



President Trump's Indiana legacy

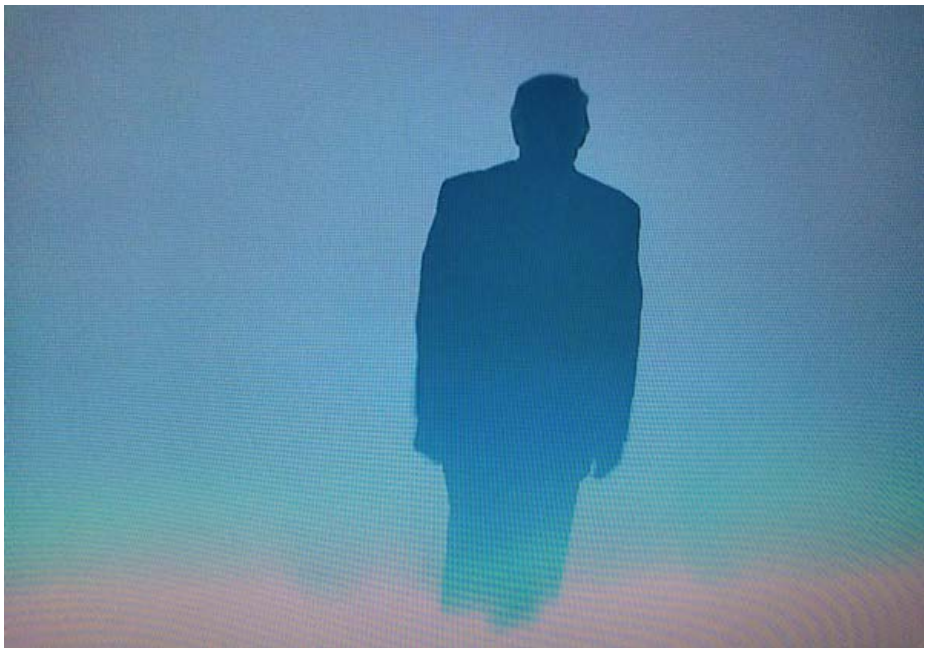
Trump's power flowed from the grassroots and never faltered here

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – As the era of President Trump draws to a close, the question is whether this will be a temporary reprieve, or a reality show to be continued over the next four years, leading to a compelling comeback in 2024.

From the time he began appearing in Indiana in March 2016, to the uncertain nature of his exit a month from now, we've not witnessed a political figure who has had this kind of sway with Hoosiers. There was the meteor of Robert F. Kennedy in 1968, who drew huge crowds leading up to his Democratic primary win, with his life snuffed out less than two months later by an assassin.

There was Barack Obama's 2008 campaign that drew crowds of up to 25,000 over a six-week period, followed by a general election repeat in which he became the



first Democrat to win the state's 11 Electoral College votes since 1964.

Before Kennedy and Obama, the only political fig-

Continued on page 4

Buttigieg's road to power

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the summer of 2019, after Pete Buttigieg delivered a comprehensively nuanced foreign policy treatise at Indiana University, I suggested that if Joe Biden were elected president, he should make the former South Bend mayor secretary of state.

I happened to be visiting the Badlands at the time of Buttigieg's IU speech, which was a scene where another young, promising American – Theodore Roosevelt – found himself grappling with the grief of the deaths of his mother and wife on the same day in 1884. Roosevelt went to the Dakotas to become a cowboy, raising cattle. He returned to New York several years later and was appointed to the U.S. Civil Service



“This is a rapidly evolving situation and it's why we have focused our initial vaccination efforts on front-line health care workers and long-term care facilities. As more vaccine becomes available, we want to continue to roll out eligibilty.” - Chief Medical Officer Lindsay Weaver



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



Commission in 1889 by President Benjamin Harrison.

After President William McKinley was elected in 1896, he chose TR as assistant secretary of the Navy on April 19, 1897. The secretary of the Navy was the older, lackadaisical Long D. Long, who gave his new assistant free rein. Roosevelt took the opportunity to rebuild the Navy into what he would later send around the world as the Great White Fleet. He refitted older ships, increased the number of U.S. dry docks. Years later, President Roosevelt would use this new fleet of heavy battleships to project power in what would ultimately become the "American century."

In a June 16, 1897, letter to the Naval War College, Roosevelt expressed his grasp of the task at hand and long range implications: "If we smash the Japanese Navy, definitely and thoroughly, then the presence of a Japanese army corps in Hawaii would merely mean the establishment of Hawaii as a half-way post for that army corps on its way to our prisons. If we didn't get control of the seas then no troops that we would be able to land after or just before the outbreak of a war could hold Hawaii against the Japanese. In other words I think our objective should be the Japanese fleet."

President-elect Biden announced Tuesday he was installing Pete Buttigieg as secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. "I trust Mayor Pete to lead this work with focus, decency, and a bold vision," Biden said. "He will bring people together to get big things done."

Biden said transportation is at "the intersection of some of our most ambitious plans to build back better," adding that his coming infrastructure improvement proposals would include the "second great railroad revolution," and said he would seek funding "to build more climate-resilient communities to deal with more extreme floods, droughts and super storms." Biden also said the U.S. "can own" the market for electric vehicles.

This could be the perfect place to use Buttigieg's considerable talents, and not some backwater D.C. outpost.

After he was introduced by Biden, Buttigieg recognized the historic context of where he's been and where he's going. "My hometown of South Bend, Indiana was built by the power of American transportation," he began. "From trade along the river at the bend that gives the city its name, to the rail lines which connected us to the rest of the country when we were considered the west, to livelihoods created by the good



paying union jobs at ... Bendix and Studebaker. And now climate and infrastructure innovation are bringing my community into the 21st Century."

He noted his first political foray – his unsuccessful 2010 run for Indiana treasurer – came on a platform supporting the Obama-Biden era rescue of the auto industry. "As a mayor fighting its way out of the Great Recession, infrastructure was at the heart of our vision," he said. "We reimagined how people and vehicles would move through our city unlocking new economic vibrancy through our urban core."

During his two terms as mayor he worked with Gov. Eric Holcomb to double-track the South Shore, and added bicycle mobility and electric

vehicle infrastructure, while often dealing with “inadequate state and federal funds.”

“I faced a constant battle with that natural enemy of all mayors, the pothole,” Buttigieg continued. “At its best, transportation makes the American dream possible, getting people and jobs where they need to be, directly and indirectly creating good-paying jobs. At its worst, misguided policies and missed opportunities can reinforce racial, economic and environmental injustice, dividing or isolating neighborhoods, undermining government’s basic goal to to empower everyone to thrive. Now comes a historic opportunity, this administration can deliver resources to create good jobs to address the climate challenge while equitably to empower all Americans.

“**Americans have given** this administration to build back better,” Buttigieg concluded. “And step one is to build. The U.S. should lead the way. Americans expect infrastructure week will forever be associated with results, and no longer a media punchline.” That was in reference to President Trump often declaration of a coming “insfrasture week” followed by ... nothing.

In January 2020, presidential candidate Buttigieg released his infrastructure plan [“Building for the 21st Century.”](#)

Jonathan French, writing for Medium.com, observed, “Most media outlets pointed to the overall highlights, but what separates his plan from his competition is the level of detail, specifically the detail of what is proposed for highways and bridges. I highly recommend that everyone read the entire plan, but the key components that I appreciate the most as a transportation professional are as follows: Highway Trust Fund funding reform; cutting 50% of the backlog of critical road repairs by 2030; repairing 50% of structurally deficient bridges by 2030; and committing to Vision Zero.”

French observes, “He recognizes that the gas tax can no longer be relied on as a sustainable funding source because it continues to decline in revenue production, and is also a barrier to mass implementation of climate change solutions in the transportation industry that don’t rely on fossil fuel consumption such as electric vehicles.”

According to his plan, Buttigieg will “require his DOT to propose a new and sustainable user fee-based system, such as a vehicle-miles-traveled fee with appropriate privacy protections that is already being piloted by states and can potentially replace the gas tax.”

“This is the first infrastructure plan that is proposing a specific sustainable solution to the ongoing Highway Trust Fund funding issues, and it is one that is growing in popularity,” French said. “Too often, Congress and past ad-

ministrations have relied on gimmicks and funding transfers to keep the Trust Fund solvent because they didn’t want to raise the gas tax. As he does with many subjects, Buttigieg refocuses the question completely as it isn’t whether or not to raise the gas tax; we’re past that debate. Now, it’s what can replace it.

“That debate has never really happened in Congress and he’s proposed the answer without the need for a commission or study that would take more time away from implementation,” French continues. “Realistically, implementation will take time, and all of the previous studies and pilot programs have presented user fees as an alternative and not as a mandate. The sooner that automakers, Congress, states, municipalities and the general public all start the discussion around user fees and come up with a combined solution, the sooner they can become a 21st century reality and can replace the archaic and insufficient 20th century gas tax.”

In his Vision Zero segment, Buttigieg observes, “The 36,500 people that were killed due to crashes in the

United States during 2018, which is obviously well above zero.” To achieve this commitment to zero deaths and serious injuries, he has proposed the following: Incentivizing municipalities, counties and states to provide safe, accessible roads and retrofit existing roads. Doubling funding for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) which would allow for the installation of more accessible sidewalks, shared use paths, crosswalks and bike lanes to increase pedestrian and bike safety. Focusing on rural road safety as rural roads account for 50% of all traffic fatalities and

are twice as deadly as urban roads.”

