better choice. Whether you're covered through your employer, buying your insurance on your own, or going without coverage altogether, the Biden Plan will give consumers the choice to purchase a public health insurance option like Medicare.

- **Increasing the value of tax credits to lower premiums and extend coverage to more working Americans:** Today, families that make between 100% and 400% of the federal poverty level may receive a tax credit to reduce how much they have to pay for health insurance on the individual marketplace. The Biden Plan will help middle class families by eliminating the 400% income cap on tax credit eligibility and lowering the limit on the cost of coverage from 9.86% of income to 8.5%.

Gun violence

Sen. Biden shepherded the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which established the background check system that has since kept more than 3 million firearms out of dangerous hands. In 1994, Biden helped secure the passage of 10-year bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. "As president, Joe Biden will defeat the NRA again," the campaign says.

He proposes:

- **Hold gun manufacturers accountable:** In 2005, then-Senator Biden voted against the Protection

of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, but gun manufacturers successfully lobbied Congress to secure its passage. This law protects these manufacturers from being held civilly liable for their products – a protection granted to no other industry. Biden will prioritize repealing this protection.

- **Ban the manufacture and sale** of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

- **Regulate possession of existing assault weapons under the National Firearms Act:** Biden will pursue legislation to regulate possession of existing assault weapons.

- **Buy back the assault weapons and high-capacity magazines already in our communities:** Biden will also institute a program to buy back weapons of war currently on our streets. This will give individuals who now possess assault weapons or high-capacity magazines two options: Sell the weapons to the government, or register them under the National Firearms Act.

- **Require background checks for all gun sales:** Today, an estimated one in five firearms are sold or transferred without a background check. Biden will enact universal background check legislation, requiring a background check for all gun sales with very limited exceptions, such as gifts between close family members.

Immigration

In the first 100 days, a Biden Administration would:

- **Child separations:** Immediately reverse the Trump Administration's "cruel and senseless policies that separate parents from their children at our border," including ending the prosecution of parents for minor immigration violations as an intimidation tactic, and prioritize the reunification of any children still separated from their families."

- **End Trump's asylum policies:** Biden will end these policies, starting with Trump's Migrant Protection Protocols, and restore our asylum laws so that they do what they should be designed to do, protect people fleeing persecution and who cannot return home safely.

- **Protect Dreamers and their families:** The Obama-Biden Administration created DACA in 2012 to protect "Dreamers," undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, obeyed the law once here, and stayed in school or enlisted in the military. Biden will remove the uncertainty for Dreamers by reinstating the DACA program, and he will explore all legal options to protect their families from inhumane separation. Biden will also ensure Dreamers are eligible for federal student aid (loans, Pell grants) and are included in his proposals to provide access to community college without debt and invest in HBCU/Hispanic Serving Institution/Minority Serving Institutions, which will help Dreamers contribute even more to our economy.

- **Rescind the Muslim bans:** Biden will immediately rescind the "Muslim bans," with the campaign saying, "The Trump Administration's anti-Muslim bias hurts

our economy, betrays our values, and can serve as a powerful terrorist recruiting tool."

■ **Restore and defend the naturalization process for green card holders:** A Biden Administration will streamline and improve the naturalization process to make it more accessible to qualified green card holders.

Sen. Harris ideology

The Lugar Center ranks Sen. Harris 93rd on its 2019 bipartisan activity list. GovTrack.org reports that of the 471 bills that Harris cosponsored, 15% were introduced by a legislator who was not a Democrat.

Gov.Track ranked Sen. Harris 100th on the ideological spectrum (1 means most conservative; 100 most liberal). U.S. Sen. Mike Braun ranked third and Todd Young 35th. Harris missed 61.9% of votes (265 of 428 votes) in 2019, when she spent much of her time campaigning for president.

Americans for Democratic Action, a liberal advocacy group that compiles ratings based on major votes, gave Sen. Harris perfect scores in 2017 and 2018. "Her liberal profile is a split tale," ADA National Director Don Kusler told the Sacramento Bee. As an attorney general and city prosecutor, her record was one "that would have many liberals, particularly our California colleagues, angered or at least rolling their eyes."

GovTrack.org founder Josh Tauberer added, "Our analysis is at odds with her documented pre-Congress career of being pragmatic or moderate, and it remains to be seen which part of her career – her actions as a district attorney and attorney general or her policy proposals in Congress – would be reflected greater in a Biden administration."

Digging into Harris's long and complex record as district attorney of San Francisco and attorney general of California,

University of San Francisco associate law professor Lara Bazelon took central aim at Harris' contention that she was a "progressive prosecutor," who sought to right injustice and change the criminal justice system from within. "Time after time, when progressives urged her to embrace criminal justice reforms as district attorney and then the state's attorney general, Ms. Harris opposed them or stayed silent," wrote Bazelon in a 2019 New York Times op-ed. "Most troubling, Ms. Harris fought tooth and nail to uphold wrongful convictions that been secured through official misconduct that included evidence tampering, false testimony and the suppression of crucial information by prosecutors." ❖



The Lincoln Project is everything they hate

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – Have you heard of The Lincoln Project? If the answer is no, I envy you. While this super PAC is all the rage in the Beltway and within Never Trump circles for trolling the president with a series of cartoonish videos and viral social media posts, they've made little headway in the Heartland.



And why would they? An electoral sideshow, The Lincoln Project, whose mission is to "defeat Trump and Trumpism at the ballot box," is an indignant, vitriolic, self-righteous group of absolutists hellbent on annihilating the Republican Party and ushering in a new era of ruinous social and fiscal policy.

As if my laundry list of mean-spirited words weren't enough (all used for effect, mind you), this group has been called "loathsome" by syndicated columnist Rich Lowry, a bunch of "grifters" by the Republican National Committee and a "Democratic scam PAC" by the National Republican Senatorial Committee. All true. But here's the real kicker: Although perched on a pedestal of moral certitude, The Lincoln Project is everything they hate.

They whine about our nation being divided – spoiler, it is – but engage in divisive campaign tactics and employ divisive rhetoric. Look, I get fighting fire with fire. You are reading a column written by the guy who hosted Ann Coulter on the campus of the University of Arizona after the student government brought Michael Moore to town. But I also understand – thankfully not from personal experience – being blinded by personal hatred to the point of seeing every slight and every grievance through that particular lens.

This is the space The Lincoln Project now occupies. They stand for nothing of substance and against everything even tangentially related to Trump. Go ahead, search their site and see for yourself their vapid platform filled only with personal animosity toward a single person.

Blinded by this hate, this group of former "Republican strategists" – purposely placed in quotes because they no longer deserve to be called either Republican or strategists – who claim to be "dedicated Americans protecting Democracy" is, in actuality, a group of disgruntled Americans promoting and protecting Democrats.

And that's what remains so baffling about their

campaign. In holding steadfast in their belief that Republican “enablers” must be defeated for their perceived transgressions, The Lincoln Project is enabling a public policy agenda that they have spent entire careers advocating against.

Their cries of “burn it all down” may give the messengers a short-lived sugar high but put into practice this strategy will result in a generational defining crash. Can The Lincoln Project sleep at night knowing they were responsible for abolishing the Electoral College, stacking the Supreme Court and cratering our economy in the name of the Green New Deal?

