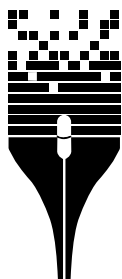


The Howey Political Report



The Howey Political Report is published by NewsLink Inc. Founded in 1994, The Howey Political Report is an independent, non-partisan newsletter analyzing the political process in Indiana.

Brian A. Howey, publisher

Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington writer

Jack E. Howey, editor

The Howey Political Report Office: 317-254-1533
PO Box 40265 Fax: 317-466-0993
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0265 Mobile: 317-506-0883

brianhowey@howeypolitics.com
www.howeypolitics.com

Washington office: 202-775-3242;
Business Office: 317-254-0535.

Subscriptions: \$250 annually via e-mail or fax. Call 317-254-1533.

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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“I had to stop by the ATM machine this morning because I thought I might have to buy my own lunch today”

- State Rep. David Wolkins, during the daylight saving time debate on the House floor

High-water mark for Indiana Dems?

Census, lack of initiative loom large

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis

Remember that HPR edition last fall, Sept. 28, Vol. 7, No. 19, “2000 Election Could Signal Historic Shift: Party of Bulen Fading to Democrats?”

Well ... neve mind.

What has been learned since Gov. Frank O’Bannon’s impressive 15 percent victory last November and the Democrats maintaining control of the Indiana House by 53 to 47 percent is two-fold:

1. The 2000 U.S. Census data reveal a demographically shifting Indiana that even with Democratic control of the map-making is beginning to show a decisively Republican bent.

2. Gov. O’Bannon, House Democrats, and to some extent the 1999 class of mayors that ushered in urban dominance are not using their mandates to lead. One veteran Democratic strategist shakes his head at the O’Bannon administration and laments, “They’re playing defense when they had every reason to go on the offense and control the game.”

Another Democrat told me on background, “The only initiative the governor has shown since the election is that he wants a new house.”

The combination of new census data that verify demographic trending and a lack of initiative by Democrats in control prompts this question: Have Indiana Democrats reached their high-water mark?

In recent editions of HPR, we’ve noted the parallel political tracks Indiana has been on: Democrats dominating recent top tier statewide races and city elections; Repub-

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Covering the golden age of Hoosier politics

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LEWIS & CLARK: House Bill 1388, which establishes the Lewis and Clark bicentennial commission, is being carried by Sens. Lewis and Clark (Jim Lewis and Murray Clark). Which just goes to show that every once in awhile, they manage to be funny on purpose.

BORST DEMANDS O'BANNON CLOSE MUSCATATUCK: Senate fiscal leaders plan to withhold more than \$90 million to fund services for the disabled unless Gov. Frank O'Bannon agrees to close the troubled Muscatatuck State Developmental Center within two years (Lesley Stedman, Louisville Courier-Journal). Senate Finance Committee Chairman Larry Borst said the money, which would pay for community-based services and proposed regional care centers, won't be included in the two-year state budget he'll release today. He said the state can't afford to continue indefinitely funding both Muscatatuck and the other services. "We want (O'Bannon) to make the decision so we know how to fund the budget," Borst said. "If he says we're going to close it down, we'll go back and rethink this thing." Katie Humphreys, secretary of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, wouldn't say whether the administra-

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Democrats, from page 1

licans having the upper hand in federal races. The new census data not only reveal that the Democratic Party will have a tough time holding on to its three Congressional seats, but the Indiana House as well.

In the Indiana House, Democrats are going to see core urban districts in Marion, Lake and Allen counties shift toward the staunchly Republican suburbs. In Lake County alone, seats held by Reps. Charlie Brown, D-Gary; Earl Harris, D-East Chicago; and Vernon Smith, D-Gary, all need to expand by at least 10,000 residents. "The old Democratic districts that we used to have probably aren't going to be there," Harris said (*Times of Northwest Indiana*).

Indianapolis currently has 14 House seats (7-7 party split) but grew by only 1.7 percent and that number can be expected to decline, with some of those seats shifting at least partially into Hamilton (population increase of 58 percent), Boone (17.5 percent), Johnson (27.9 percent), Hancock (22.2 percent) and Hendricks (30.5 percent) counties, which currently have only 13 seats combined.