French concludes, “Knowing that he was a mayor with first-hand experience in implementing infrastructure solutions, I was highly anticipating Pete Buttigieg’s infrastructure plan for highways and bridges and it does not disappoint. With a focus on funding reform, highway safety and research, it truly is the best of the field and its pragmatic solutions including taking a ‘carrot and stick’ approach with states around funding are the type of thinking that is needed in Washington. Pete Buttigieg has truly devised solutions that will finally move transportation and infrastructure forward in the United States during the first half of the 21st century and beyond.”

If Buttigieg is confirmed by the Senate, he’ll become the first Millennial and first openly LGBT member of a presidential cabinet.

If President Biden gives his new transportation secretary the latitude to innovate, it will burnish the growing notion that Mayor Pete has a vivid political future projected in the timeline of decades. ❖



Trump, from page 1

ure who could move the Hoosier masses the way Donald Trump did over the past four years was D.C. Stephenson, the Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon, who orchestrated a pervasive power grab in 1924 (backing Gov. Ed Jackson, winning the General Assembly and dozens of city halls) before a murder indictment and conviction ended that chapter.

Trump packed Indiana's basketball fieldhouses like no other from 2016 to 2018, leaving in his wake the cream of the Democratic crop (Evan Bayh, Joe Donnelly, John Gregg, Christina Hale) stunned, defeated and idled.

The most extraordinary aspect of Trump's rise with Hoosiers is that it came at the grassroots level. He didn't have a single establishment endorsement and just two slated delegates, Rex Early and Bill Springer, prior to his emphatic 53% primary victory in May 2016. Gov. Mike Pence's backhanded endorsement of Sen. Cruz was the closest Trump got to any Indiana GOP imprimatur. He brought the rest of the GOP establishment around when he tabbed Pence for his ticket in July 2016, with campaign manager Paul Manafort, Ivanka and Jared Kushner realizing Pence as a needed ramp to evangelical Christians that would become a significant part of his emerging coalition.

Since then, Indiana has been a rock-ribbed Trump state. There are three components to this allure. The first is the economic Republicans who view Trump's obsession with Wall Street and the stock market as good for business. They watched their stock portfolios and 401Ks grow rapidly. Out on the farm and in the state's sprawling manufacturing sector, these farmers and industrialists believed in Trump when he picked a trade fight with the Chinese, who they saw as intellectual property thieves who propped up competition with buttresses of the state.

There were the social conservatives who saw Trump's embrace of the Federalist Society's judicial list as a reason to back such a morally and ethically compromised candidate. Pence's Bill Clinton-era writings on the presidency as a societal moral beacon seem quaint today.

And, finally, there were the masses on the Indiana assembly lines, farms and Main Street antique shops and museums that indicated a community stuck in a bygone era. They see an emerging browner, polysexual America as a threat to their being and existence. These were the folks who waited in long lines outside of Northside Gym, the Ford Center, the Fairgrounds Coliseum, Westfield's Grand



Park and the Southport Fieldhouse to lap up Trump's stream of consciousness, coming at the expense of Hoosier "lib-tards."

These are the folks who openly laughed at this writer for having the audacity to wear a facemask into a Greenwood convenience store as the pandemic wreaked havoc last May.

"Beverly" of the Missouri Ozarks captures the prevailing sentiment found in ruby red, outer Indiana with a Facebook post mulling this question: "Why do people continue supporting Trump no matter what he does?"

Beverly: "You all don't get it. I live in Trump country. They don't give a shit what he does. He's just something to rally around and hate liberals, that's it, period. He absolutely realizes that and plays it up. They love it. He knows they love it. The fact that people act like it's

anything other than that proves to them that liberals are idiots, all the more reason for high fives all around.

"Because they're not even keeping track of any coherent narrative, it's irrelevant. Fuck liberals is the only relevant thing," Beverly continues. "That's why they just laugh at it all because you all don't even realize they truly don't give a fuck about whatever the conversation is about. Look at the issue with not wearing the masks. I can

tell you what that's about. It's about exposing fear. They're playing chicken with nature, and whoever flinches just moved down their internal pecking order, one step closer to being a liberal.

"You've got to understand the one core value that they hold above all others is hatred for what they consider weakness because that's what they believe strength is, hatred of weakness. Sometimes they will lump vulnerability in with weakness. They do that because people tend to start humbling themselves when they're in some compromising or overwhelming circumstance, and to them, that's an obvious sign of weakness. Kindness = weakness. Honesty = weakness. Compromise = weakness. They consider their very existence to be superior in every way to anyone who doesn't hate weakness as much as they do."

That Trump failed to use his bully pulpit to inspire mask usage resulted in a pandemic spiraling out of control by Election Day, costing him his chance at reelection.

The fact that Trump polled almost 200,000 more Hoosier votes in November than he did in 2016 is evidence that he grew his base in Indiana. The future problem for Republicans is a similar one facing post-Obama Democrats. There were hundreds of thousands of new Obama

voters in 2008 who never turned out again for an election.

When gauging President Trump's impacts on Indiana and the United States, here are the important metrics:

■ **Elections:** Trump won the contested 2016 Indiana presidential primary 53% (591,514 votes) to 36.6% for Sen. Ted Cruz and 7.7% for Ohio Gov. John Kasich. Trump carried 87 counties to five for Cruz. He won the 2016 General Election 56.5% to 37.5%, with 1,557,286 votes and helped Sen. Todd Young defeat Evan Bayh 52.1% to 42.4%, and Eric Holcomb over John Gregg 51.4% to 45.4%. In 2020, Trump defeated Joe Biden 57.1% to 41% with 1,729,516 votes, carrying 87 counties. He won the Electoral College 306-232 over Clinton in 2016 and lost it 306-232 to Biden on Monday.

■ **Trump approval:** Trump never cracked 50% approval in Gallup. He reached 49% in January 2020. It stood at 46% in the final preelection poll, while just 28% felt the country was headed in the right direction. On Nov. 19, it stood at 43/55%. In the October Ball State Hoosier Poll, Trump's approval was 41% and disapproval at 45%.

■ **GDP under Trump:** Candidate Trump predicted Gross Domestic Product rising into the 4 to 6% range. Here's a look at annual U.S. GDP growth during Trump's presidency. The 2020 estimate comes from the Federal Reserve: 2017: +2.3%; 2018: +3%; 2019: +2.2%; and 2020: -3.7%.

■ **Hoosiers in the Trump administration:** More than 30 Hoosiers joined the Trump administration, headed by Vice President Mike Pence. Cabinet members include Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, CMS Commissioner Seema Verma, Surgeon General Jerome Adams, who controlled nearly half of the federal budget, while former senator Dan Coats was director of National Intelligence until August 2019.

■ **CARES Act:** President Trump signed the CARES Act in late March 2020 as the COVID pandemic kicked in. Indiana has received \$2.4 billion.

■ **Market Facilitation Program:** To lessen the brunt of his tariff trade war with China, President Trump has spent \$51 billion on subsidies to U.S. farmers, including \$1.3 billion to Hoosier farmers. In 2020, the trade deficit was on track to exceed \$600 billion, the largest gap since 2008. While GOP cries of "socialism" were aimed at Democrats, the tangible evidence of such activity came from the Trump administration to the farm.

■ **COVID:** As of Monday, Indiana has suffered 6,657 deaths since March, had 434,642 positive

cases, administered 5,000,278 tests to 2,446,551 individuals. In schools, 16,383 students and 3,404 teachers have tested positive as of Dec. 11. In the U.S., the death toll on Wednesday stood at 303,948, while there have been 16.72 million COVID infections reported.

■ **Obamacare:** Since Trump took office, 2.3 million Americans have lost their health insurance coverage. Indiana had 140,931 people enrolled in private individual market plans through the Indiana exchange during the open enrollment period for 2020 coverage. That's down about 35% from the exchange's peak in 2015, when more than 218,000 people enrolled. According to the IndyStar in October, more than 572,000 Indiana low-income



President Trump depicted in a painting by artist Jon McNaughton.

residents receive their health insurance through HIP 2.0, about 100,000 more than at this time last year, officials for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration said. While the Trump administration tried to end Obamacare, it never developed a viable alternative.

■ **America First:** According to George Packer of The Atlantic, President Trump withdrew the United States from 13 international organizations, agreements and treaties, including the Paris Climate Accords and the Trans Pacific Partnership.

■ **Immigration:** Trump has built about 400 miles of the Mexican border wall. Mexico has not paid for any portion of this project. According to the U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. apprehensions totaled 859,501 in 2019, 404,142 in 2018 and 310,531 in 2017. In the final two years of the Obama administration, there were 415,816 apprehensions in 2016 and 337,117 in 2015. Since 2017, at least 5,500 children have been separated from their parents at the Mexican border, with 545 children still not reunited with their parents as of October.

■ **Environment:** According to The Atlan-

tic, President Trump reversed 80 environmental rules and regulations.

■ **Judiciary:** President Trump appointed more than 220 judges to the federal bench – all of them rated conservative by the Federalist Society, including three to the Supreme Court, Justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett of Indiana.

■ **National Debt and deficits:** The national debt increased by \$7 trillion since 2017, or 37%. The U.S. federal budget deficit is projected to reach a record of \$3.3 trillion in 2020. According to The Balance.com, this increase is largely a result of government spending in reaction to the coronavirus pandemic. U.S. federal outlays for 2020 total \$6.6 trillion, which is \$2.2 trillion more than in 2019. Revenue for 2020 is projected to be \$3.3 trillion, too, which leaves the deficit at \$3.3 trillion. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that this deficit for 2020 will be 16% of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), which is the largest it's been since 1945.