They also decry loyalty to the president but demand unquestioning fealty to an ideologically amorphous cause. You are either with them or against them – and in this case, the grave sin of being against them is in failing to re-tweet one of the foul-mouthed missives of co-founders John Weaver and Rick Wilson (and here I promised myself to not mention their names lest I give them more of the attention they crave).

Among those who have sinned and therefore incurred the damning wrath of The Lincoln Project are Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Thom Tillis of North Carolina, Martha McSally of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. The first pair are running in two of the most competitive races in the country, while McSally was appointed to replace John McCain in the Senate and Graham was the late senator’s best friend. Ironically, that’s the very same McCain who made Weaver and another project co-founder, Steve Schmidt, politically famous when they worked on his



campaigns.

Rather than spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on ads trying to oust these senators from office, what they should be doing is marshaling those resources to help these vulnerable Republicans win. After all, these are the very senators who would help chart the course of a post-Trump Republican Party, whether that comes next year or four years from now. Why throw them off the ship without a life jacket?

And here I thought these guys were supposed to be top-notch political strategists. They sound more like college-aged Karl Rove wannabes (note: Rove is the gold standard; these guys wish they were him). ❖

Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokesman for Dan Coats, former director of national Intelligence. 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.”



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Weinzapfel envisions 'clear path' to victory

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Todd Rokita's pitch to Indiana Republican Convention delegates was that he would be more in sync with Gov. Eric Holcomb. Democrat challenger Jonathan Weinzapfel doesn't believe that is the case.



"I think folks are looking for leadership," Weinzapfel told Howey Politics Indiana on Tuesday. "Perfect example: The governor issues a mandatory

statewide mask order. Curtis Hill issues an advisory saying he doesn't have the authority to do that. Todd Rokita issues some mealy-mouthed statement saying, "Let's defer to the legislature."

"I'm the only one, the only Democrat, who steps forward and says I support the governor's policy, his decision to get this virus under control," the former Evansville mayor said. "This is a necessary step. He clearly has the legal authority to do this under the public health emergency. I think that's an example of the type of leadership Hoosiers are looking for. Putting politics aside and making the best decisions on behalf of the people."

A second example came on Tuesday, with Gov. Holcomb vowing to take on racial inequity issues. "I applaud the initiatives Gov. Holcomb announced today," Weinzapfel said. "Indiana needs to have this conversation, and this is a good start. However, we need to go further. As Indiana's next attorney general, I will push for body cameras for every police officer across the state, establish use-of-force guidelines that local communities can look to, and work to secure more funding so local departments have the training and technology they need to keep Hoosiers safe. We must create a more fair and just criminal justice system and I'll work with anyone to make that happen."

"There's no difference between Curtis Hill and Todd Rokita," Weinzapfel said. "As far as their position on the issues, they are both well to the right of the governor and I don't think they are in the mainstream of Hoosier voters."

Campaign consultant Brent Littlefield said that while Rokita "is a strong constitutionalist on the people's right to protest, he's been very aggressive on lawlessness.



Protesting and looting are not the same. Todd has been telling people we need to be defending the police, not defunding the police." Littlefield added that Rokita backs Holcomb on ISP body cams and supporting diversity.

In 2011, as mayor of Evansville, Weinzapfel purchased body cameras for the city's police force, one of the first cities in Indiana to do so. As attorney general, he is committed to promoting the use of body cameras, working to expand police training to de-escalate violent situations and, where needed, rebuilding community trust between police departments and the communities they serve.

Weinzapfel believes his campaign is poised for the first Democratic statewide win since Glenda Ritz upset Supt. Tony Bennett in 2012. "We're raising a lot of enthusiasm. We know there's a clear path to victory. We're pumping on all cylinders."

Asked what his "clear path" is, Weinzapfel said. "This is the most political uncertainty I've ever witnessed in my political career in the past 30-35 years. We have an endangered Republican president. In all likelihood he's going to win Indiana, but he's not going to win by 19%. We're in the middle of this global pandemic where people are worried about their jobs. Now there looks like there will be little federal support. They're worried about their health care, their kids are going back to school and parents are worried about whether they are going to be safe. You have all kinds of essential employees that are worried about the work environment. They've ploughed their life savings into their small business and don't know if they're going to get anything out of it. I know people looking to put a loved one in a nursing home. How do you tell if it's safe to stay in those facilities?"

"There's just so much uncertainty and what seems apparent to me is that people are looking for leadership," Weinzapfel said. "I'm not sure they care if it's Democrat or Republican. They're looking for leadership and looking for people with ideas with a track record for getting things done, a track record of listening to people and building consensus, and are willing to work across the aisle to get things done. That's what gives me a lot of optimism about our chances to win this attorney general's race."

He points to the Obamacare suit that Hill has joined and Rokita has vowed to continue. "What a stark contrast between the two of us," Weinzapfel said. "Todd Rokita voted more than 60 times to kill the ACA without any type of replacement plan. And now if he were to become AG he is expected to participate in the lawsuit Curtis Hill has filed. This will have a dramatic impact on Hoosiers if they're successful. There are 2.7 million Hoosiers who have preexisting conditions and if you've tested positive for coronavirus, you've got a preexisting condition. What that means, you have to go back 10 years ago at a time when insurance companies could discriminate. Why do they want to go back in time to those days? But that is exactly what Todd Rokita would do."

He entered the post-convention sequence with

a big financial lead over Rokita, though the Republican has ratcheted up his fundraising with an event featuring Vice President Mike Pence.

Weinzapfel added that he expects high Democratic intensity. "Democrats are angry and scared," he said. "That's a combination that will drive turnout." Horse Race Status: Leans Rokita.

Governor

Holcomb opposes expanded mail vote

Democrat gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers and attorney general nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel called on Gov. Eric Holcomb and Secretary of State Connie Lawson to ask the Indiana Election Commission to expand vote by mail, a move that was rejected last Friday by the Indiana Election Commission. "This is failed leadership," said Myers. "Indiana is one of only eight states that do not allow all voters to vote safely by mail in times of a pandemic." Weinzapfel added, "An overwhelming number of Hoosiers have been calling for safer voting options. With the election fast approaching, our Indiana counties need direction now." Holcomb believes expanding vote by mail is an issue that should be addressed by the Indiana General Assembly next year. "I think that question would be more appropriately answered with the General Assembly," Holcomb said at his weekly COVID press conference on Wednesday. "Obviously we were under a stay-at-home order statewide that was Exhibit A, if you will," he said of expanded, no-excuse absentee balloting in the delayed June 2 primary that drew more than 500,000 Hoosiers. "Exhibit B is we are very open right now in the State of Indiana and so to make that kind of drastic change on the fly while we are mobile would be inappropriate. Now that is a discussion worth having for all kinds of various reasons, set aside COVID-19, for all



HOWEY
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President (U.S. & Indiana)



President Donald Trump (R), Joseph Biden (D), Jo Jorgensen (L)

HPI Horse Race:

National: Leans D; Last week: Leans D
Indiana: Safe R; Last week: Safe R

Indiana Governor



Gov. Eric Holcomb (R), Woody Myers (D), Donald Rainwater (L)

HPI Horse Race:

This week: Safe R
Last week: Safe R

Indiana Attorney General



Todd Rokita (R) Jonathan Weinzapfel (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Leans R
Last week: Leans R

Congressional 2nd



U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorki (R) Pat Hackett (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Congressional 5th



Victoria Spartz (R), Christina Hale (D), Kenneth Tucker (L)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Leans R

Congressional 9th



U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R) Andy Ruff (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

kinds of other reasons. I look forward to having it in January when we have statewide input."

