



# HOWEY

## Political Report

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## Hoosier xenophobia nationalizing over ports

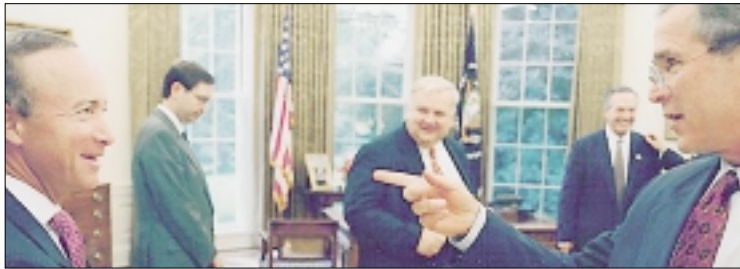
### *Will new controversy damage toll road lease prospects?*

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis

If you're in Gov. Daniels' brain trust, you have to be wondering how far the controversial port contract with the United Arab Emirates will travel into "fly-over country" (i.e. The Hoosier state).

Just when the toll road lease bill seemed to be finding durable legs three weeks before sine die, the port story blew up over the weekend. New York Gov.

George Pataki and Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich, both Republicans, on Monday voiced doubts about the acquisition of a British company that has been running six U.S. ports by Dubai Ports World, a state-owned business in the United Arab Emirates.



Gov. Mitch Daniels and President Bush, seen here in the Oval Office, are both confronting nationalistic xenophobia over toll road leases and ports. (White House Photo)

It was quickly followed by U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, then U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh ... on Wednesday, U.S. Rep. Mike Pence, today U.S. Reps. Mark Souder and Mike Sodrel.

U.S. Rep. Peter King, the New York Republican appearing with Democrat Schumer, told *CNN*, "I have never seen an issue so galvanizing."

It ushered in a new era for the Bush administration, long the champion of national security in the post 9/11 world. And it introduces a new xenophobic element in a state where business dealings with "foreigners" has seen increased anxiety from Hoosiers unaware of the extent of international trade going on all around them.

**Pence urged the Bush Administration** to put a hold on a port contract.

"During ordinary times normal procedures for reviewing port security contracts might be appropriate, but these are not ordinary times," said Pence. "We are a nation at war, and to ensure the security of our nation's major ports the president should put a hold on this contract until it can be investigated."

Souder explained, "I support legislation being proposed by the Chairman of



"On such an important security matter, it's simply not enough for the administration to ask us to trust them."

— U.S. Rep. Mark

Souder, urging President Bush to review the port lease to an Arab company

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Brian A. Howey, Publisher  
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington Writer  
Jack E. Howey, Editor

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Call 317-254-0535.

The Howey Political Report  
PO Box 40265  
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0265.

www.howeypolitics.com  
BrianHowey@howeypolitics.com

Indianapolis Office: 317-506-0883.  
Indianapolis Fax: 317-254-0535.  
Washington, DC Office: 202-256-5822.  
Business Office: 317-254-0535.

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the House Homeland Security Committee that would suspend the port deal for 45 days and allow for congressional approval or rejection of it. While I have strong doubts about the deal, and will likely end up opposing it, let's ensure that we have all the facts before a final decision is made."

Sodrel said today, "I cannot support the operation of critical U.S. ports by a foreign government. It is one thing to have private foreign capital invested in our country. It is quite another to have a foreign government assume the operation of critical U.S. assets," Sodrel said. "Given what I know about this arrangement, it is not in our country's best interest to allow it to go forward without a broader, more public investigation."

Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, the Democratic seeking the 8th CD seat held by U.S. Rep. John Hostettler, called on Congress to block the deal. "This is another example of how out of touch they are," Ellsworth said. "Only folks in Washington would think it's a good idea to out-source the operations of one of our most vulnerable terrorist targets to a foreign power with ties to terrorism."

Ellsworth cited homeland security concerns as central to his decision. According to the FBI, money was transferred to the 9/11 hijackers through the UAE banking system. After 9/11, the Treasury Department reported that the UAE was not cooperating in efforts to track down Osama Bin Laden's bank accounts. Additionally, the UAE was one of three countries in the world to recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. "I wouldn't hire characters like this to guard my jail," Ellsworth said, "and I don't think we should be hiring them to run our ports."