■ **Emoluments:** According to The Atlantic, taxpayers and campaign donors handed over at least \$8 million to Trump family businesses.

■ **Lies, false statements and mis-truths:** The Washington Post's Fact Checker had documented 22,247 false or misleading claims in 1,316 days.

Hupfer says Trump impact was critical

Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer told HPI of Trump's Indiana impacts, "Certainly in 2016 the Trump/Pence ticket was critical. They led the ticket by a substantial margin. It helped the governor and down-ballot races across the state.

"When I think about the last four years, from a policy standpoint here in Indiana with the federal government, it's been very strong," Hupfer continued. "They've responded and reacted with the governor's office in such a positive manner. That will be the legacy long term, whether it was the lead crisis (in East Chicago) that they jumped on, whether it's the extension of HIP 2.0, whether it's double tracking the South Shore, they've just been really good partners. The state has had some really big wins that I think will be impactful for Hoosiers for years and decades to come."

Packer writes in The Atlantic: "America under Trump became less free, less equal, more divided, more alone, deeper in debt, swampier, dirtier, meaner, sicker, and deader. It also became more delusional. No number from Trump's years in power will be more lastingly destructive than his 25,000 false or misleading statements. Super-spread by social media and cable news, they contaminated the minds of tens of millions of people. Trump's lies will linger for years, poisoning the atmosphere like radioactive dust.

"The most mendacious of Trump's predecessors would have been careful to limit these thoughts to private recording systems," Packer continued. "Trump spoke them

openly, not because he couldn't control his impulses, but intentionally, even systematically, in order to demolish the norms that would otherwise have constrained his power. To his supporters, his shamelessness became a badge of honesty and strength. They grasped the message that they, too, could say whatever they wanted without apology."

Former Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats spanned the opportunity Trump posed for Hoosiers, and the pitfalls after he was fired by Twitter in August 2019. Since then, Trump's reelection campaign seemed to attack the election process itself, a stunt that appears to have ended with Joe Biden securing his Electoral College victory on Monday.

"The most urgent task American leaders face is to ensure that the election's results are accepted as legitimate. Electoral legitimacy is the essential linchpin of our entire political culture," Coats said in a New York Times op-ed in September. "We should see the challenge clearly in advance and take immediate action to respond. The most important part of an effective response is to finally, at long last, forge a genuinely bipartisan effort to save our democracy, rejecting the vicious partisanship that has disabled and destabilized government for too long. If we cannot find common ground now, on this core issue at the very heart of our endangered system, we never will.

"Our key goal should be reassurance," Coats added. "We must firmly, unambiguously reassure all Americans that their vote will be counted, that it will matter, that the people's will expressed through their votes will not be questioned and will be respected and accepted."

Clearly, with 70% of Republicans seeing the coming Biden presidency as illegitimate, Coats has his work cut out for him.

Whether Trump forges a credible comeback in four years is open to speculation. His populist imprint on society may be more enduring than his personal brand of politics.

New Yorker writer Adam Gropnik warned in 2016, "Countries don't really recover from being taken over by unstable authoritarian nationalists of any political bent, left or right – not by Peróns or Castros or Putins or Francos or Lenins."

That view prompted Charles Homans to observe in the New York Times Magazine, "The institutional and social frailties they expose outlive them. And the impossibly dark punchline offered by the Broadway-caudillo drag of Trump's latest phase is that the United States, the world's most powerful democracy, did not even get a real Perón. The authoritarian style arrives in America not in the form of a general or an intelligence agency thug, but in the form of a guy who was sweating along to the disco cover of 'Don't Cry for Me, Argentina' at Studio 54.

"Instead of government, we had a stage," Homans concludes. "Regardless of what happens ... this is the thing we know now and can never unlearn. The truth is he'll never leave us." ❖

Hoosier GOP accepts Biden ... sort of

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON – After strongly supporting or at least acquiescing for weeks to President Donald Trump’s attempt to declare himself the winner of the presidential election, Republicans in the Indiana congressional delegation accepted his defeat earlier this week – sort of.



Democrat Joe Biden prevailed over Trump, 306-232, in the Electoral College on Dec. 14. Following the tally, one Hoosier Republican addressed the result.

“Today, the Electoral College has cast their votes and selected Joe Biden as the president-elect,” Sen. Mike Braun said in a statement. “State legislatures, state courts, and the United States Supreme Court have not found enough evidence of voter fraud

to overturn the results of the Electoral College vote. I, like many Hoosiers, am disappointed by the results of the Electoral College vote, but today marks a watershed moment where we must put aside politics and respect the constitutional process that determines the winner of our presidential election.”

Sen. Todd Young, who is helping lead GOP efforts to hold two Georgia Senate seats in January runoff elections, was lower key in his acknowledgement of Biden’s victory.

“The Electoral College submitted its vote, and I also think as we look into next year, it’s very important that each of us pledges to work with President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect [Kamala] Harris to ensure that we keep the American people safe and secure so that we get through this coronavirus period and we emerge very strongly on the back end of it,” Young said during a Dec. 15 Senate leadership press conference.

Five Hoosier Republican House members – Reps. Jim Banks, Jim Baird, Jackie Walorski, Trey Hollingsworth and Greg Pence – signed an amicus brief in support of a Texas lawsuit that challenged the election outcome in Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Georgia.

The Supreme Court rejected the Texas motion, saying Texas didn’t have standing to contest election procedures in other states. The decision was the highest-profile of dozens of losses in court for allies of Trump, who never presented sufficient evidence of election fraud.

In an email exchange with HPI, Banks said he has “uttered ‘President-elect Biden’ for a number of weeks.” He disputed that the lawsuit sought to overturn election

results, calling that characterization a “slanted narrative.”

“The amicus brief supported the Supreme Court looking into questions of who can change election rules and presents a valid legal question that Congress and the courts should dig into in the future,” Banks said. “Can executive branches or unelected positions change these rules unilaterally or shouldn’t they be passed by legislatures instead? Seems like a valid question among others that Congress should dive into.”

The other legislators who signed the amicus brief did not respond to multiple HPI requests asking if they accepted Biden as president-elect.

“I’m still amazed,” former Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke (R) said of the Indiana Republicans backing the Texas lawsuit. “That runs counter to our history. We spent 250 years trying to expand the franchise, not restrict it.”

Helmke said the reason so many GOP members of Congress stuck with Trump to the bitter end is because they feared primaries from Trump supporters if they broke ranks.

“They’re trying to make sure they stay on the right side of Trump,” said Helmke, a professor of practice at the O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University and director of the Civic Leaders Center.

How Republicans questioning the election outcome describe their efforts can help them avoid criticism that they’ve gone too far, said Andrew Downs, director of

the Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics at Purdue Fort Wayne.

“An awful lot of people think it would be reasonable to follow the process all the way to the end,” Downs said. Banks, for instance, “has not suggested anything completely outrageous yet.”

The Hoosier Republicans who backed Trump’s effort to hold onto the White House without evidence of

voting fraud likely weren't taking much of a political risk. They're in safe seats in a strong pro-Trump state.

"It's hard to defeat somebody because of one thing," Downs said. "By the time we get to 2022, it will be gone in terms of making a difference to voters."

Political memories could be even shorter.

"In a month, I think people are going to forget they waited this long to call [Biden] president-elect," Helmke said. "I don't think there will be short-term political

consequences. But when the history books are written, it might be a different story."

Sowing doubt about the legitimacy of an election might shake the foundation of democracy, but it probably won't cost Republicans the next election. ❖

Schoeff is Washington correspondent for Howey Politics Indiana.

What happens to GOP after President Trump?

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – After President Trump, what happens to the Republican Party? Quite a topic these days. So, let's consider some questions about whether the Republican Party will remain solidly Trumpist or will be less Trumpy and whether future GOP prospects are bleak or bright.



Q. Will Republicans in Congress now pull away from Donald Trump?

A. No. Here's proof. Only 27 of 249 Republicans in Congress were identified last week as having finally acknowledged that Joe Biden is president-elect.

Q. Do all those non-acknowledging Republicans think Trump really won?

A. Of course not. They aren't politically stupid. They've known for weeks that Biden won and that Rudy Giuliani's lawsuits are frivolous.

Q. Well, if they know Biden won, why don't they say so?

A. Because, as I said, they aren't politically stupid. They don't want to anger Trump and his base and suffer a loss in the next Republican primary or fatal defections in the next general election. Just saying publicly that Biden is president-elect can bring a dreaded angry tweet. Many of them, showing they are fully in touch with reality, congratulate Biden privately.

Q. Does Trump think he really won?

A. There is one school of thought that he of course knows he lost but is cleverly spreading the myth of mass rigging to keep his base stirred up, maybe for another presidential race in 2024, and to keep donations pouring in. There is the other opinion that he actually is unhinged and really believes all those rambling conspiracy theories. I'm not getting into psychoanalysis one way or the other here.

Q. Will Trump be a candidate for president again?

A. Yes. He will at least announce that he is, maybe

on Biden's inauguration day. He will start out tweeting and rising money as a candidate. Trump still controls the Republican National Committee and has a solid base that could guarantee him the Republican nomination. And he could again win the presidency. Those possibilities are another reason congressional Republicans don't want to cross him.