Adding to the House Democratic dilemma is that they currently hold at least five seats - Claire Leucke (Fowler), Bob Bischoff (Lawrenceburg), Dale Grubb (Covington), Dick Bodiker (Richmond) and Sheila Klinker (Lafayette) - that once they retire could reasonably be expected to become Republican if current demographic shifting holds up.

Democratic map-makers will have quite a bit more flexibility in mitigating some of the trending against the Marion County delegation because they won't be hemmed in by the barriers (Illinois and Lake Michigan) that face their Region brethren.

Worse on Senate side

In the Indiana Senate (controlled 32 to 18 by Republicans), the numbers are even worse. Of the Northwest Region's six Senate districts, the biggest losers are districts represented by Sens. Earline Rogers, D-Gary; Samuel Smith, D-East Chicago; and Frank Mrvan, D-Hammond, which posted double-digit losses and will expand by up to 22,000 people. A Republican pickup of at least one seat in Lake County would be considered a relatively safe bet.

Indianapolis currently has seven Senate seats, dominated 5 to 2 by Republicans, with map-makers there probably targeting Sens. Billie Breaux and Glenn Howard for another potential pickup.

Some Statehouse observers are seeing potential GOP dominance in the upper chamber so extreme that map-makers there could very well come up with a plan to guarantee a quorum on the floor (34 senators) coming out of one delegation.

Congressionally

On the Congressional front, there are efforts under way to try and prop up the 3rd CD by shifting it out of eastern Elkhart County and into northern Porter County, but that comes at the expense of U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, who will see his 1st CD trend more Republican by the end of the decade.

U.S. Reps. Julia Carson and Baron Hill also face districts that will trend Republican. In Carson's case, if she can survive the next two elections, the demographic trending will favor her later in the decade. Hill faces an influx of Republicans fleeing Cincinnati and there is talk of dividing Bloomington between the 8th and 9th CDs to give him a little relief.

So tenuous is the Democratic hold on what are now the 3rd, 9th and 10th CDs that any kind of Republican wave like 1980 or 1994 could wash them out. On the Republican side, only U.S. Rep. John Hostettler in a northward shifting 8th CD looks particularly vulnerable.

Mayoral class of '99

The early read on the Democats' two prize plums - capturing mayors offices in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne - is that both will be vulnerable in 2003. In Fort Wayne, Mayor Graham Richard has been criticized for being too subterranean. He's received flak recently for under-reported crime statistics, which show a small increase despite a campaign pledge of a 20-percent reduction. Allen County

Republican Chairman Steve Shine vowed on his own re-election that he would win back the Fort Wayne mayor's office. His prospects look promising. Councilman John Crawford, a physician who could finance his own campaign, is gearing up for a challenge. Former Mayor Paul Helmke is keeping his options open for a return. In the wings are '99 nominee Linda Buskirk, who lost by less than 100 votes, and former Sheriff Joe Squadrito. Any of this GOP quartet could mount a potent challenge - IF - Shine can unite the party behind the nominee.

In Indianapolis, the *Star* is already referring to Mayor Bart Peterson as "beleaguered" on its editorial pages. HPR observed earlier this year that Peterson needed to advance on two critical issues - police and fire pensions and combined sewer outflows. Peterson's \$14 million police and fire pension dilemma is part of an initiative in the legislature that includes many Indiana cities and towns. That legislation is progressing, but the state is under fiscal duress, House Speaker John Gregg complained to HPR just last week cities and counties are always seeking bail-outs from the state, and Senate Finance Chair Larry Borst certainly understands the political implications. The fact that Peterson isn't the only mayor wanting to ensure that police and fire retirees are paid will help him on that front.

Peterson just unveiled a 20-year plan to reduce by 85 percent CSO flowing into the city's creeks and rivers - a plan that got an endorsement from the *Star* editorial writers. The EPA will have to sign off and there is already speculation that it might seek an accelerated plan. Imagine OMB Director Mitch Daniels - who certainly has the wherewithal to do so - pressing EPA Chief Christie Todd Whitman to kick the 20-year plan back (which would be an interesting role reversal from the Republican Goldsmith administration and the Clinton EPA).