**But it was Pence's 6th CD opponent,** Democrat Barry Welsh, who was the first to make the link between Indiana Toll Road to ports. "Gov. Daniels has sold one of our roads, and President George W. Bush has outsourced six of the nation's ports to a country with terror links. Out-sourcing port security to Dubai, part of the middle eastern United Arab Emirates, the home of two of the nineteen 9/11 terrorists, and the location of laundering money to finance the attack, is just absurd. So absurd that it has to be done in secret."

The backdrop to this is the virulent xenophobia about leasing the toll road to "fer-ners."

The *Indianapolis Star* reported on Monday that anxiety is accompanied by a patriotic zeal that in some cases has edged toward intolerance. "The lease has almost become a symbol for all that has gone on over the years," said state Rep. Jeff Espich, R-Uniondale. "It's a fear of the foreign ownership of America. For most Hoosiers, it's not a matter of

rational arguments, but fear about what the deal represents."

**During a public meeting last week** of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Chairman Robert L. Meeks, R-LaGrange, scolded those in attendance for some of their comments. "We are not picking up this road and moving it to Australia," he said (*Indianapolis Star*).

As Gov. Daniels toured the toll road tier counties last



A truck sports a placard "Plunder Indiana" and urges a call to Gov. Daniels. (HPR Photo)

week, he met the "fer-ner" situation head-on. Daniels pointed to the fact that Americans already rely heavily on foreign products and are employed by international companies (Pryzbila, *LaPorte Herald-Argus*). "Are we upset about that or is that a good thing?" he asked. "The goods and services will be from the U.S. and Indiana."

At the end of last week, the toll road lease deal looked to be on solid footing. Daniels conducted a series of town hall meetings in Angola, Elkhart, Crown Point and LaPorte. He found skeptical and suspicious crowds, several of those attacking him personally. When that happened, Daniels was able to swing the room in his favor. His Democrat opponents continue to underestimate the boomerang nature of such attacks.

Daniels was also tamping down paranoia in his own party. State Sen. Robert Meeks called Major Moves an infestation of "pork" and "greed." State Rep. Randy Borrer described a meeting earlier this week in which Daniels confronted Meeks about the rhetoric. Borrer said the air was cleared and Meeks understands that substantial changes in the Senate could jeopardize its passage in the House. Some changes, including the removal of I-69 toll road provisions, are expected today.

**And Borrer noted that** State Sen. Glenn Howard, D-Indianapolis, was signalling his support, the first legislative Democrat to do so. He hoped others would follow. "We've kind of all been led to believe that this is a good deal for Indiana, without going into the specifics of it," said Sen. Earline Rogers, D-Gary (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). Daniels said he has seen some warm to the concept. "Clearly there's been a shift. But I wouldn't claim that it's not still something that troubles some people."

Whether that shift gets caught up in the spewing rhetoric in Washington about the ports deal remains to be seen. House Republicans are being described as "skittish." ❖



## Bayh and the Dubai Buy

By MARK CURRY

The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Sen. Evan Bayh didn't miss a heartbeat on *Fox News Sunday* last week when asked about a story that at the time was little more than a cloud on the horizon outside the beltway -- the Bush administration's approval of a deal that would allow DP World, a company mainly owned by the United Arab Emirates, to conduct significant operations at six major U.S. seaports.

"There can't be a choice between profits and protecting the American people," he said. "We have to do, even if it costs us a couple extra bucks, what it takes to protect this country. I'll give you one little example. About 80 percent of the magnets that make our smart bombs go are now made in China. It's not smart to rely on China to produce important weapons systems for this country, just like it's not smart to outsource our port security if there's any doubt."

On Monday, Bayh's office issued a press release outlining steps he intends to propose in legislation that would "stop outsourcing our homeland security."

"The Dubai takeover is a symptom of a much larger problem," Bayh stated in the press release. "Again and again, the current system for overseeing foreign takeovers has undermined our national security interests by rubber stamping deals like this one."

Long after Bayh had flown to Florida and later California for several days of fundraising, his fellow lawmakers (including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist), hacks and bloggers of every political stripe began to whip up a veritable maelstrom that continued to batter the administration late into the week.

**So far, the president says** he will not be moved.

"We will continue to talk to people in Congress and explain clearly why the decision was made," Bush told reporters during a Cabinet meeting this morning. "This wouldn't be going forward if we were not certain that our ports would be secure," he said.

On Tuesday, Bush had explained, "I want those who are questioning it to step up and explain why all of a sudden a Middle Eastern company is held to a different standard than a Great British [sic] company," Bush said. "I'm trying to conduct foreign policy now by saying to people of the world, 'We'll treat you fairly.'"