The Election Commission was deadlocked at 2-2, killing the expanded vote by mail proposal last Friday. "We still are dealing with a pandemic...but we've come to understand this pandemic a little better, how to protect ourselves," said Republican Commissioner Zach Klutz. "Case in point, we are now in Stage 4.5 of a five-stage back-on-track plan. Just because something was agreed upon in March because of an emergency doesn't mean those same factors automatically make this appropriate this time." Klutz and commission Chairman Paul Okeson both voted against the proposal introduced by Democrats, which failed to pass with a 2-2 deadlock. Okeson said he also would not consider holding a public hearing on the issue.

Myers posts web video

You won't often see an Indiana candidate for statewide elected office use the N-word, without bleeping or other niceties, in the first 15 seconds of a three-minute video intended to introduce the candidate to Hoosier voters. But Dr. Woody Myers, the Democratic nominee for governor, is not a typical politician (Carden, NWI Times). And, as the former emergency room physician notes in his [first campaign ad](#) now running on various social media channels, these are not typical times. As the video alternates between images of Myers speaking directly into the camera and dressing for surgery – including putting on the mask, gloves, face shield and gown that have become commonplace in the COVID-19 era – Indiana's first Black gubernatorial nominee of a major political party explains how his life experiences have prepared him to lead Indiana during a period like no other. "In medical school, they teach you to first do no harm. What they don't prepare you for is a drunken patient waking up and screaming, 'N---, what are you doing to me?'" Myers says in the video. The ad concludes with Myers describing his opponent, Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb, as "Mike Pence's hand-picked replacement," and suggesting no one is better prepared than Myers to respond as Indiana's chief executive to the issues certain to dominate the next four years. "My life has led me to this reckoning of a pandemic, an economic collapse and a racial awakening," Myers says. The cash-strapped Myers campaign did not say whether or when the ad, produced by the viral campaign marketing team Putnam Partners, will run on broadcast or cable television in Northwest Indiana, or anywhere in the state. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Holcomb.

Congress

DCCC poll has Hale leading 50-45%

Democrat Christina Hale holds a 5% edge over Republican Victoria Spartz in the race for the open House seat. According to a poll conducted for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and released



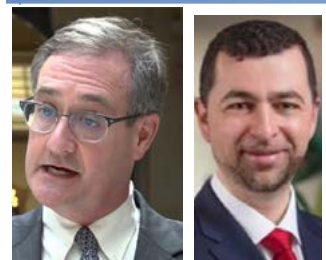
Indiana General Assembly SD8



**Sen. Mike Bohacek (R)
Gary Davis (D)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly SD30



**Sen. John Ruckelshaus (R)
Fady Qaddoura (D)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD5



**Rep. Dale Devon (D)
John Westerhausen (R)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

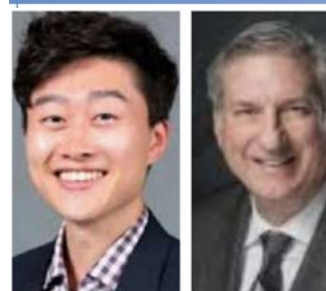
Indiana General Assembly HD7



**Rep. Ross Deal (D)
Jake Teshka (R)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD15



**Rep. Chris Chyung (D)
Hal Slager (R)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

exclusively to The Hill, Hale leads with 50-45%. The DCCC poll, which was conducted by Tulchin Research, surveyed 400 likely voters Aug. 5-10 and has a margin of error of 4.9 percentage points.

A Club For Growth poll gave Spartz a 7% lead over Hale (Lange, IndyStar). According to crosstabs provided by Club For Growth, 47% of the 409 voters surveyed said they would vote for Spartz if the election were right now, compared to 40% who said they would vote for Hale. Another 5% said they would vote for Libertarian candidate Ken Tucker. The margin of the error for the poll conducted by WPA Intelligence on Aug. 4-6 was 4.9%. Joann Saridakis, Hale's campaign manager, questioned why Club For Growth put out these results just after Hale's campaign released its first general election ad. "Club For Growth spent over half a million dollars to buy the primary for Victoria Spartz, and now they're panicking that their investment isn't paying off," Saridakis said in a statement. "If they truly believed she has a 'significant' lead, they wouldn't have waited until we went up on television to release a week-old poll." At the end of June, Hale's campaign released its own poll showing Hale had a 51% to 45% lead over Spartz. Unlike Club For Growth, Hale's campaign declined to share the crosstabs with IndyStar.

5th CD: Club For Growth attacks Hale

Club For Growth has opened up its fall offensive against Democrat Christina Hale in the 5th CD. Club For Growth Action ad "Guess Who" – highlights Christina Hale's "liberal positions and votes for higher taxes and fees, against a balanced budget that cut state income taxes, and support of public option." It is spending \$218,000 in the Indianapolis DMA for the next two weeks. "Hale voted at least 11 times for higher taxes and fees on Indiana families," the ad begins. "Hale voted against a balanced budget that actually cut state income taxes. And, like Nancy Pelosi, Hale backs the public option plan that radically expands the role of government in health care." Club For Growth gave close to \$500,000 on behalf of Republican nominee Victoria Spartz, then released a poll last week showing Spartz with a 47-40% lead. "It comes as no surprise that Club For Growth would try to buy this election for Victoria Spartz," said Joann Saridakis, Hoosiers for Hale campaign manager. "After all, this dark money group is known for bankrolling candidates who put the insurance industry's profits first and work to eliminate affordable health care options, strip away protections for people with pre-existing conditions, and privatize Social Security. And that's exactly who Victoria is."

GOP leadership endorses Spartz

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Whip Steve Scalise and have released statements of support for Victoria Spartz's campaign for Congress. Leader Kevin McCarthy said, "Victoria Spartz earned the Republican nomination by winning a 15-way primary with strong grassroots



Indiana General Assembly HD19



Rep. Lisa Beck (D)
Julie Olthoff (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD35



Rep. Melanie Wright (D)
Elizabeth Rowray (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD37



Rep. Todd Huston (R)
Aimee Cole Rivera (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Indiana General Assembly HD88



Chris Jeter (R)
Pam Dechert (D)
Open: Brian Bosma

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Indiana General Assembly HD89



Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer (R)
Mitch Gore (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

support and bold new ideas about how we can get our economy back on track. I am confident she will hold this seat, help us reclaim the majority, and be a tremendous representative for the Hoosiers in Indiana's 5th Congressional District. Victoria has my complete endorsement." Whip Steve Scalise commented, "As a successful businesswoman who has actually lived under socialism, I know that Victoria will be an important voice in the conversation as House Republicans work to stop this dangerous ideology in its tracks. I look forward to welcoming Victoria Spartz to Congress next year!" **Horse Race Status:** Leans Spartz.