Q. But shouldn't congressional Republicans also be worried about how voters rejected President Trump pretty decisively in the popular vote and in the Electoral College? Shouldn't they fear voters will seek to punish Republican candidates if the party sticks with him?

A. Voters on Nov. 3 certainly didn't punish Republicans in general. Even though Democrats were anticipating an anti-Trump tide to sweep away Republicans for Congress, Republican candidates other than Trump did very well, winning almost all of the "toss-up" races and pulling upsets as well.

Q. Then are future Republican prospects bright?

A. Could be for 2022. If there is the usual backlash against the president's party in 2022 midterm elections, Republicans could wipe out the narrow Democratic House margin and regain control there. Long term, GOP prospects could be bleak if the Biden wins in Georgia and Arizona and his lead of seven million in the popular vote signal trends for the future.

Q. What could most affect future Republican success or failure?

A. The Democrats. In politics, just as in a football game, what one team can do is affected by what the other team is doing. The Democratic brand didn't do well in the election this fall. Will it improve? Many of the voters who decided they couldn't take any more of Trump decided then as they looked down the ballot that they couldn't take what they perceived Democrats to stand for either.

Q. Will Trump still be a big factor politically?

A. Will it snow in South Bend this winter? Some things are certain.

Q. But will Trump help or hurt Republican prospects?

A. That is uncertain. He was unpredictable as a president. So, what he will do or tweet as a former president and how it will be perceived is unpredictable as well.

❖

Colwell is a South Bend Tribune columnist.

President Trump became the disruptor

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – The late founder of Walmart was a disruptor of major proportions. His company launched a retail revolution from the sleepy backwaters of Arkansas and totally transformed Main Street USA by creating a dynamic big box retail entity that effectively replaced your local hardware, sporting goods, clothing, fabric, appliance, stationery, toy, dry goods, pet and you name it stores.



His work was revolutionary, highly profitable and controversial. Worshipped by some and cursed by many, Sam Walton became the be all and end all to the world of retail. He created a concept that would last forever, or did he?

Just when it appeared that Walmart would become the most dominant and powerful business in the world, along came a diminutive young man named Jeff Bezos and a quaint online bookseller named Amazon. While Walmart brought gale force winds to the retail world, Amazon brought five hurricanes tied together with a trio of tornados. Just as Sam Walton before him, Bezos and Amazon found themselves worshipped and reviled by nearly equal numbers. Such is the life of a disruptor.

I believe that President Trump will be viewed by history as a disruptor and not just because he is scorned by such a large percent of the American people and much of the world. He will be viewed as the proverbial bull in the china shop that got things done at the same time that he crashed the aisles.

With President Trump's time in office quickly coming to a close, it's time to take a balanced look at the legacy of his time at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. It's a mixed bag and deserves more than just knee jerk adulation or vile contempt.

Let's start at the beginning. Donald Trump was not an experienced politician when he entered the Republican presidential horse race in 2015. A few of the lessons that your normal politician learns on the way up from county council to presidential candidate are:

1. Don't argue and fight with people who buy their ink in a barrel.
2. Don't criticize former office holders from your party because everyone has their friends.
3. Don't make fun of a person's appearance, disability or mannerisms.
4. Make more friends than enemies.

Unfortunately, in the rough and tumble world

of New York commercial real estate and in the cloistered world of a sheltered childhood and hallowed halls of a billionaire's Park Avenue penthouse, you just didn't learn about all of the niceties of a civilized world. In a Trump world if you saw something stupid or someone who did something stupid, you let them, their friends and the New York Times know that they were stupid. In business, this brash, take-no-prisoners approach rarely blew up in your face. In politics, Karma is a bitch!

It is always a tricky business trashing your opponents just enough to get the nomination without alienating them and their supporters beyond redemption. It is a delicate high wire balancing act that has been practiced since the beginning of democracy. Let's face it, before democracy, you could just whack your opponent's head off, hold it up for the crowd to see and that generally brought the people over to your side. Democracy guaranteed that you would cross paths with many of your former opponents again and again.

In the 2016 presidential primaries, Donald Trump resorted to a hodgepodge of childish name calling, attacks on a person's appearance and dismissed many opponents by calling them liars, losers or idiots. My guess is that if there is one insult or slur that Trump used that he would like to take back, it would be the sickening attack on Sen. John McCain. I don't care whether you like John McCain or not, you simply do not impugn a man who was shot out of the sky by a missile over Hanoi, then beaten and tortured for nearly seven years in a North Vietnamese prison. You do not question his heroism or honor. Trump did both and continually paid the price for it.

The facts of life of a 16-candidate primary dictate that a candidate can win the lion's share of delegates with solid backing of 25% of the voters. Trump realized that by playing to the fears, dislikes and prejudices of the far right wing of the Republican Party and to those who had never engaged in politics, he could form an unstoppable coalition and pile up enough delegates before any effective stop-Trump effort might coalesce. He was correct and demolished his opposition in a staggeringly effective manner.

Donald Trump was able to unify most of the Republican Party using the siren call of defeating "Crooked Hillary." While there were a few "Never Trumpers" who were willing to go public in the summer of 2016, most laid low with the smug assumption that there was no way in this world or any other where Trump would be elected president. They were wrong. "Never Trumpers" and Democrats alike were shocked at just how many disaffected Americans there were who were fed up with the status quo in government. They may have been shocked by their loss at the polls but they proved reluctant to take away any lessons from their defeat.

Celebrities, pundits, Democrat politicians, the media and the lunatic fringe quickly declared that Trump was not their president. Others took the rhetoric and transformed it into a relentless four-year coordinated campaign to delegitimize Trump's victory and give full credit to the

fallacy of a Russian cabal and conspiracy. This morphed into the trainwreck of a needless and ridiculous coup attempt called impeachment.

Something interesting happened along the way. The great disruptor and divider managed to achieve a significant number of accomplishments that are almost shocking in their scope. President Trump has nearly remade the judiciary by filling hundreds of federal court vacancies with conservatives. He nominated and got confirmed three conservative Supreme Court justices. Trump got tough with Canada, Mexico and China about trade inequities and in the process after verbal battle and the threat or implementation of tariffs began an amazing process of returning manufacturing jobs to the United States.

Trump's stimulus and tax plan was sweeping and comprehensive and made America more competitive around the world. Our corporate tax rates were moved closer to those of our competitors, repatriating massive amounts of capital back to the United States where it could be used to improve production, pay dividends and lead to the hiring of record numbers of new employees.

Unemployment shrank to historically low levels and the rising tide of success lifted all boats. Black, Hispanic and youth unemployment rates dropped to their lowest levels in history. Personal incomes rose dramatically and the United States, once again, returned to its status as the economic behemoth of the world. President Trump cut governmental red tape and stimulated innovation and productivity. He also opened up our energy industry and suddenly, the United States was completely energy independent.

For all the talk of Donald Trump being disrespected by foreign leaders and governments, loathed by some of our friends and mocked by many, the president achieved significant results in foreign policy. Trump withdrew the United States from the disastrous Paris Climate Accord that would have cost us thousands of manufacturing jobs. He abrogated the sham of a treaty with Iran governing the spread of nuclear weapons. He cajoled our NATO allies into spending billions of dollars more in support of their own defense each year. He moved our U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. He implemented a tough travel ban for people coming from terrorist states. He replaced NAFTA with an historic trade deal with Mexico and Canada. He leveraged Europe to admit more U.S. imports. Trump moved to block the export of critical technology to China.

Donald Trump also was able to achieve something that no president, Republican or Democrat, had been able to do by significantly expanding the number of Middle Eastern and Muslim countries who signed treaties with Israel, opening up airline flights and commerce. Although the mainstream media largely ignored this development, the cause of peace was significantly advanced by the work

of President Trump.

It can truthfully be stated that Donald Trump achieved more in four years in office than most presidents have accomplished in two terms. Our military, foreign policy and economy are all stronger as a result of President Trump's efforts.

There was a distinct dark side to the Trump presidency. Civility, respect and human decency were frequent casualties to his operational style. He went through cabinet secretaries and political appointments like a Steelers fan downing beers at a pre-game tailgate. Chug, chug. Smash the can on his head and throw the trash away for someone else to pick up.

Plenty of exceptional and decent people were vilified, verbally pilloried and discarded with nothing more than a vile Twitter tweet. Trump's ugly treatment of those who stood in his way will be his worst legacy and may have proven to be his ultimate undoing. You just don't treat people like garbage and not expect some sort of payback. Trump received his payback in spades.

I will not live long enough and, possibly, no one reading this column will live long enough to see Donald

Trump accurately evaluated by historians. It may never happen. So much of what he achieved economically has been swept away by the pandemic. When the economy rebounds as it is certainly going to do, there will be Joe Biden sitting in the Oval Office to take the credit and a compliant media ready to serve as his propaganda arm. You doubt this? Remember that Barack Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize before he even took office.

The main characteristic of a disruptor is that they are confronted with an army of detractors who say that what the disruptor is trying to do just cannot be done. After the disruptor proves them wrong and wildly succeeds, he is faced with more than an ample supply of characters who claim that they were responsible for the success. This time will be no different.

The Trump presidency will be reduced to a few short paragraphs in a high school textbook and dwarfed by the chapters dedicated to the many wonderful achievements of Barack Obama and Joe Biden. In time, President Trump will historically reside somewhere near Calvin Coolidge and William Howard Taft, unsung, unloved and unmourned.