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tion will commit to closing Muscatatuck within two years. "That puts the focus on closing something as opposed to putting the focus on what is in the best interest of the client being served," she said. "We must evaluate the needs of the clients."

BUSH COMING TO NOTRE DAME: President George W. Bush will become the fifth sitting president to address University of Notre Dame graduates when he speaks at commencement May 20 (Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune).

LUGAR, SOUDER EYE SUPPORT FOR MACEDONIA: The United States shouldn't sit idly by as Macedonia, the only former Yugoslav republic that won its independence without bloodshed, is on the verge of war, Sen. Richard Lugar, said Tuesday (Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). U.S. policy should be that "these intrusions are unwelcome and, as a matter of fact, will be repelled. Someone must simply stop the music and do so before chaos ensues that is likely then to lead to much greater conflict." Although Rep. Mark Souder, R-4th, has taken an opposite view - he opposed U.S. intervention in Bosnia - he said the United States has special obligations in Macedonia. "Our

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intervention (in the Bosnian war) may have caused the problems" Macedonia is having now, he said. "There are times you have to intervene. This might be one."

LAKE COUNTY INCOME TAX MAKES STUNNING COMEBACK: In a stunning about face, Northwest Indiana lawmakers have decided that some form of a municipal option income tax might become part of a legislative tax reform package aimed at easing Lake County's growing financial crisis (Terry Burns, Times of Northwest Indiana). Lake County lawmakers initially emerged from an hour-long meeting Tuesday at the Statehouse saying they had agreed to drop both income tax proposals because a consensus could not be reached on the politically divisive issue. However, after some back room arm-twisting, legislators announced several hours later that they had decided to put the municipal tax back on the table.

ECONOMY WORRIES THE REGION: Northwest Indiana is already starting to feel the effects of the nation's economic slowdown, and experts say the impact there could hit harder and sooner because of the area's dependence on the steel industry (Kristi O'Brien, Gary Post-Tribune). Donald Coffin, associate professor of economic at IU

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Democrats, *from page 3*

Demographic shifting aside, we see Indianapolis as a competitive mayoral environment for the next several elections. Here the GOP has some credible challengers - Scott Newman, Sens. Murray Clark and Theresa Lubbers - waiting in the wings. Peterson is a rising star, but he's got his work cut out for him, particularly if his best laid plans don't work.

Gubernatorial forecast

Which gets us to the Statewide offices. Hoosier voters have shown a willingness in the Bayh-O'Bannon era to back conservative Democrats. If you look at the trending in down ballot Statehouse races, it goes Republican, as evidenced by Attorney General Steve Carter's reclamation of that office in 2000 and Sue Anne Gilroy's retaking of the Secretary of State's office in 1994.

Hoosier voters don't look at the lower tier Statehouse offices as ideologically as they do the governor. They tend to vote party lines. A Bush II recession would give Bloomington Mayor John Fernandez a bit of a tailwind in 2002 when that office sits atop of the ballot, but further out this decade, it's going to be a tough road for Democratic statewides.

Gov. O'Bannon's actions have been perplexing. Many Democrats saw O'Bannon's ascension to the governor's office as an opportunity to return the dynamic to attaining the goods for traditional constituencies by a man unburdened with the thirst for national office. Other than his 1997 victory on workers compensation, O'Bannon's legislative goals have not been met. His \$1.5 billion in tax cuts have been spread so thinly as to not position the state for a better footing in the highly competitive global economy.

His chances of fulfilling his 1996 campaign promise to restructure the tax code were squandered in 1997 and this year. Once the reassessment manuals come up, Hoosiers are going to wake up

to the notion that their property taxes are potentially going to go up by more than the 30 percent previously forecast and more so in Democratic strongholds like Lake, Harrison, Clark, Floyd and Monroe counties.

Gubernatorial spokesman Thad Nation suggests that "everybody has to take a look at 2002" for restructuring. That, he says, would give O'Bannon and Speaker John Gregg about six months to "educate" Hoosiers on a tax shift.