RealClearPolitics Election 2020			
President	Senate		House
Election 2020	Biden	Trump	Spread
RCP National Average	49.9	42.3	Biden +7.6
Top Battlegrounds	48.7	44.4	Biden +4.3
Latest Betting Odds	56.7	41.9	
Electoral College	Biden	Trump	Toss Ups
RCP Electoral Map	212	115	211
No Toss Up States	337	201	
Battlegrounds ●○	Biden	Trump	Spread
Wisconsin	50.0	43.5	Biden +6.5
Minnesota	50.0	43.0	Biden +7.0
North Carolina	46.4	47.0	Trump +0.6
Florida	50.3	45.3	Biden +5.0
Pennsylvania	49.7	43.3	Biden +6.4
Arizona	47.0	45.0	Biden +2.0
2020 vs. 2016	2020	2016	Spread
Top Battlegrounds	D +4.3	D +5.2	Trump +0.9
RCP National Average	D +7.6	D +5.5	Biden +2.1
Favorability Ratings	D +13.6	D +18.0	Trump +4.4

General Assembly

SD8: Davis raises USPS issue

The USPS issue is creeping into Hoosier politics. Gary Davis, Democratic candidate for SD8, issued the following statement also on the unnecessary political attacks on USPS and vote-by-mail access across the state: "Politicizing the United States Postal Service and Hoosiers' right to vote is just another notch in the abhorrent rhetoric families have been forced to stomach recently," said Davis, who is challenging State Sen. Mike Bohacek. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Presidential

Obama warns of second Trump term

Former President Barack Obama warned that American democracy could falter if President Donald Trump is reelected, a stunning rebuke of his successor that was echoed by Kamala Harris at the Democratic Convention Wednesday night as she embraced her historic role as the first Black woman on a national political ticket.

Obama, himself a barrier breaker as the nation's first Black president, pleaded with voters to "embrace your own responsibility as citizens – to make sure that the basic tenets of our democracy endure. Because that's what is at stake right now. Our democracy."

Harris, a 55-year-old California senator and the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, addressed race and equality in a personal way Biden cannot when he formally accepts his party's presidential nomination on Thursday. "There is no vaccine for racism. We have got to do the work," Harris said, her words emphatic though she was speaking in a largely empty arena near Biden's Delaware home. "We've got to do the work to fulfill the promise of equal justice under law," she added. "None of us are free until all of us are free."

Wednesday night, former Arizona Rep. Gabby Giffords reflected on her own journey of pain and recovery from a severe brain injury nearly a decade after being shot while meeting with constituents. She urged America to support Biden. "I struggle to speak, but I have not lost my voice," Giffords said. "Vote, vote, vote."

Hillary Clinton, Trump's 2016 rival, implored Democrats to turn out in larger numbers in November to block the president's reelection. "For four years, people have said to me, 'I didn't realize how dangerous he was.' 'I wish I could go back and do it over.' Or worst, 'I should have voted,'" said Clinton. "Well, this can't be another woulda coulda shoulda election." "Vote

like our lives and livelihoods are on the line," she added, "because they are."

Obama spoke harshly of Trump, too. "Donald Trump hasn't grown into the job because he can't," Obama said, speaking from the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. "I have sat in the Oval Office with both of the men who are running for president. I never expected that my successor would embrace my vision or continue my policies. I did hope, for the sake of our country, that Donald Trump might show some interest in taking the job seriously."

Buttigieg delivers Indiana's roll call

Indiana Democrats opted to have former presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg deliver it's roll call vote Tuesday night, and not gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers. Buttigieg was flanked by party leaders John Zody, Cordelia Lewis Burks and Arielle Moyee Brandy at Studebaker Building 84, the South Bend high-tech center where Buttigieg kicked off his presidential campaign in April 2019. Buttigieg addresses the DNC tonight.

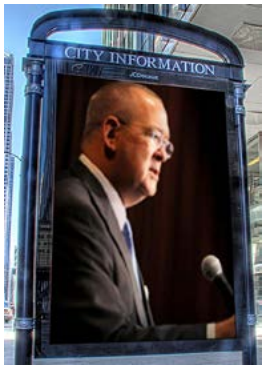
Indy Mom addresses DNC

DeAndra Dycus is the mother of DeAndre Dycus, who was hit by a stray bullet while attending a birthday party in Indianapolis back in 2014 addressed the DNC. "A stray bullet changed our lives," she said. "Since March I have only been able to see my son three times. I can't touch or hug him due to COVID-19. In towns across America, there are families who know what a bullet can do. That's why I'm a mom who volunteers to stop this." Since her son was shot Dycus has been active with groups, such as Moms Demand Action. "President Trump, he doesn't care. He didn't care about the victims after Parkland, Las Vegas, or El Paso. I want a president who cares about our grief." ❖

What's up with the stock market?

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Almost every casual conversation I have about the economy turns to the stunning recovery of the stock market. From investment professional to anxious observer, few can reconcile a Great Depression level of unemployment and GDP declines with the resurrection of stock markets that took place since the crash of March 2020.



Now, I don't wish to pretend I can forecast stocks or fully explain why they've recovered. If I could predict the stock market 60% of the time, I'd be among the richest men in the world in just a few weeks. What I can do is offer some reasonable causes for the

wild swings and nearly full recovery we've experienced over the past six months.

To begin, I'll have to share some too infrequently spoken truths about stock markets. The first is simply that stock markets exist to match household savings with investment opportunities. This is what all financial services do, and stock markets are especially good at it.

For all the convenient critiques of Wall Street as a place for rich people, most American families own stock. If you have any retirement fund, at any time in your life, you are a Wall Street investor. You may pick stocks yourself or, like my family, let a fund manager pick them. Either way, you are a capitalist. In fact, we are nearly all capitalists now. That is news to celebrate, because the future will require the economic growth that only capitalism can deliver.

The stock market is important for other reasons. Many nonprofits and nearly all philanthropic organizations rely upon stock returns. That means everything from youth sports to anti-poverty programs to scholarships rely on the growth of wealth delivered by stocks. My church, like most, funds missions and youth programs from stock investments. There is no good alternative, and we should be enormously thankful that we enjoy well-functioning markets where we can buy and sell small parts of companies, the things we call stocks.

With stock markets serving this important societal service, it would be too much to ask that they also be good measures of overall economic performance. All we can expect is that prices of stocks will signal where the best investment options lie. That is profoundly important, and gives us some insight into why stock prices recovered from the March crash.

In the wake of COVID-19, the Federal Reserve cut interest rates, flooded financial markets with cash by purchasing bonds and bought private sector debt. This

is consistent with their legal mandate set in 1947 to keep inflation and unemployment low. The goal of these policies was to push money into more productive activities thus reviving the economy.

So, Fed policies meant that bank deposits had very low returns, causing some households to move money to stocks. It also pushed bond yields negative after adjusting for inflation. Bond markets are where governments go to borrow cheaply, and pushing them into negative territory caused some investors to move to stocks.

These policies are far from perfect, but they tend to restore confidence in the economy, and explain at least part of the stock market recovery. In other words, stock markets recovered because they offered the least bad haven for those with savings.

Another explanation for the stock market resurgence is the limited nature of early economic damage from COVID-19. Some corporations listed in stock markets faced early losses, such as Disney and United Airlines. But, most of the economic damage of COVID-19 has fallen on smaller companies, such as independent restaurants and bars. Local government, schools and universities also faced significant employment cuts. None of these is represented on stock exchanges.