"They ought to look at the facts, and understand the consequences of what they're going to do. But if they pass a law, I'll deal with it, with a veto."

Threat of veto -- it would be the president's first -- only fanned the flames. Bill Gertz reported in Wednesday's *Washington Times* that several unnamed administration security officials said the deal could potentially allow terrorists to infiltrate seaports.

**Some observers insisted the president was right.** Ports of Indiana spokesman Jody Peacock explained to *The Times of Northwest Indiana* that the U.S. Coast Guard regulates all ports and vessels regardless of the ownership of the companies working at any individual port.

Others suggested that lawmakers behaved irresponsibly. "Everyone is playing politics, and it's very unfortunate," Judith Kipper of the Council on Foreign Relations told *Newsday*. "It reconfirms to Arab and other allies that the United States is not a friendly place for investments and financial transactions." In an editorial entitled "*Paranoia about Dubai ports deal is needless*," the *Financial Times* stated "The bluster about national security conceals one of the uglier faces of U.S. protectionism - the one with the slightly racist tinge."



According to Bayh spokesperson Meghan Keck, the senator's proposed legislation will directly address such concerns by requiring the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, which approves such sales, "to consider any country - whatever country is involved in the business deal - to consider that country's relationship with the U.S. before it approves that sale."

The legislation would also require the Director of National Intelligence to certify there are no troubling national security implications of such sales; add the director to the Committee to bolster national security consideration; require the president to notify Congress and relevant state officials of all proposed foreign acquisitions; and, calls for increased transparency at the Committee.

As Helen Delich Bentley, a former Maryland congresswoman and a port consultant, told the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, CFIUS has always operated in secrecy, and has approved many deals that she objected to.

**Keck noted that CFIUS** has only stopped one business purchase since it was formed in 1988.

"Like the magnets that were made in China, Sen. Bayh believes that there are some assets that the U.S. should never have to depend on other countries to provide," Keck said. ❖

*Mark Curry, based in Washington, D.C., is covering the Bayh presidential campaign for HPR. Watch for his weekly reports*



## Credible sources in the Senate

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

Indiana is a surreal place when it comes to health care. It's a land where a CEO of a leading health insurance company can get a \$24 million bonus, but 800,000 (or 14 percent) of its residents are without health care.

Sure, they can show up at the Wishard emergency room and let their meager personal budgets land them in bankruptcy, or let the taxpayers pick up the tab.

And then there's the Indiana Senate. In 2001 and 2002, Senate President Robert Garton helped engineer what has become the "legislator health care for life" trough wallow. It even includes ex-spouses. No one, except Garton, can remember any public hearings on the matter. HEA 1196, Section 141 (2002), made the annual appropriation, but as for the liability to taxpayers, the 19-page fiscal impact statement in citation for IC 2-5-1.1-17, reads, "Reserved."

The issue is politically explosive. It was instrumental in State Sen. Brent Waltz's 2004 Republican primary upset of legendary Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst. State Rep. Troy Woodruff successfully used it in his razor-thin November 2004 stunner over Democrat John Frenz of Vincennes. Waltz notes the perk offended 80 percent in a campaign poll.

So offensive, that House Speaker Brian Bosma ended the program in the House. But in the Senate, well, the program was ... just scaled back a wee bit.

In a late February press conference, Garton gathered senators Luke Kenley, David Long and Democrats Richard Young, Vi Simpson and Earlene Rogers to announce his "reforms." The fact that Kenley and Simpson, once gubernatorial contenders, would even want to touch this radioactive issue is curious.

Kenley said the current changes for the Senate would mean the program would cost "less than 1 percent" of the billion dollar figure.

At this press conference, Kenley publicly chided me for using the billion dollar figure. "The number now is less than 1 percent of the number put out by Brian Howey," Kenley said.

**Reporter:** "What was the original cost?"

**Kenley:** "I don't think anybody put out a figure and said, 'Here's what it is under the old plan.' We didn't worry about the old plan because we knew we weren't going to go to the old plan. The rough back-of-the-envelope estimate we have now is less than 1 percent of that amount."

**Reporter:** "So you're not going to tell us what it is currently?"

**Kenley:** "The actuary can't do it."

**Reporter:** "Well, if you can tell us that it is less than 1 percent with the new changes, why can't you tell us what it is currently?"

**Kenley:** "I don't follow your question."

**Reporter:** "The plan as it is in place today, you're not giving us an estimate for that, but you're giving us an estimate for the changes."