The problem with that scenario is that a complicated issue like that with incredible political implications is thrust into an election year dynamic with many legislators trying to adjust to new maps and, in the case of many Democrats, a lot of new Republican constituents. After 16 years in the wilderness, Republicans such as Borst are going to be inclined to let O'Bannon and Joe Kernan wallow around the reassessment mine field they've created for themselves. Factor in the two-ton chickens coming home to roost in the Democratic bulwark of Lake County, and it's easy to see the 16-year reign being seriously challenged.

Kernan will be a great candidate, but as we've said before, that was the early line on John Mutz.

Democratic Chair Robin Winston is more than eager to challenge this assessment. "I don't think this is our high-water mark. We'll have a tremendous candidate in '04. Joe Kernan is a guy who looked death in the face."

Winston has his organization still working at a fevered pitch. "My staff is shocked. They thought '01 would be an off year, but we're on a murderous pace because we're getting ready for '02, '03 and '04."

He points to the party track record in 2000: Winning county commissioner races in Vanderburgh, Porter, Lake, St. Joe, Delaware, Madison and Floyd counties. "And where we didn't win commissioners in places like Tippecanoe and Allen, we won it for Frank O'Bannon." ❖

PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

Of Reagan, & Bauer & Jones, & Nero ...

INDIANAPOLIS - The plaque on the wall commemorating President Ronald Reagan's 1982 visit to the Indiana House quoted the Great Communicator: *"The great American experiment will soon enter a new phase. That will last until the end of the century and prepare us for the next. You here today are the ones who will carry this experiment forward. You are the public servants who will offer the most creative solutions and most promising hopes for the future. Americans need your vitality and the people need your responsiveness."*

State Rep. B. Patrick Bauer was in a cantankerous mood Monday afternoon as he rose to take on Daylight Saving Time. "You're trying to give this issue, this dead issue, a soft landing, a gentle burial," Bauer said as his colleagues guffawed. "You're trying to let it have some eulogies during the summer. And maybe there would be a flicker of light that came out at one of these study committees, and perhaps it would see the light of day. I personally hope not. I'm an opponent."

Just a few hours earlier, in Room 101 of the Statehouse, a cadre of business innovators had gathered, people such as Mike Hudson of Rolls Royce, who employs a thousand high-paid engineers in Indiana and deemed DST an "urgent issue." Kathy Langham of Langham Transport Services, talked about scattered flight and trucking schedules and need to "retrain and recoach our customers" because of Indiana's idiosyncratic time. "We hope this passes quickly," she said.

Federal Express, whose Indianapolis hub has been steadily becoming as important as its Memphis facility, is losing ground to UPS because the rival can accept packages an hour later, thanks to

Indiana's archaic time.

Even Indiana Democratic Chair Robin Winston acknowledged the scheduling confusion when flying Gov. Frank O'Bannon from Indianapolis, to Gary, to Jeffersonville, and then to Evansville. There are now four clocks installed at Democratic headquarters: New York, Indianapolis, Gary and Jeffersonville, just to keep the time straight.

Bauer and State Rep. Bob Kuzman ruled this day, as the snickering, tittering House voted 51-46, mostly along party lines, to send the bill into a summer study committee.

The resolution might as well have been called the "Scott Jones Education Act." House members were rebelling at the audacity of the Escent entrepreneur who has busied himself in recent years creating thousands of new high-tech jobs and securing millions of dollars of investments to match a \$50 million 21st Century Fund. Apart from creating jobs and pushing Indiana as a futuristic e-commerce distribution center, Jones had the utter audacity to push DST. "He picked the wrong issue," an insider told HPR. "He picked the wrong lobbyist." That would be Bill Moreau Jr., former Gov. Evan Bayh's chief of staff who had taken some of these very House members to the woodshed years ago to instill discipline. Time, it seems, didn't diminish their memories and notions of a payback.