The greatest legacy of the presidential term of Donald Trump will be the death of truth and the death of an unbiased and fair press. Let us hope that who, what, when, where and why have not permanently faded into because.. ❖

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



Hupfer expands GOP to historic new highs

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Earlier this year, Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer pondered how much more dominant the state party could be. Now, in the wake of November's elections, he discovered that answer.

Hoosier Republicans now control 88% of all county elected offices, or 1,330 out of 1,509. This comes on top of holding all of the Statehouse constitutional offices, nine out of 11 congressional offices, 71 mayoral offices after a 19-office increase in 2019, while it has maintained super majorities in the Indiana House (71 out of 100) and Senate (40 out of 50).

In a memo to party stakeholders, Hupfer's partnership with Gov. Eric Holcomb has led to four of the strongest years in party history, with \$25 million raised. The Indiana GOP has set and broken fundraising and voting records, made significant inroads with constituencies not historically aligned with their party, and expanded the map of elected Republicans throughout the state.

Core to the success was the creation of a first-of-its-kind joint fundraising arrangement between the state party and the Holcomb campaign. This partnership, Team Holcomb, reflected Gov. Holcomb's commitment to ensure that Republicans up and down the ballot in Indiana had the funding necessary to run competitive races and win.

Team Holcomb got off to a fast start in 2017 helping to contribute to a record-setting year of fundraising for both entities: State party, \$1,999,908; Eric Holcomb for Indiana (EHFI), \$1,797,889.

That was followed in 2018 by Mike Braun's 50.7% to 44.8% victory over Sen. Joe Donnelly, while winning three Statehouse offices with at least 55.5% of the vote, while the state party raised \$3,522,775 and EHFI \$2,789,011.

During the 2019 municipal elections, the GOP picked up 19 city halls by investing over \$250,000 in local campaigns and recruiting and training grassroots volunteers. Gov. Holcomb and Chairman Hupfer did a barnstorm tour to support candidates in Terre Haute, Washington, Evansville, Jeffersonville, New Albany, Lawrence, Muncie, Fort Wayne, Elkhart, Valparaiso, and Kokomo. These targeted efforts led to flipping former Democrat strongholds in cities like Kokomo, Muncie, and Logansport, among

others. The INGOP posted \$3,030,679, while EHFI posted \$4,258,077.

Then came 2020, or "The Main Event" that saw Holcomb reelected with 56.5%, the ticket of President Trump and Vice President Pence carrying the state with 57%, while Todd Rokita was elected attorney general with 58% and Victoria Spartz staved off Democrat Christina Hale in the 5th CD. The Indiana Republican Party and Gov. Holcomb's reelection team deployed field staff in all 92 counties. These teammates, most of whom were volunteers, recruited over 700 additional volunteers to canvas the state.

This political team was a true force multiplier for during the 2020 cycle, achieving record-level voter contact numbers in this cycle: Phone calls, 2,650,000; door knocks, 839,000; along with 2 million text messages. As for fundraising, the INGOP raised \$3,987,667 and EHFI posted \$3,658,906.

The combined fundraising total for the 2017-2020 period is: State party: \$12,533,029; EHFI: \$12,503,883 for a fundraising total of \$25,036,912.

"Never has a political team achieved the successes Gov. Holcomb, Chairman Hupfer, and the Indiana Republican Party has achieved at every level," the GOP memo states. "The Indiana Democrats have been relegated to minor, fringe-party status, unable or unwilling to compete for Hoosier votes. Each time the Indiana Republican Party was said to have reached a political zenith, we've gone even higher and broadened our party even more. And we aren't done."

HPI conducted this Zoom interview with Hupfer on Tuesday morning:

HPI: Focusing on the end of the Indiana Republican Party memo, what jumped out at me was that 88% of all county offices are now held by Republicans. That is a staggering number. County and municipal officials have always been the bedrock of the state party. For one party to control 88% is amazing. When we talked

earlier this year, you said, "How much more success can there be?"

Hupfer: I had many folks, when I took the position, question where we can go with the party. We've proven in three successive elections that we could continue to broaden the relationship between the Republican Party to all Hoosiers, from the top of the ticket all the way down. It's just reflective of the policies the Republican Party stands for in Indiana; a success Indiana as a whole has had under Republican leadership at the state and local levels. Voters in Indiana have come to trust the Republican Party to deliver on our commitments. If we say something during the campaign we strive to achieve it. We're getting up there. I think it's important to talk about that 88% in a year where there's a lot of challenges, when maps



are drawn. That's going to be reflective of the depth and breadth of support the Republican Party has across the state. If you look at sports, sometimes it's easier to somehow rise to the top for a very brief moment than to stay there for an extended period of time. We're in that place now. At the completion of the governor's term, it will be 20 years. It will be a modern record. We as a party have to double down as far as delivering solution-based agendas and electing solution based candidates if we're going to stay at this lofty position and having this kind of trust relationship with voters.

HPI: The final sentence in the memo is "We're not done." So what comes next? Will you seek another term as chair?

Hupfer: I'm leaning that way. I'm going to talk to a bunch of folks. We're planning some travel around the state to talk to a wide swath of people connected to the party, from grassroots, to elected officials, to donors. We'll talk and get feedback as to what they would like to see for the next four years. From the governor's side, we've seen record after record in fundraising, both at the party, from the campaign, and we finished strong. We'll probably take a significant chunk of what's left from the governor's funds and form a PAC focused on supporting the governor's agenda, supporting solution-oriented candidates on the ballot moving forward, so we'll continue to actively raise money and provide the opportunity for people to support for those solution-oriented issues for the governor. Very shortly, Todd Young has done a tremendous job as U.S. senator and that election cycle is already underway. We don't have any Democrat names popping up yet, but it won't take long. We will continue to build on what we've done statewide in volunteer infrastructure, training and preparing for that next election in 2022.

HPI: What can you tell me about your redistricting priorities?

Hupfer: Anyone who has looked at that has given extremely high marks to Indiana. I would expect districts to be redrawn similar to the ways they've been done over the last several decades. Hopefully that can be accomplished. It's one of the things we need to get done this session. Obviously this session is going to be different at what will hopefully be the end of this pandemic and vaccines begin to get widely distributed. I think you'll see something similar to the past.

HPI: Will you seek to bolster the 5th CD?

Hupfer: You have to start with the new census data and see where the population is; see what districts you're going to be forced to expand or contract. Once you do that you can start looking at the map as a whole. I would expect the 5th District, based on what I know today, has probably grown in population and will have to



be redrawn in some manner. There's a couple of others that appear, anecdotally, to have additional population. So there will be other congressional districts that will be modified, at least slightly based on census data. They usually do.

HPI: Then you have your General Assembly maps, with multiple cycles at super majority. I don't think we've had super majorities that have lasted this long.

Hupfer: We will continue to do what we've done in the past and keep communities of interest together and draw as straight lines as we can, respect traditional borders. But again, until you see the census data to see what districts need to be drawn in what manner, I think you go with what Republicans have done historically, which is to draw districts that pass the eye test and be fairly drawn.

HPI: Are you interested in the 2024 governor's race? Is that something you're going to take a look at?

Hupfer: I'm not going to exclude anything, but I think it is not the time to be talking about 2024 for anyone who is a serious candidate. We're heading into what may be one of the most complex legislature sessions we've ever had in Indiana from a basic task at hand, which is the budget and COVID response. There will certainly be education pieces out there for the governor's Next Level Commission. It's going to be complicated, not just from an issues standpoint but from logistics standpoint. I think the electorate is fatigued. We've just gone through what has been a very intense and controversial in many ways election cycle. I think the electorate needs a significant breather to get through these challenges the state is facing. At the appropriate time those folks who are serious about it can emerge and start talking about their own aspirations and their visions for the state. But I think it's too early to start that.

HPI: Going back to Gov. Holcomb's speech on racial disparities last summer, you've taken some steps with the state party to increase that appeal across additional demographics that haven't traditionally backed Republicans. Talk to me about that.

Hupfer: From the party standpoint, one piece of it is our diversity series. We announced the makeup of the first class this past week. That class starts in January. Members, whether they're elected officials or folks who help with campaigns, or party chairmen, will talk to a diverse group of participants. I think it's going to be a chance for those same officials to learn from both our advisory board and our first class about those issues and how to better communicate to those communities. What channels of communications are best? That's one piece. The other piece is the day-to-day of what I've been doing for three years, going across the state and meeting with members and leaders of diverse communities, talking about what the Republican Party stands for, what our beliefs are, but also spending more time listening and learning and trying to find ways to build authentic long-term relationships, not focused on getting a vote in the

next election. The only way to do that is to build long-term, authentic relationships with honest dialogue. One of the reasons Republicans are popular is that our policies have moved the entire state forward. You'll see that from

the governor on the official side as well. I know each state agency is analyzing how best to help grow participation of minority communities in all aspects of government and society. ❖

Buttigieg nomination means history will be charted by Hoosiers

By **PETE SEAT**

INDIANAPOLIS – In nominating Pete Buttigieg to be his secretary of transportation, President-elect Joe Biden is maintaining at least one element of the present status quo in Washington; history will continue to be charted by Hoosiers.



The unwritten, yet steadfast rule, of Hoosiers replacing Hoosiers permeates from the highest echelons of the federal government down to the entry level staff who make peanuts. Ron Klain, Indianapolis native and North Central graduate, will replace Vice President Mike Pence as the senior most Hoosier in the White House when he becomes Biden's chief of staff.