That doesn't mean stock investors don't care about this part of our economy. Eventually lost employment in small firms and government will put major downward pressure on stock prices. But we are only six months into a multi-year downturn, the fullness of this downturn is ahead of us, not behind us.

The stock market isn't just affected by the absence of small firms on its listing. The shifts in household and business consumption that accompanied the early stages of the pandemic benefitted some of the largest firms on the listing. Large technology firms, such as Apple and Google, profited from us working at home, as we bought new equipment, software and online services. The fancy yoga pants and gallon-sized jars of hand sanitizer were delivered by Amazon, whose stock prices are up by 40% since the start of the pandemic.

Stock market indices are not linear combinations of listed firms; they are weighted by firm value, so the big firms that did best in the pandemic swamp the smaller firms, such as airlines or hotels. Even Disney, which saw its theme parks close, recovered as its streaming services replaced its lost profits. ❖

Michael J. Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.

Indiana Vote by Mail makes its case

By **JOHN MUTZ, KATHY DAVIS, PAUL HELMKE, LEE HAMILTON and PIERRE ATLAS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Our democracy depends on voters showing up at every election to perform their civic duties. Well-designed, thorough, and rigorous election administration and monitoring is key to maintaining voter confidence. And providing options for voters is essential to be sure everyone has the equal right to participate, whether at polling locations or by mail.

We ask Indiana to adopt reforms that increase voter confidence and turnout beyond our average rate of 52% for general elections. Sadly, an average of 48% of voters do not bother to vote even in presidential election years. We need Indiana residents to vote and Indiana's leaders need to act now.

The op-ed by Marc Thiessen, a well-known opponent of voting by mail, (Indianapolis Star on Sunday, August 9) demands a response considering the November election is fast approaching. It is of utmost importance that voters have accurate information. We are living in a time of pandemic and voters should not be forced to choose between performing their civic duty, and their health and safety. All options for safe voting should be made available.

The 2008 MIT study cited by Thiessen was conducted when Oregon was the only state that mailed ballots to all registered voters, having been the first state to do so 20 years ago. The 3.9 million voters in other states who never received their absentee ballots were not prevented from voting at the polls in person. The 2.9 million ballots mailed to voters but not cast represent voters who chose not to vote.

Thiessen, like President Trump, seems intent on injecting doubt in voters' minds about the integrity of mailed elections. Of California's rejected primary ballots in 2020, 69% were rejected because they arrived late; 27% had missing or non-matching signatures, for which California has a process for voters to cure.

This election season, Oregon and eight other states will mail ballots to all registered voters. Thirty-five states will use no-excuse absentee applications. These states have put in the work to reach all eligible voters. To date, Indiana has been resistant to such efforts.

Here are some measures Indiana needs to adopt to provide equal and safe access for all voters:

No-excuse absentee ballots should be available to all voters. County clerks do not have the resources, time, or inclination to monitor voters' reasons when applying for absentee ballots.

Voter list maintenance is a crucial step in making sure voter rolls remain free of ineligible or deceased

voters. The National Voter Registration Act requires such periodic list maintenance, but Indiana has used methods that the courts have found actually violate the NVRA.

Clear ballot and envelope design with easy-to-follow instructions results in fewer calls to election offices and fewer ballots returned without signatures.

Intelligent Mail barcode (IMB®) available through the USPS: This is the same tracking used for FedEx and UPS packages. The barcode allows election staff to follow ballot mail and permits voters to sign up for text or email alerts.

Ballot drop boxes as an option for return of ballots. In vote-by-mail states, most voters choose to return ballots in secure drop boxes, or to polling locations, with clear chain of custody requirements for retrieval.

Signature verification procedures to cure or verify allegedly invalid, or missing, signatures. Most states have such procedures in place. Indiana does not.

Extend deadline for receipt of ballots to 6 p.m. on Election Day and if postmarked on or before Election Day and received up to 10 days later.

Tabulation of ballots. Indiana law prohibits the counting of absentee ballots until Election Day. If permitted, beginning to tabulate ballots before Election Day will speed up the process and avoid delayed announcement of results.

These measures will keep voter confidence high and ensure our elections remain open and accessible. It takes leadership at the state level to make changes. Injecting doubt into voters' minds about the security and accuracy of mail-in ballots indirectly suppresses the vote.

Indiana must provide voters with effective ways to cast their vote by mail, in a way that inspires rather than undermines public confidence in our elections. Other states have successfully grappled with these challenges. Indiana voters deserve as much. ❖

John Mutz, former Republican Lieutenant Governor of the State of Indiana

Kathy Davis, former Democratic Lieutenant Governor of the State of Indiana

Lee Hamilton, Distinguished Scholar, Professor of Practice, Indiana University Former Democratic Representative for Indiana's 9th CD

Paul Helmke, professor of Practice, and Director of Civic Leaders Center, Indiana University, former three-term Republican mayor of Fort Wayne, former president and CEO of the Brady Center

Pierre M. Atlas, Ph.D., professor of Political Science and Founding Director, The Richard G. Lugar Franciscan Center for Global Studies, Marian University

The faith we place in our elections

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – I’ve lost track of the times over the years I’ve heard a politician say, “This is the most important election of my lifetime.” In fact, I’ve said it myself. And I’m sure we all believed it at the time. But in my case,



at least, I know I was wrong in the past. Because this year’s election is the most important of my lifetime.

Elections are the crown jewel of a representative democracy. We do at least three things when we vote. First, and most obviously, we vote for our preferred candidates. Second, by doing so we vote to direct policy and to give the party we favor more control over the levers of power.

Third, and possibly most important, by voting we place our stamp of approval on the system – we participate in it, reinforce it, and trust it to carry our voice.

Then, whatever the result, we accept it.

This is actually one of the remarkable things about the American political system, the degree to which Americans over the centuries have placed their faith in election results, win or lose. Occasionally there are charges of voter fraud, but overwhelmingly we accept the results and express confidence in the fairness, transparency, and integrity of the election process. It’s been a vitally important part of our system that we’ve taken too much for granted.

This allegiance to the idea that the process matters more than personal conviction has come even from politicians who had a right to object. The most obvious recent example is Al Gore in 2000, after votes left uncounted because of the Supreme Court cost him the election. Bitter supporters urged him not to accept the result and to challenge the legitimacy of the process. Instead, in his concession speech, Gore said, “Other disputes have dragged on for weeks before reaching resolution. And each time, both the victor and the vanquished have accepted the result peacefully and in the spirit of reconciliation.... [O]ur disappointment must be overcome by our love of country.”

That was a bare 20 years ago and look how far

we’ve strayed. This year, it’s fair to say, Americans’ trust in the election process is at best unsettled. Many are worried about foreign meddling. But that’s nothing compared to the undermining coming from the very top, a sitting president who refuses, so far at least, to say whether he will accept the results of the election, who floats the idea of postponing it, who questions the validity of the venerable absentee ballot, and who talks constantly about “corrupt” elections. In fact, Susan Glasser writes in *The New Yorker*, since 2012 Donald Trump has “questioned voting or suggested that an election would be rigged, unfair, or otherwise compromised” 713 times. This year alone he was closing in on 100 times when her article was published. No wonder a lot of Americans of both parties worry about the legitimacy of the results in November.