The House floor on Monday reminded me of that scene from the movie *The Deer Hunter*: While the Communists entered Saigon, the addled fools were still wagering their bets on showdowns of Russian roulette. The one economic development bill that wouldn't cost Indiana a cent went down in flames. Rome was burning, while Nero (and Pat Bauer) fiddled, and Dick Mangus's parrot crowed away. ❖

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Northwest, says the area is "different from the rest of the country because of our continued heavy reliance on the steel industry," which is sensitive to what happens in the rest of the economy. The area's steel industry already has instituted overtime cuts and layoffs and has issued dismal earnings reports. The average work week in December 1999 was 46 ¼ hours; last December the number dropped to 43 hours, and at \$23 an hour represented a significant decrease in income.

REDISTRICTING, I-69 DISCUSSED: Both State Sen. Richard Bray and State Rep. Matt Whetstone say they expect new districting maps to come out in about two weeks and will lose people in their districts (Dan Ryan, Martinsville Reporter). The pair spoke at a Third House session in Mooresville Saturday. Bray represents District 37 (portions of Clay, Morgan, Owen, Putnam and Vigo counties) and said census figures show him with a surplus of 6,800 persons in the district. Whetstone also said census figures show him with too many people and "I may have a whole new district in the next few weeks because there is so much growth around Indianapolis."

AMBROSE LEAVES INDIANA: Frank Ambrose, who has been accused of driving

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10-inch nails into trees set aside for logging in the Morgan-Monroe State Forest, filed a change of address notice with the Monroe County Circuit Court earlier this month and plans to move to the Detroit area (Indiana Daily Student). He must appear in court April 5 for a pre-trial conference on the felony charges he faces. He has been accused of being a member of the Earth Liberation Front, an ecoterrorist group, but denies membership in the organization.

SENATE COMMITTEE PASSES PAY RAISE LEGISLATION: The Senate Rules and Legislative Procedures Committee voted 8-0 Monday to increase legislators' pay to \$19,000 a year. It would be the first pay raise in 16 years.

SPEED LIMIT BILL PROBABLY WILL DIE IN SENATE: The Indianapolis morning that although more than half the states have increased their interstate speed limits to at least 70 mph, the legislative effort in Indiana is uphill. A proposal passed in the Indiana House probably won't make it to the Senate floor. If it does, lobbyists for police, the insurance industry and traffic-safety groups are prepared to line up against it.

KANG, DANIELS, GURULE TO JOIN BUSH ADMINIS-

Faith-based initiative raises constitutional questions; Goldsmith's role evolving

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.
The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON - Congressional efforts to write legislation that would promote delivery of social services through private and religious organizations will raise fundamental constitutional questions - and the devil is in the details.

On Wednesday, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert and Reps. J.C. Watts (R-Okla.) and Tony Hall (D-Ohio) introduced a measure to expand federal funding for faith-based organizations, establish tax incentives for charitable donations, and set up special savings accounts for the working poor. The issue is a White House priority.

But consensus on legislation may not come for a while. Members of Congress disagree over whether religious groups can proselytize through programs that receive a portion of their funding from the government. Some conservative Christians - such as Pat Robertson - object to the government proscribing prayers and bible study and are leery of federal support of other religions.

"We have to do it slowly enough to get it right," said Rep. Mark Souder (R-4th CD), a House leader on the issue. He said America's founders anticipated the kind of debate that is occurring today on Capitol Hill. "They wanted us to think through religious liberty questions. We as the Christian majority should respect the rights of the minority. By having it defined, everyone should be better off."

Souder said that in some communities in his district, immigrants from Asia who are Buddhists and from the Middle East who are Muslim outnumber Christians. "Minorities and majorities change positions. We need standards you can work with whether you're the majority or the minority," he said.

One controversial area is charitable choice, which allows private and religious

organizations to accept government funding for social service programs. Many groups receive both private and public funding. Souder said proselytizing with federal funds is unconstitutional. Religious organizations may be able to promote their message if they use the private portion of their funding and if clients have other alternatives for receiving the service. How to determine whether that choice exists could be a sticking point. "As we get this sorted out, the bill will move through," Souder said.