The Hoosier cabinet seat being vacated by Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar will be warmed, if confirmed, by Buttigieg.

Jim Banks, the Fort Wayne area member of Congress, will claim our rightful spot at the congressional leadership table as the newly elected chairman of the Republican Study Committee after Todd Young's term as chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee comes to an end.

Why does any of this matter? If you know, you know. And if you don't know, I might as well tell you. Hoosiers, the saying goes, are the best people in the world. While it's unclear who exactly first said that (hint: it was me right here in this column), we do know that "where ever you go there is always a Hoosier doing something very important."

Trite and overused, that quote from Indianapolis native Kurt Vonnegut is oh so right.

These rolling hills and fertile plains of flyover country have bred or reared the heartiest of our nation's public servant stock and we should give Biden credit for taking note.

Among those history making Hoosiers are the three presidents who at one time called Indiana home. The president with the shortest term in history, William

Henry Harrison, was appointed the first governor of the Indiana Territory by John Adams. Abraham Lincoln spent one-fourth of his life, from the age of seven to 21, in Indiana. And Benjamin Harrison got a longer stint than grandpa, one full term, when he was plucked straight out of Indianapolis for the top job.

But where we've really made our mark is as the mother of vice presidents. Starting with Schuyler Colfax, vice president under Ulysses S. Grant, to the current president of the Senate, Mike Pence, six Hoosiers have performed the role Teddy Roosevelt famously said was "not a steppingstone to anything except oblivion."

There are also legislative statesmen of historical note on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. Lee Hamilton was a different kind of vice, vice chair of the 9/11 Commission, after 34 years of distinguished service in the United States House of Representatives. Richard Lugar, along with Georgia Democrat Sam Nunn, negotiated the dismantling of nuclear weaponry in the Soviet Union. And Birch Bayh authored not one, but two, constitutional amendments in his three terms in the Senate.

And since there are three branches of government, there are three branches of Hoosiers securing their seats at the table, or in this case, the bench. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, like Lincoln, spent his formative years in Indiana, graduating from LaPorte's LaLumiere School. The newest jurist in the hallowed chambers, Amy Coney Barrett, called South Bend home before becoming the fifth woman to be confirmed for a lifetime appointment on the court. And while two-ninths being Hoosier is a good start, I won't rest until all nine are Hoosiers!

All kidding aside, seeding his team with Hoosiers is to me the clearest indication that Biden wants to make good on his campaign promises. After all, in Indiana we build things and grow things and in Washington we Hoosiers do things. The names presented heretofore make that case.

But what really makes us stand out, I think and I hope, is our ability to see past partisan differences and be proud when one of our own is called to serve. The cream of the crop comes from the Hoosier State. It's a blessed place to call home as Buttigieg, Klain, Banks and all the Hoosiers of history who came before them can surely attest. ❖

Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokesman for former Director of National Intelligence and U.S. Sen. Dan Coats. Currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group.

Holcomb agenda focus on pandemic, finances

Howey Politics Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric J. Holcomb today announced his 2021 Next Level Agenda, which is focused on safely navigating out of the pandemic and emerging as a stronger Indiana. “The 2021 Next Level Agenda is focused on making sure Indiana remains a state of opportunity for all,” Holcomb said. “To do that, we must manage our way through the world’s worst pandemic in over a century.”



The 2021 Next Level Agenda includes five pillars detailing both legislative and administrative priorities for the year ahead:

Cultivate a strong and diverse economy:

To continue our dedication to fiscal responsibility, Gov. Holcomb’s 2021 agenda calls for passing the state’s ninth straight balanced budget. As the number one manufacturing state in the nation per capita, the Governor will seek to enhance our status by expanding our Manufacturing Readiness Grants to enable companies to modernize their operations. The state will also stay on track to triple federal defense investment in Indiana by 2025.

Maintain and build the state’s infrastructure: The 2021 agenda is designed to enhance the infrastructure we have and finish projects already underway. The Governor will grow his nation-leading Next Level Connections Broadband Program with legislation to better reach additional areas of the state that are unserved or underserved with higher internet speeds. The state will continue projects including I-69 Section 6, the West Lake Corridor expansion and double tracking the South Shore Line Rail projects, and the effort to plant one million trees across the state. Additionally, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority will create a comprehensive overview of our state’s housing supply.

Education, training and workforce development: The Governor remains committed to ensuring that K-12 schools receive 100 percent of their funding for the second half of the school year. He will also work to increase K-12 funding in the next biennial budget and at a minimum restore higher education funding cut in the last fiscal year due to the impact of the pandemic. Gov. Holcomb will continue to prioritize finding long-term sustainable solutions to improve teacher compensation a top priority. He will review and consider recommendations of the Next Level Teacher Compensation Report. Among the recommendations is a proposal to improve school corporation data accessibility and transparency by creating a website to allow for easy comparisons of school corporation financial, expenditure, and compensation metrics

relative to other districts. The dashboard launched today and [can be viewed here](#). The 2021 agenda also includes reviewing and reducing unfunded mandates on schools, retaining more higher education graduates in Indiana, and increasing minority teacher recruitment and minority participation in Workforce Ready and Employer Grant programs.

Public health: The Governor remains committed to the goal of becoming the best state in the Midwest for infant mortality by 2024 by protecting pregnant workers by providing more workplace accommodations. Using lessons learned in the pandemic, the agenda calls for reforming long-term care services to be outcome and quality driven, and for initiating a comprehensive assessment of local health departments and state delivery of public health services.

Deliver great government service: The 2021 agenda includes regulatory and statutory changes prompted by the state’s COVID-19 response, including expanding telemedicine services, making virtual meeting options permanent and providing businesses and schools with coronavirus liability protections. Additionally, the agenda calls for removing barriers for Hoosiers to reinstate their driver’s license. Having a driver’s license is essential to finding and keeping a job, and the suspensions have a bigger impact on low-income populations, rural residents, and ex-offenders. The agenda also calls for continuing to improve services and increase opportunity for the state’s minority populations.

“Responding to a global pandemic has caused us to rethink how we’ve done business and just as importantly, how we do business post-pandemic,” Gov. Holcomb said. “COVID-19 has shifted our course, but Indiana remains focused on what will make us stronger, with practical and people-centered solutions based on a foundation of civility.”

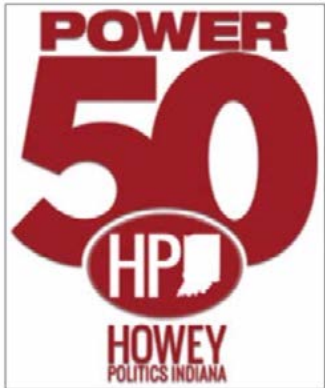
Fall forecast better than expected

Indiana fiscal leaders say the revenue outlook for the next two years is better than expected, but they’re cautioning that spending will still have to be conservative. (Erdody, IBJ). According to a revenue forecast presented to the State Budget Committee on Wednesday, tax receipts for the state’s general fund – essentially its main checking account – will total \$34.95 billion for the next two-year budget, which will start in July. The state’s top budget writers described the outlook as flat – it’s only about \$360 million more than the current \$34.59 billion budget – but better than they had anticipated. “I think the economics of the situation right now are that we are recovering in the state of Indiana and doing well, but the future is a little bit variable and unpredictable, and it’s our good planning in the past that has made us ready for the future,” House Ways and Means Chairman Tim Brown said. Senate Appropriations Chairman Ryan Mishler, described it as a “positive outlook.” The state has about \$115 million less in revenue available for the upcoming two-year budget than total appropriations made in the current budget. ❖

2021 HPI Power 50 List will face drastic change

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When the 2020 HPI Power 50 List was published on Jan. 7, the COVID-19 pandemic was just beginning to create a stir in China. Vice President Pence was at the apex of his power. Health Commissioner



Kristina Box was cited for her coming contributions to the "story of our lifetime" (the opioid crisis). South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg was an out-sized presidential dreamer.

Come January, Indiana will have two new members of Congress, 1st CD Democrat Frank Mrvan and 5th CD Republican Victoria Spartz.

This will be a biennial budget and reapportionment year in the General Assembly, so Dr. Tim Brown and Chairman Timothy Wesco will rise on the 2020 list.

There will be new gubernatorial contenders, at least one new state party chair. Will there be a Libertarian to crack the list for the first time since we began this publishing exercise in 1999, now that gubernatorial nominee Donald Rainwater made it into double digits in the Nov. 3 election.

The HPI Power 50 list is designed to illustrate who stands to make the greatest impacts in the coming year. We invite our readers to make nominations or complete your own full list.