Now, it’s not uncommon to hear charges of voter fraud, but study after study has found that actual voter fraud in the U.S. is rare. It’s possible in a city or town, but if you think about how our national elections are run – in 50 states, each with its own rules, and each locality controlling the electoral process – it’s hard to see how fraud could take place on any sizable scale.

Which is not to say there aren’t problems. Chicanery from politicians bent on disenfranchising voters whose politics they don’t like and decades of underfunding the actual machinery of elections give us plenty to be concerned about.

But here’s the thing. We have over 200 years of

success at transferring power peacefully, often between political leaders who disagreed vehemently with one another. That has been one of the keys to American success. I’m not alone in thinking of this year’s vote as the most important of my lifetime, and woe betide us if our confidence in the result – which will play a big part in our willingness to accept



the result – is betrayed by politicians seeking to game the system or by election officials who don’t live up to the trust Americans place in them to get it right. ❖

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.

National conventions will be very different

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND — In sports, a lot depends on the way the ball bounces. In presidential politics, a lot depends – or at least it often has – on the way the convention bounces. Traditionally, a presidential nominee gets a bounce upward in the polls after the nominee’s national political convention.



Since I’ve had the good fortune in the past to cover 20 national conventions, 10 Republican, 10 Democratic, I’ve written a lot about the bounces, about the expectations of the delegates in the convention hall, about the projections of the pundits and about the actual bounce or lack thereof in the polls after delegates

and pundits depart the convention site.

The conventions this month will be different. Very different. No packed convention hall. No wild demonstrations of support for the presidential nominee. No balloon drop as the convention reaches a finale, with enthusiasm up as thousands of balloons come down.

The conventions, still needed to officially name nominees and set a tone for the party, this time will be virtual, not traditional in a packed hall, because of the pandemic that has grown worse in this country.

I always enjoyed leaving the press platform to push through the crowded aisles to reach the Indiana or Michigan delegation, get some quick quotes from the governor or senators or area delegates and struggle back before the floor pass expired. Now, of course, such crowded aisles and delegates squished together would be life threatening.

Will TV ratings for virtual conventions be high or dismal? Will there be much of a bounce in the polls for either Joe Biden or Donald Trump after their respective conventions this month? We don’t know.

The way either convention bounces won’t decide the election. But how voters view the events still could have significance in determining which party gains or loses momentum as days to the election dwindle.

If the election were to come next Tuesday, Biden likely would win, though it wouldn’t be a sure thing. Election forecast guru Nate Silver puts the chances of a Biden win at 71%. That, by the way, is the exact percentage Silver had for Hillary Clinton in his

last projection before the 2016 election.

A big bounce for Biden, after the Democratic Convention this week, after voters hear the speeches from various sites rather than from an arena of cheering delegates, and after they evaluate as well the selection of Kamala Harris for vice president, would extend Biden’s lead in the polls, diminishing Trump’s chances to catch up. A more modest bounce of 2 or 3 percentage points would not change things very much, with Trump having a chance to match that or close the gap with a bigger bounce in his convention.

No bounce at all, such as John Kerry suffered after the 2004 Democratic Convention, could signal a looming disaster.

The national pundits could get it wrong, so wait until the major polls are in after this week. For example, a lot of the evaluation by analysts as that ‘04 convention ended was that Democrats had played it smart, with Kerry and other speakers avoiding attacking President George W. Bush and sticking to a positive theme of bringing America together to face challenges at home and abroad. Voters say they want a positive message. So, Kerry was right? Wrong.


He got no bounce. Bush bounced back with a Republican Convention that captured attention with ridicule and mockery of the Democratic ticket as weak and woeful. Some pundits thought that would turn off voters. It turned a lot of them on as Bush climbed to victory.

Just as the way the ball bounces can affect the outcome in sports, the way the convention bounces – or maybe doesn’t bounce at all for a nominee – could affect the outcome of this presidential election. ❖

Colwell covers Indiana politics for the South Bend Tribune.

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

Biden's pick of Harris (in context)

By **JOEL K. GOLDSTEIN**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Vice President Joe Biden's selection of Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate concludes one of the most unique and historic vice presidential selection processes in American history. Biden's selection process is the first time in American history that a major party presidential candidate committed at the outset to choose a woman as his running mate.

It was only the second vice presidential selection process in which a major party presidential candidate made a point of considering multiple members of minority groups as his or her running mate – the first, of course, being Walter F. Mondale's 1984 process which produced Geraldine Ferraro's nomination.

Although Harris is only the third woman ever selected as a major party vice presidential nominee, she is the first selected by a presidential candidate leading in the polls and perceived to have better than a 50% chance of election. If elected vice president, it would be the first time, in our 59th presidential election, that a woman is elected to national office.

She also is the first woman of color to be a major party national candidate. Although Biden's selection process adopted a much more intensive version of the vetting process that Jimmy Carter, and to a lesser extent President Gerald R. Ford, began in 1976 and which has been greatly expanded since then, Biden's process was affected by the extraordinary constraints the COVID-19 pandemic imposed which prevented normal in-person campaigning as part of the audition and inhibited other in-person sessions.

Finally, Biden's vice presidential selection process occurred amidst two extraordinary events that dramatically changed the American political context. Those events were, of course, the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd on Memorial Day and other incidents that have focused attention on racial injustice which continues to permeate American society.

Something old, something new

Every first-time vice presidential selection involves the intersection of familiar patterns and practices with the totally unique and novel circumstance of a selector who has never previously chosen a running mate picking from a distinctive pool in a unique context. And every selector must strike some balance between the short-term interest in winning the election, the long-term interest in finding a governing partner, and the remote contingency of choosing a presidential successor, although political and governing considerations may often coincide. Of course, govern-

ing depends on electoral success.

The impact of the vice presidential candidate on the outcome is likely to be felt only at the margins, and the impact is complicated and resists precise measurement. Significant unique factors included Biden's deep understanding of the vice presidency from his successful service in it for two terms, his age – which makes seeking a second term subject to more doubt than with most presidential candidates – his decision to limit the pool to women, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising focus on racial justice issues on the political context.

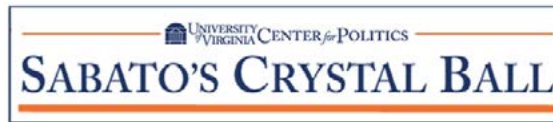
Biden's pool was distinctive in that all were women and a larger percentage than ever before were persons of color. The 11 apparent finalists were Sens. Harris, Tammy Baldwin, Tammy Duckworth, and Elizabeth Warren; former National Security Adviser Susan Rice; Reps. Karen Bass and Val Demings; Govs. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Gretchen Whitmer; Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms; and 2018 Georgia gubernatorial nominee Stacey Abrams. All but Bottoms and Abrams held one of the traditional feeder positions that every vice presidential candidate since 1940 has held – past or current senator, governor, high federal executive official, or member of the House of Representatives. As such, those in the pool carried titles similar to the pools of males considered in past searches of both parties.