Former Sen. Dan Coats said that problems involving proselytizing can be overcome by giving aid recipients flexibility through vouchers or tax credits to

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choose among government, private and religious

organizations. He said a good model is federal aid for higher education. "If we keep our focus on what we're trying to accomplish and not get too hung up in defining exactly how it should be done and allow some flexibility, we'll see results," said Coats, who helped introduce the concept of "compassionate conservatism" through his 1995 Project for American Renewal.

Compassionate Tax Code

Almost everyone can agree on tax incentives. One idea is to allow people who don't itemize to deduct charitable contributions. A proposal by Sen. Richard Lugar would extend the tax deduction for food bank donations to farmers, ranchers and restaurant owners. Easy wins on tax policy might foster favorable attitudes for other faith-based proposals.

"Measures like that will build support for this whole concept but also impact the atmosphere in which this

debate is taking place," said Amy Sullivan of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a nonpartisan organization.

One major change has been the alignment of the players in the faith-based debate. "Any other year, it would have been a Ted Kennedy program," said Sullivan. "Now it's coming out of a Republican White House."

No substitute for public sector

Not everyone in the religious community backs faith-based initiatives. "It's a complex question, and a lot depends on the details. I'm more skeptical than affirmative," said the Rev. J. Philip Wogaman, a religious scholar and senior minister at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington.

Faith-based initiatives must not financially or morally undercut government efforts, Wogaman said. "The implication that you sometimes get is that faith-based communities are more dedicated and their employees are more committed than public institutions." He said that many Foundry members view their secular work in government agencies as a way to express their faith.

Wogaman is wary of statements by Robertson and the Rev. Jerry Falwell that some religious groups should be excluded from government support. "I could think of some religious communities that I would rather not see strengthened, and they may not be the same ones that (Falwell and Robertson) have in mind."

Intended for Inner City

A misconception that may be encouraged by the prominence of religious conservatives in the debate is the target for faith-based efforts. "This is really oriented toward how we get more effective relief to the urban and rural poor," said Souder. "This was not designed for big suburban churches. This was intended for predominantly African American and Hispanic inner city out-

reach missions."

The nuances of the concept are likely to generate wide-ranging opinions. "In general, this is a difficult, complicated issue," said Sullivan. The Pew Forum has a poll on faith-based initiatives coming out in a few weeks. "You can move people 10-15 points just on how you word the question."

Goldsmith's Role

One of the people who is trying to build public support is former Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith. President Bush passed over Goldsmith when he selected a director for the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Instead, Goldsmith, who indicated he wanted a larger portfolio than Bush had in mind for the faith-based office director, was named chairman of the Corporation for National Service, an unpaid position. Many expected Goldsmith, who was Bush's chief domestic policy adviser during the campaign, to have a larger White House role.

But Goldsmith has appeared as a spokesman at events, on television, and in the print media. He's also vigorously lobbying Capitol Hill. "Whenever something faith-based happens, he's there," said Souder.

After Congress passes faith-based legislation, the White House will try to leverage federal funding with money from private sources. That could expand Goldsmith's duties. "His role is evolving," said Souder. "It is somewhat less than defined but very opportunistic. His influence is likely to increase because he's smart."

But Goldsmith is not bashful about letting everyone know he's the most intelligent person in the room. Some have speculated that that aspect of Goldsmith's personality holds him back. Or he may have wanted to maintain flexibility in his job because his wife is ill. Goldsmith declined to be interviewed for this article, referring questions to the White House. ❖

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TRATION: Young Woo Kang, a special education administrator from Munster, professor and advocate for the disabled, has been asked by President Bush to join his proposed White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiative (Times of Northwest Indiana). Deborah Daniels has been named assistant attorney general for the Office of Justice Programs. Prof. Jimmy Gurule of the Notre Dame Law School will be undersecretary of the Treasury Department's Office of Enforcement. Kang will work with Bush officials to persuade Congress to approve the plan. If the program is OK'd, Kang's role would be with funding programs for the disabled and those requiring rehabilitation. That latter group could include those with drug and alcohol problems, he said.