This year's list will be published in the Jan. 7, 2021, edition of Howey Politics Indiana

Here is our 2020 HPI Power 50 list:

1. Vice President Mike Pence
2. Gov. Eric Holcomb
3. Pete Buttigieg
4. U.S. Sen. Todd Young
5. U.S. Sen. Mike Braun
6. Senate President Pro Tem Rod Bray
7. Secretary of State Connie Lawson
8. Speakers Brian Bosma and Todd Huston
9. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch

10. Dr. Woody Myers
11. Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer
12. ISTA President Keith Gambill
13. Mike Schmuhl
14. Marc Short
15. HHS Sec. Alex Azar and CMS Director Seema Verma
16. Attorney General Curtis Hill
17. Commerce Sec. Jim Schellinger
18. U.S. Rep. Jim Banks
19. Indiana Treasurer Kelly Mitchell
20. Christina Hale
21. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.
22. FSSA Sec. Jennifer Sullivan and IDOH Commissioner Kris Box
23. INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness
24. Chief Justice Loretta Rush
25. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett
26. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry
27. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke
28. Democratic Chairman John Zody
29. Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett
30. U.S. Rep. Andre Carson
31. U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski
32. Drug Czar Douglas Huntsinger
33. Purdue President Mitch Daniels
34. IU President Michael McRobbie
35. USDA Under Sec. Ted McKinney
36. Surgeon General Jerome Adams
37. Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown

38. Bill and Ann Moreau
39. RNC Committeeman John Hammond
40. Chamber President Kevin Brinegar
41. IMA President Brian Burton
42. Marty Obst
43. U.S. Rep. Greg Pence
44. U.S. Rep. Larry Bushon
45. State Sen. Jeff Raatz and State Rep. Robert Behning
46. Kurt and Kristin Luidhardt
47. U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky
48. U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks
49. Earl Goode
50. Joe Donnelly



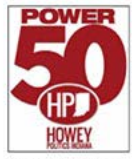
Pence, Pete & Gov head Power 50

Veep, mayor and governor in position to transform Indiana and American political scene

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis and **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**, in Washington

INDIANAPOLIS – As we unveil the 2020 version of the Howey Politics Indiana Power 50 List, Hoosiers appear to be relatively satisfied with their state government, unsure about the federalists and specifically President Trump, and are most concerned about health care and the economy.

These are the latest survey numbers from the We Ask America Poll conducted in early December for the Indiana Manufacturers Association. They accentuate the formulation of our annual Power 50 list headed by Vice President Mike Pence, Gov. Eric Holcomb, former South Bend mayor and Democratic presidential contender Pete Buttigieg, and the state's



two Republican senators who will likely sit in judgment (and acquittal) of President Trump in an impeachment trial

Continued on page 3

Unforgiving Middle East

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**
INDIANAPOLIS – By most Western accounts, Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani was, as President Trump might put it, "scum."

He had the blood of hundreds if not thousands of Americans on his hands. As I surveyed the list of the hundred or so Hoosier soldiers killed by IEDs and other havoc during the ill-fated Iraq War, I'm sure Suleimani played a role in at least some of them.

That President Trump made the decision to assassinate Suleimani by drone, at first consideration, was good. My initial thoughts were that this terrorist general probably died



"All is well. Assessment of casualties & damage taking place now. So far, so good!"

- President Trump, tweeting Tuesday evening after Iran missile attacks on U.S. bases in Iraq. Trump is expected to address the nation this A.M.

More on townships

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Yes, this is the third column on townships. Be patient; the end to this series is in sight.

Originally, townships were to be perfect squares of six miles in each direction, or 36 square miles. They were to maintain public roads, provide public education, provide relief for the poor, and help maintain public safety.

Today, the average Indiana township has 35.5 square miles of land area. That fact would make the surveyors who laid out our townships pretty happy. However, Union Twp. in Montgomery County. is the largest at 111.6 square miles, while Albion Twp. in Noble County has but 3.8 square miles. Why? Because the Indiana legislature in the 19th century was inclined to go along with what local folks wanted. In the 1800s, many elected officials didn't care whether counties and townships fit what some Easterners thought would be best back in 1787.

Ask your neighbors or your representatives in today's General Assembly, "What do townships do?" They may tell you those governmental units provide poor relief. This is almost perfectly true.

Of the 998 townships reporting to the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance for 2019, 65 had no requests for township assistance. Another 691 had fewer than 50 such requests during the year. That's fewer than one per week. Imagine we raised our expectations to two applicants, on average, per township per year. In

2019, 82% of our townships would disappoint us. Just 175 Indiana townships saw 100 or more of the 150,000 applicants who sought assistance.

Some readers might think we have too many township offices if we have only 150,000 applicants for assistance. But others would be less inclined to render such a judgments. Townships have been defended for generations as the government unit closest to the people, because they are so numerous and require less travel than to a centralized office in the county seat. It was a great argument 200 years ago when roads were mud traces after the rain and the horse provided the energy for transport. Yet, as with many things, technology changes the environment within which we function, but does it change us?

Townships were seen by many observers in the past as a way to recognize the diversity of preferences in the population. Not everyone wants to the same government services as does his/her neighbors. The tic-tac-toe pattern set out by surveyors was not an instrument of regimentation, but a structure that invited diversity of preferences.

Perhaps we fail to see this today because we don't have much diversity of preferences. Every place is not a place without a McBurger. Our houses must have cathedral ceilings so we can be property worshiped. Perhaps we should move more responsibility and funding to the townships and elect people who truly care about community.

More on townships next week. ❖

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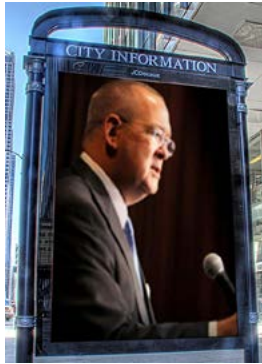
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Indiana's hospital monopolies

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – Summary: Our hospital monopolies are financially damaging to Indiana's economy and Hoosier families. Last Sunday night I sat in front of the TV a few extra minutes basking in the Colts victory. Much to my delight, the venerable "60 Minutes" teaser announced they'd profile the civil anti-trust case of Sutter Health in Sacramento California.



This reporting should be interesting to Hoosiers and their elected leaders. Here's why.

Since the Affordable Care Act was passed, healthcare systems in the United States have been rapidly acquiring independent hospitals. They have also bought up physician practices and specialty care clinics. This potentially limits patient choice of hospitals

and monopolizes the stream of patients flowing into their facilities. Hospitals in the U.S. have also structured contracts that force bundles of services on employers.

Anyone who had a good American history course in high school might remember that these are textbook examples of those business practices that were prohibited by Gilded Age Anti-Trust laws. The landmark case was U.S. v. Standard Oil, which set the stage for modern anti-trust.

Today, you can replace 'oil company' with 'hospital system,' 'independent oil producer' with 'physician office' and a tuxedoed John D. Rockefeller with a smiling CEO/physician in a lab coat, and you have much of today's healthcare markets. It is a problem ripe for litigation.

Almost one year ago, Sutter Health was sued by the State of California for anti-trust violations like those listed above. Sutter settled the case an hour or so before stepping foot into the courtroom. They agreed to pay \$575 million to the State of California, submit to a special pricing oversight for the next ten years and end their anti-trust practices. They got off lightly.

What should surprise and anger Hoosiers is that much of Indiana suffers healthcare markets that are more monopolized market areas than Sacramento. In fact, close to one-half of Indiana's healthcare markets as defined by the Affordable Care Act are more monopolized than the one in which California brought suit against Sutter Health. There are a lot more issues that should trouble us.

California residents pay 16.2% of their incomes for healthcare, while Hoosiers pay 20.8%. Since 2000, California residents saw their cost share of health spending grow by only about half the rate that of Indiana families. Today Indiana's hospital monopolies are financially damaging to Indiana's economy and Hoosier families.

The "60 Minutes" story also highlighted the vast cost differences that exist between hospitals in the highly monopolized and more competitive regions of California. Their example was on a childbirth, which is twice as expensive in the Sutter Health region as in a nearby city. That prompted me to check the data for Indiana.

I chose my community because I live near a hospital in one of the most monopolized healthcare markets in the United States. As it turns out, a normal delivery at my local hospital in Muncie was priced at \$19,488. The closest hospitals outside this healthcare market was in Anderson. The prices for the same procedure were \$7,386. The closest hospital inside the same healthcare market charged \$21,305 for the same procedure, and of course that was part of the same not-for-profit healthcare company.

Now, just to be clear, these aren't my data. The hospital pricing data are those submitted by these hospitals to the federal government. Nor are the monopolization data sets mine; they come from a study funded by the IHA to discredit my work. Oddly enough, the IHA-funded study actually reported levels of monopolization that are above the U.S. Department of Justice threshold to trigger anti-trust intervention in every single Indiana healthcare market. It is also worth noting that in 2018 and 2019 Sutter Health was less profitable than Indiana's top four largest hospital chains. As a painful reminder, all of these hospital chains are not-for-profit firms.

Of course, the defenders of hospital monopolies will argue that the price differences have real causes. They'll say operating costs are different, or they'll sponsor some public health researcher to claim there are vast differences between the behavioral health characteristics in these two places. They will claim that these factors account for a normal delivery in Muncie to be a bit more than twice the cost of Anderson. After all, John D. Rockefeller made the same arguments.

Now, I'm sure this column will prompt another round of op-ed pieces by monopoly apologists complaining about my biases and general ignorance of economics. Again, that is right out of John D. Rockefeller's playbook, and if you are going to run a successful monopoly, he provided a superb example.

Of course, I should remain silent about the upcoming attacks and whining letters to my employer. After all, I'm unlikely to be a good judge of my own shortcomings. But, I will say this much in defense of the dozens of hospital monopoly studies. When it comes to hospital pricing and profits, you may believe either what they tell you in newspapers, or what they tell the IRS and other federal agencies; you cannot believe both.