The nature of the search

Biden's search was among the longest in modern history. Biden's nomination became apparent when he followed his victory in South Carolina on Feb. 29 with a stunning showing three days later on Super Tuesday and another on March 10 that closed the door on Sen. Bernie Sanders. With the presidential nomination assured, focus turned to the vice presidential nomination during the 11th debate in mid-March when Biden committed to select a woman as his running mate. The five-month period from mid-March until Aug. 11, 2020, provided the longest vice presidential vetting period.

The process was relatively transparent regarding those under consideration, which gave opportunity for those favoring or opposing various candidates to express themselves. Biden chose a slightly larger and a demographically representative committee to screen those under consideration, consisting of former Sen. Christopher Dodd, Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, and former Biden counsel Cynthia Hogan. Three members were past or current elected officials. Committee members had worked in both houses of Congress, the executive branch, local government, and the private sector. The committee included an equal number of men and women. It included two white members, a black member, and a Mexican-American member. They ranged in age from 49 (Garcetti) to 76 (Dodd), with Rochester in her late 50s and Hogan in her early 60s.

Not only was there a longer period to discuss a



contracted pool, but the intensifying COVID-19 pandemic and intensified focus on structural racism in America transformed the context in which the decision was made. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, initially considered to be among the most likely vice presidential options, withdrew amidst criticism of her record as a prosecutor for not prosecuting alleged police brutality prior to her time in the Senate, and calls for Biden to select a woman of color. The process allowed input, and Harris was among the most popular choices.

The messages sent

Presidential candidates use the vice presidential selection to send messages about their values. The selection of Harris fit with Biden's campaign theme of running to restore "the soul of our nation." As the first Black and Indian-American candidate for vice president, as a woman and child of immigrants, her selection sent a message of inclusion, a theme much in evidence in the rollout on Aug. 12. Biden also presented her as a fighter for the middle class and those aspiring to reach it, rekindling a theme of his vice presidency, when he chaired President Obama's Middle Class Task Force.

Harris also provides a running mate who has demonstrated herself to be an effective cross-examiner of Trump administration officials and nominees and critic of its performance and policies. She is expected to be an able campaigner who can persuasively make the case against Trump. Importantly, her selection helps keep Trump and his record the campaign focus.

Biden's public promise that Harris would assume the "last person in the room" status he had enjoyed with President Barack Obama signaled that as vice president, she will be engaged in decision-making. His request that she tell him when he is wrong confirms that promise but also draws a distinction with Trump's operating style, which is widely perceived to invite sycophancy.

Compatibility

Some had speculated that Biden would not choose Harris because she had attacked him during an earlier debate for opposing busing and working with Senate segregationists earlier in his career in the Senate. Campaign bitterness has deterred other presidential candidates from choosing certain rivals. Jimmy Carter did not consider Rep. Morris Udall in 1976. George H.W. Bush chose Dan Quayle instead of Bob Dole or Jack Kemp in 1988. Obama did not select Hillary Clinton in 2008.

On the other hand, other political leaders have put such incidents behind them. Bush's dismissal of Ronald Reagan's economic ideas as "voodoo economics" did not preclude his selection as Reagan's running mate in 1980. Dole chose Kemp in 1996 notwithstanding a history of acrimony between them. Kemp had endorsed Dole rival Steve Forbes when Dole's nomination was assured; Dole disparaged Kemp as "the quarterback." Reagan and Bush and Dole and Kemp went on to establish friendly relations.

Biden apparently falls in the latter group. He

stated that he does not hold grudges, and his selection of Harris seems to confirm that. Indeed, Biden has been known for his ability to put himself in the position of others to better understand their behavior and to work harmoniously with a range of different people.

An also-ran selected

Harris' selection provides the fifth time since 1960 that a presidential candidate has selected someone who ran against him or her in the primaries and caucuses. Harris, like Biden in 2008, was not the runner-up, a characteristic that Lyndon B. Johnson, George H.W. Bush, and John Edwards had shared. Although Harris' candidacy was unsuccessful, her exposure to a national campaign, as well as her success in California statewide politics, was thought to better prepare her for a national campaign.

The first Democratic Californian

Harris is the third major party vice presidential candidate from California (after Earl Warren in 1948 and Richard M. Nixon in both 1952, 1956) but the first national party candidate from California on the Democratic ticket.

The Democratic senator's vice presidential advantage: Harris' selection also represents the 16th time in the last 19 Democratic selections that the running mate has been a senator. The near-monopoly is more striking when one considers that two of the three exceptions presented extraordinary circumstances. Sargent Shriver's selection in 1972 was, of course, the second Democratic selection that year and one that occurred only after a number of senators declined George McGovern's invitation, and Geraldine Ferraro's selection in 1984 at a time when no Democratic women served in the Senate.

Many of those who were prominently mentioned in the process were Harris' senatorial colleagues including Sens. Baldwin, Duckworth, Klobuchar, and Warren. The senatorial advantage in Democratic vice presidential politics probably traces to the greater name recognition senators have as compared to others, their prominence in presidential politics, the perception that they have foreign policy experience, and the ability to sustain public exposure even when their party is out of office, something that is more difficult for former Cabinet members.

The irrelevancy of home and swing states

The Harris selection provides further evidence that vice presidential selection gives little weight to choosing a running mate from a competitive large (or medium-size or small) state. Although pundits often emphasize this criterion and political scientists devote more time to it than virtually any other topic regarding vice presidential selection and campaigns, as we have pointed out repeatedly since 2012 here, presidential candidates never choose running mates for that reason. Lyndon B. Johnson was chosen to help John F. Kennedy in the South, not just in Texas, and the home state of a vice presidential pick has not been the principal reason for any selection since then. ❖

James Briggs, IndyStar: Let's get an obvious point out of the way: Gov. Eric Holcomb's words aren't going to make Indiana more inclusive. Actions speak louder ... well, you know the quote. Holcomb on Tuesday delivered a speech on race and equity that offered 26 minutes of words and only a few cautious actions. Holcomb announced he will require Indiana State Police troopers to wear body cameras by spring 2021; he will create a new job with the title of chief equity, inclusion and opportunity officer (it will report to him), and he will require the state to track and monitor diversity within its agencies. Those are the highlights. They're fine. They're better than nothing. Body cameras are popular, but, as I've written before, research has found no strong evidence that cameras change how police do their jobs or make citizens more satisfied with police encounters. Holcomb's new cabinet position is a good gesture, yet doesn't guarantee any results. More data on diversity is valuable, but what the state does with it will matter more. Holcomb's address offered little more than a scorecard of items for which he can be held accountable — some day, but not, conveniently enough, until after he faces re-election in November. Dr. Woody Myers, the Democratic candidate for governor, who is Black, summed up his reaction to the speech in six words: "Much too little, much too late." That's one way to look at Holcomb's speech — and it is fair. Here's another, more generous perspective: Holcomb delivered a message to Republican-leaning Indiana, including his own conservative base, which many people don't want to hear. That took some courage. Here's a Republican governor talking about lynching and Jim Crow laws at a time when many of Holcomb's fellow Republicans don't want to talk about that history. They especially don't like to talk about how that history is still relevant today. But it is. And Holcomb went there. "I think the governor made some very important first steps to address and speak to the larger Black community," said Marshawn Wolley, a spokesman for the African American Coalition of Indianapolis. "Having a governor declare 'Black lives matter' and 'Black livelihoods matter' is significant." That isn't going to fix racism. But it counts as progress in a state where many people want to pretend there is no problem at all. ❖