CELL PHONES IRK BUSH: "Who's in charge of the cell phones?" Bush demanded of an aide Tuesday at the end of his Oval Office session with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. As they spoke to reporters, Bush and Sharon were interrupted not once, but twice, by the singsong trill of cellular telephones (Associated Press). Bush called out to the aide by name and chastised him, saying, "Are you in charge of the cell phones? You didn't do a very good job of telling

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them to turn them off."

STATE REGULATORS APPROVE AMERITECH PLAN: State regulators will let Ameritech continue to earn unlimited profits in exchange for technology upgrades and rate cuts -- but only if the company agrees to a more stringent structure of fines for customer-service problems (Lesley Stedman, Louisville Courier-Journal).

VOTING GHOSTS IN GARY, WHITING: Gary and Whiting have more registered voters than residents old enough to vote (William Lazarus, Times of Northwest Indiana). Election officials blame the "Motor Voter Act" for barring the old system of purging names of voters who failed to vote in repeated elections. While Gary and Whiting are the only state cities thus far to have more registered voters than those old enough to vote, the problem has been growing across the state.

LIBERTARIAN PREPARES SECRETARY OF STATE RUN: Knowledgeable sources are telling HPR that Valerie Hurd, Indianapolis, the Libertarian candidate in 2000 for Marion County surveyor, is considering a run for secretary of state. ❖

COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Stuart Rothenberg, *Roll Call* - If the economy continues to slow, producing more layoffs and minimal economic growth, who or what will be to blame? Mind you, I don't care who's actually responsible. I just want to know who, if anybody, will get blamed in November 2002. History, I think, is pretty clear about this. Voters tend to punish the incumbent president's party in elections when the economy is weak. It happened in 1958, when a serious recession resulted in major GOP midterm losses, and in 1992, when Bill Clinton capitalized on a slowdown to oust President George Bush. It even happened in 1982. Two years after President Jimmy Carter handed over an economy suffering from stagflation, voters punished the Republicans with a 26-seat loss in Ronald Reagan's first midterm. ❖

Morton Marcus, *Syndicated* - The first news stories from Census 2000 have been written. We have read about Indiana's population growth, how each of our 92 counties fared in the past decade, and the growth in Hispanic and racial groups. But most papers missed the biggest story of all: our children. After two decades of decline, the number of children in Indiana grew by 118,400 (8.1 percent) from 1990 to 2000. Between 1970 and 1990 the number of children in Indiana fell by 384,300. During the 1990s the population under 18 years of age accounted for 22.1 percent of the state's 556,300 total growth. Some of that earlier decline was the aftermath of the post-war baby boom. But another part was due to the loss of our state's young adults as the economy of Indiana failed to keep pace with progress elsewhere in the nation. While much has been made of the brain drain, the out-migration of educated young people, we should have been noticing the fertility

drain. Whatever their education level, young adults leaving the state take with them their fertility, our grandchildren and our future. Children are a great natural resource. Properly developed, they become income producing assets. Abused, neglected, or otherwise improperly developed, they become liabilities, welfare cases, underemployed workers, or jail house residents. The more children we have, the greater our opportunities for future success based on our internal strengths. Thus it is appropriate to celebrate the increase in the number of Hoosier children and the change in Indiana's fortune. Yet we should note also that the population of children (those 17 and younger) grew at 8.1 percent and less rapidly than the 10.2 percent growth in the adult population (those 18 and older). Data for the nation and most other states are still being released. Thus we are unable to answer the inevitable questions, "Yeah, but how does that compare with the nation?" And, "Ain't we still better off than Kentucky?" ❖

Mike Leonard, *Bloomington Herald-Times* - The honeymoon isn't over yet. Major newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, continue to parrot the Bush euphemism, "faith-based initiatives," for example, when there appears to be no difference between the warm and fuzzy Bushism and the clearer and less ambiguous wording, "religious-based." The President mangles his syntax and makes nonsensical statements on an almost daily basis, but still, Bush gets breaks that former Vice President Dan Quayle never enjoyed. Washington reporters accept the daily "what the president meant" briefings as routine and paraphrase what they can't quote. But there are signs that the media are growing weary of playing nice. ❖