Oh, and there's one more interesting twist on the Sutter Health case and its implication for hospital monopolies around the country. California's attorney general, Xavier Becerra, who brought suit against Sutter Health, has been nominated to head the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I am so looking forward to 2021. ❖

Jennifer Rubin, Washington Post: President-elect Joe Biden will name former South Bend, Ind., mayor Pete Buttigieg as his transportation secretary. "Buttigieg, 38, built his presidential bid on calls to pass the torch to a new generation of leaders, something Biden himself called 'absolutely essential,'" The Post reports. "He was the first openly gay major party candidate to win delegates in a bid for the White House, and his campaign was aided by the supportive presence of his husband, Chasten." While other Biden nominees have raised some hackles from either Republicans or another group of Democrats (or both, in the case of retired Gen. Lloyd Austin, named to head the Pentagon), Buttigieg's selection was received with widespread praise and something we have not seen before: genuine glee. Certainly, another "first" — an openly gay man holding a Cabinet post — explains part of the appeal. The reaction also reflects widespread agreement that Buttigieg acquitted himself exceptionally well for a newcomer to national politics throughout the Democratic primary, winning praise for his extraordinary verbal acuity, his happy warrior demeanor and his Renaissance man profile (e.g., he is a classical pianist and speaks seven languages in addition to English). If Democrats had been selecting the award for the most congenial media figure, Buttigieg might have won in a landslide. His continued appearances on Fox News drew raves for his ability to disarm hosts and speak to a hostile audience. As a fresh face, a great communicator and a policy whiz, he seems to be a recipe for an enthusiastic reception. There is something else at play as well: For all the talk of serving as a bridge to the next generation, Biden's Cabinet picks have largely built a bridge back to the Obama administration with a flock of familiar faces whom Biden trusts and knows well (e.g., Susan E. Rice, Tom Vilsack, Janet L. Yellen). In defending the picks, Biden aides have stressed that he ran on competence, problem-solving and experience. In that regard, he certainly has delivered. Buttigieg may find himself in the thick of everything, from climate change and emissions standards to racial equity to infrastructure on the Biden agenda. (And given the short tenure of some White House nominees, Buttigieg may "move up" to even higher-profile roles as other secretaries exit their posts.) The job "could provide an opportunity to make a lasting mark," The Post reports. And just as important, if confirmed, the perch would give Buttigieg a chance to make a positive, lasting impression. Real excitement in getting the chance to watch a promising career unfold surely explains a good deal of the enthusiasm over his selection. ❖



a top-tier candidate in the 2020 presidential race, agree to be the transportation secretary in the now-forming administration of President-elect Joe Biden? Isn't that a little, well, small, for someone of Buttigieg's political abilities and ambitions? While those questions make some sense -- no ambitious political kid dreams of growing up to be the transportation secretary, after all -- they also sort of miss the point. Or, the point(s). Consider: 1) The highest office that Buttigieg has ever held is as the mayor of his hometown of South Bend, Indiana -- population 101,000. He's never worked in Washington. He's never managed and navigated not only a massive agency, but also the even more massive federal bureaucracy. Assuming he is confirmed, Buttigieg will be in charge of a department with 55,000 employees. 2) Biden has made rebuilding America's infrastructure a key goal of his presidency. ("Infrastructure Week" was a punchline during Trump's four years in office.) In his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, Biden made specific mention of just the sorts of initiatives that will be under the purview of Buttigieg. ❖

James Briggs, Indystar: Mike Braun is ready to accept Joe Biden as the president-elect. But he's still not ready to move on from making nebulous assertions that "irregularities" plagued the election, a sign that not even overwhelming and official confirmation of Biden's victory will enable us to exit this toxic political season. Braun, a Republican U.S. senator, on Monday issued a statement that acknowledged Biden won the presidential election, as confirmed by the electoral college, yet cloaked his meager reality acceptance in broader skepticism over the entire election system. Braun called on all levels of government to "take actions to restore integrity," without any hint at what that might mean. To be clear, the only thing damaging integrity in U.S. elections is President Donald Trump's years-long push to sow doubt in them — he never even fully accepted the result of the election he won in 2016 — and the unpatriotic amplification from Trump flatterers such as Braun, attorney-general elect Todd Rokita and five House Republicans from Indiana. Braun said there is a "need to continue a thorough investigation into the irregularities and credible allegations of fraud," which he has claimed the media — I guess that's me — have ignored. Braun, like Trump and a host of other Republicans, has sought to frame people like me, a member of the mainstream media, as untrustworthy on this topic. Fine. The question, then, is who you can trust. If anyone is in a position to reinforce with facts and evidence the idea that Democrats stole the election from Trump, you'd think it would be the president's attorneys. But as Andrew C. McCarthy writes in the conservative National Review, the lawyers representing Trump in lawsuits across the U.S. have not been making voter fraud claims. When a Trump-appointed judge in the all-important battleground state of Wisconsin gave the president a chance to make his case in court, his attorneys agreed there was no fraud. ❖

Chris Cillizza, CNN: Name President Donald Trump's transportation secretary. Chances are you can't. (It's Elaine Chao, who also happens to be married to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.) Which says something about the profile of the average transportation secretary. It's low. All of which raises this question: Why would Pete Buttigieg, who came from nowhere to become

Weaver outlines evolving vaccines

INDIANAPOLIS — As Indiana's front-line health care workers begin receiving the state's first shots of Pfizer's vaccine against COVID-19, uncertainties remain about future numbers of incoming doses and who should be inoculated next, health officials said Wednesday (AP). Five Indiana hospitals have received doses, Indiana's chief medical officer, Dr. Lindsay Weaver, said during Gov. Eric Holcomb's weekly briefing on the state's coronavirus response. So far, 46,000 of the state's more than 400,000 eligible health care workers have registered for an appointment to get their first shot, Weaver said. Health care workers at Parkview Health in Fort Wayne received the state's inaugural doses on Monday. Members of the medical staff at IU Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis became the first in central Indiana to get vaccinated Wednesday morning. While front-line health care personnel — including those in hospitals, long-term care facilities and emergency medical service providers — are first-up to get the shots in Indiana, Weaver asked other residents to "please be patient — your turn is coming as more vaccine arise." This week, Indiana was allocated 55,575 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, which health officials said they expect to make available at an additional 50 hospitals and clinics around the state in a matter of days. But exactly how much more vaccine the state can dole out in the coming weeks is still unclear. Weaver said the state found out Wednesday that number of new doses coming in next week is already less than originally anticipated. "This is a rapidly evolving situation, and it's why we have focused our initial vaccination efforts on front-line health care workers and long-term care facilities," Weaver said. "As more vaccine becomes available, we will continue to roll out eligibility to additional popula-



tions."

Indiana virus death toll exceeds April

INDIANAPOLIS — Just halfway through December, the Indiana State Department of Health has recorded 1,028 COVID-19 deaths—more than the number of virus-related deaths recorded during the entire month of April (Indiana Public Media). The ISDH reported Wednesday 6,283 new cases and 125 deaths, increasing state totals to 440,850 cases and 6,781 deaths. Seven of these new deaths occurred on Dec. 11, which makes Friday the single deadliest day of the pandemic with 82 total deaths. In mid-April, the state death average peaked at about 42 deaths a day. As of last week, Indiana now averages about 73 COVID-19 deaths every day. According to ISDH numbers, 3,192 Hoosiers are hospitalized with the virus. COVID-19 patients occupy 39.9% of Indiana ICU beds with only 11.2% still available.

Congress closes in on \$900B relief deal

WASHINGTON — Congressional negotiators are closing in on a \$900 billion COVID-19 economic relief package that would deliver additional help to businesses, \$300 per week jobless checks, and \$600 stimulus payments to most Americans. But there was no deal quite yet (AP). The long-delayed measure was coming together as Capitol Hill combatants finally fashioned difficult compromises, often at the expense of more ambitious Democratic wishes for the legislation, to complete the second major relief package of the pandemic. A hoped-for announcement Wednesday failed to materialize as lawmakers across the spectrum hammered out details of the sprawling legislation and top negotiators continued to trade offers. But lawmakers briefed on the outlines of the aid bill freely shared them. It's the first significant legislative response

to the pandemic since the landmark CARES Act in March, which delivered \$1.8 trillion in aid and more generous jobless benefits and direct payments to individuals. Since then, Democrats have repeatedly called for ambitious further federal steps to provide relief and battle the pandemic, while Republicans have sought to more fully reopen the economy and to avoid padding the government's \$27 trillion debt.

Moderna vaccine up for approval

WASHINGTON — The FDA is set to meet Thursday afternoon to discuss Moderna's vaccine (AP). Americans can expect the approval to be even faster than the Pfizer vaccine, which was approved last week after the FDA panel met on Thursday, December 10. There's a chance the Moderna vaccine could be approved by Friday or even earlier. This vaccine is said to be 94.5 percent effective and requires two doses four weeks apart. Moderna officials also said it can show their vaccine prevents asymptomatic infections.

Holcomb urges people to vaccinate

BLOOMINGTON - Even as Indiana rolls out its first wave of vaccinations, state officials urged Hoosiers to continue socially distancing and wearing masks into the holidays to prevent the spread of COVID-19. "The one common denominator is it is occurring where we let our guard down... when we're around people we know well," Gov. Eric Holcomb said. "That's why we're just appealing you, especially during the holiday season, when we all want to get together with our families." Holcomb said he would get the vaccination but he didn't qualify for the first round, which was reserved for healthcare workers and the most vulnerable Hoosiers in nursing homes. "I will absolutely get the vaccination but it won't be until... it's my time," Holcomb said.