William McRaven, Washington Post: Today, as we struggle with social upheaval, soaring debt, record unemployment, a runaway pandemic, and rising threats from China and Russia, President Trump is actively working to undermine every major institution in this country. He has planted the seeds of doubt in the minds of many Americans that our institutions aren't functioning properly. And, if the president doesn't trust the intelligence community, law enforcement, the press, the military, the Supreme Court, the medical professionals, election officials and the postal workers, then why should we? And if Americans stop believing in the system of institutions, then what is left but chaos and who can bring order out of chaos: only

Trump. It is the theme of every autocrat who ever seized power or tried to hold onto it. Our institutions are the foundation of a functioning democracy. While they are not perfect, they are still the strongest bulwark against overzealous authority figures. The institutions give the people a voice; a voice in the information we receive, a voice in the laws we pass, a voice in the wars we fight, the money we spend and the justice we uphold. And a voice in the people we elect. As Trump seeks to undermine the U.S. Postal Service and stop mail-in voting, he is taking away our voice to decide who will lead America. It is not hyperbole to say that the future of the country could depend on those remarkable men and women who brave the elements to bring us our mail and deliver our vote. Let us ensure they have every resource possible to provide the citizens of this country the information they need, the ballots that they request and the Postal Service they deserve. ❖

Byron York, Washington Examiner: The news is filled with reports of President Trump's "assault" on the U.S. Postal Service. The president, Democrats and some in the media say, is deliberately slowing mail delivery and crippling the Postal Service so that it cannot handle an anticipated flood of voting by mail in the presidential election. Former President Barack Obama said Trump is trying to "actively kneecap" the Postal Service to suppress the vote. Speaker Nancy Pelosi has called the House back into session this week and has set an "urgent hearing" for Aug. 24, demanding Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and the head of the Postal Service Board of Governors testify "to address the sabotage of the Postal Service." Some of the accusations have grown so frantic that they resemble the frenzy of a couple of years ago over the allegation, from many of the same people, that Trump had conspired with Russia to fix the 2016 election. Now, it's the Postal Service. But what, actually, is going on? Here is a brief look at some of the issues involved. The idea that the Postal Service will not be able to handle the volume of mail in the election, or not be able to handle it within normal Postal Service time guidelines, does not make much sense. According to its most recent annual report, last year, in fiscal year 2019, the Postal Service handled 142.5 billion pieces of mail. "On a typical day, our 633,000 employees physically process and deliver 471 million mailpieces to nearly 160 million delivery points," the report says. This year, that number is higher, given the Postal Service's delivery of census forms and stimulus checks. Those alone added about 450 million additional pieces of mail. In 2016, about 136 million Americans voted in the presidential election. The number will probably be a bit higher this year. If officials sent ballots to every single American registered to vote, about 158 million people, and then 140 million people returned ballots, the roughly 298 million pieces of mail handled over the course of several weeks would be well within the Postal Service's ability to handle. ❖

Holcomb, clerks urge early vote

INDIANAPOLIS — If you're planning to vote absentee in the November elections, now is the time to request an absentee ballot ([WRTV](#)). That's the message from Hamilton County Clerk Kathy Williams, and it goes for all Indiana counties. Williams wants to be sure that ballots are returned by the mail-in deadline. "We've had a lot of calls with concern about the post office and its ability to get mail-in ballots returned in time," Williams said. "We encourage voters to apply now for their absentee ballots. We will start mailing those ballots the week of September 14th which will give folks six weeks to get them returned." Elkhart County Clerk Chris Anderson told [WSBT-TV](#), "The turnout is going to be 60,000, 70-, 75-, 80,000 Elkhart County registered voters. I fully expect 35-, 40-, 45% of those to be absentee by mail ballots." Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday echoed Williams' message and encouraged Hoosiers who qualify to not procrastinate when it comes to filling out absentee ballot applications. "I would encourage people to do it sooner rather than later just for the very reason that folks might be concerned," Holcomb said.



Indiana applies for fed lost wages

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana has applied for the federal government's Lost Wages Assistance program and hopes to begin delivering the \$300 supplemental weekly payments to most people receiving unemployment benefits in the next month or so ([IBJ](#)). At least nine states have already been approved for the program announced earlier this month by President Donald Trump, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is administering the program. Trump created the program

in an executive order after federal lawmakers failed to come to an agreement on a new pandemic aid program to replace the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act. The new payment replaces the \$600-a-week unemployment supplement that expired last month and was not extended by Congress. Indiana opted out of kicking in an extra \$100 payment from already-allocated CARES Act funds or other sources of state funding after an "evaluation of our economic situation," said Department of Workforce Development Commissioner Fred Payne. If approved, the \$300 weekly payments will be retroactive to Aug. 1.

ISDH to create school dashboard

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana will start matching COVID-19 tests to student records to notify schools of positive cases and create a public dashboard tracking the spread of the coronavirus in schools, the state's top health official announced Wednesday ([IBJ](#)). The state aims to launch the public dashboard next month. Schools will be asked to submit numbers daily on new positive cases among students, teachers, and staff, said Dr. Kristina Box, the state's health commissioner. The move to publicize COVID-19 cases in schools comes as many students across the state have returned to classrooms this month. "I cannot say this enough: The actions you take outside of school are just as important as those that you take inside the school building," Box said.

99% at Purdue, IU test negative

WEST LAFAYETTE — Purdue and Indiana universities say nearly 100 percent of their students do not have COVID-19. Health officials tested the student body and reported that 99.26% are virus free, the press release says ([WANE-TV](#)). The Lafayette Journal & Courier reported 223 students tested positive. As part of

the Protect Purdue Plan, all Purdue students are required to have a negative COVID-19 test before arriving on campus for the fall semester. First-year students began arriving Aug. 14 for Boiler Gold Rush orientation programs. Additional students are arriving throughout the week in order to begin classes on Aug. 24. Indiana University has reported the positivity rate among students tested for COVID-19 is about 1%. The figure was included in an email sent to faculty and staff Wednesday ([Bloomington Herald-Times](#)). IU classes are still set to begin Monday with a mix of both online and in-person instruction.

Hospitals take big pandemic hit

SOUTH BEND — Indiana hospital executives feared the financial impact of the coronavirus. Now a statewide study shows just how bad the early months of the pandemic were for the industry (South Bend Tribune). On average, Indiana hospitals had a negative operating margin of -8.3% for the month of April, the study by the Indiana Hospital Association found. Rural hospitals that have emergency departments and under 25 beds had it even worse, with an average negative operating margin of -27.7%.

Trump urges Goodyear boycott

WASHINGTON — President Trump called for a boycott of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. in response to reports that the company showed a slide to workers prohibiting the wearing of politically affiliated slogans, such as "Make America Great Again" apparel ([Wall Street Journal](#)). In a tweet Wednesday morning, Mr. Trump wrote: "Don't buy GOODYEAR TIRES - they announced a BAN ON MAGA HATS. Get better tires for far less!" Shares in Goodyear closed down 2.4% Wednesday, recovering somewhat after a steeper decline following the president's tweet.