**Kenley:** "Right."

**Reporter:** "Why not the first?"

**Kenley:** "Because once we decided to make a change, we never felt it was going to be relevant."

**Garton:** "You're talking 50 years."

**Kenley:** "We're paying the guy money to do this, OK? So, once you decide you're going to make a change, then that number becomes relevant within the context of what

you think is a reasonable fair plan. We didn't pay him to do a full actuarial study."

**Reporter:** "You have said we've all over-estimated."

**Kenley:** "Well, to the first part of your question, I never said that number. I don't know where you would get that number."

**Howey:** "From a member of the Senate Majority Caucus."

**Kenley:** "I don't know whether you would consider that to be a credible source or not."

**Howey:** "I'm just trying to figure out where there is a credible source."

**Reporter:** "We are trying to find a credible source. I believe Sen. Long said that all that information would be available when you guys announced your changes."

**Sen. Long:** "The actuarial number that we were talking about, OK?, never existed."

No one ever knew what the cost would be when they pulled this fast one. In the Indiana Senate, there is a stunning lack of "credible sources." It was like Harrison Ford's Col. Lucas character in the movie *Apocalypse Now* telling Capt. Willard, "You understand, Captain, that this mission does not exist, nor will it ever exist."

But the real capper was Garton's defense of the program and saying, with a straight face, that any Hoosier could find health insurance now. Missing was the word "affordable."

Garton's Republican primary opponent, Columbus accountant Greg Walker, says the Senate president has been caught with his "hand in the cookie jar" and will seek to ... terminate his command. ❖

*This column will appear in the Indianapolis Business Journal's Forefront section.*





## Prayer and politics

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - It was a busy week for prayer and politics, though most of the active politicians claimed there was nothing political about it.

The Indiana blogosphere lit up over the weekend with reports that House Speaker Brian Bosma offended members of the Indianapolis Jewish Relations Committee last week during their lobby day. According to an e-mail that was posted on *The Daily Pulse* and later *Advance Indiana*, Bosma was quoted saying, "How many Jews are there in Indiana? About 2 percent? There are at least 80 percent Christians in Indiana."

Several bloggers checked in with HPR on Monday morning. "Why haven't you done anything with this?"

HPR responded: We are checking out the story with Speaker Bosma.

A few hours after the initial inquiry, Bosma was on the phone. The speaker understood the political implications of the gaffe and moved quickly to squelch them. Bosma told HPR that he had just finished meeting with Jewish leaders, including Doug Rose, Henry Efromyson and Marcia Goldstar. "I extended a sincere apology if my words were taken as disrespect," Bosma said. "They accepted my apology and understood what was implied was not my interpretation." Bosma said the quote from an e-mail of one of the original Lobby Day participants carried on blogsites was not correct. "We did have a discussion on populations," Bosma said. "But I did not say it that way. It was a misunderstanding entirely."

**In the blog-posted e-mail**, the Indianapolis JCRC's Jewish Lobby Day was described. "The day ended with a private meeting with Speaker of the House Bosma meeting our group in the beautiful House chambers," the e-mail said. "We asked questions about full day kindergarten, about the clinics, and a young member of the delegation asked about providing sexuality education in public schools that is more than abstinence based. He responded to everything we asked. Sometimes we liked what he said and sometimes we didn't. Speaker Bosma wondered why we hadn't discussed the controversy surrounding the issue of prayer in House chambers. He told us his version of what happened and what he believes, and a passionate exchange took place. The end of this exchange left us, the Jewish delegation, in shock."

It was with this percolating in the background (though it evaded the *Indianapolis Star's* Oblivion Bureau) that U.S. Reps. Mike Sodrel and Dan Burton appeared at the Statehouse with State Sen. Mike Delph in room 101. It was originally supposed to take place in the House chambers, but by the time of the press conference, it was moved and there wasn't a House member in sight.

**There, Sodrel announced HR.4776**, to remove the review of content of speech in the legislature from the jurisdiction of federal courts. Federal Judge David Hamilton ruled recently, in the case of *Hinrichs v. Bosma*, that ministers invited to deliver invocations before the Indiana State Legislature, and the legislators themselves, must not make any reference to Jesus Christ or to the Christian religion.



U.S. Rep. Dan Burton had an animated exchange with WXNT's Abdul Hakim Shabazz while State Sen. Mike Delph (left) and Rep. Mike Sodrel watched with amusement. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

"This decision goes beyond freedom of religion, to threaten freedom of speech, and imperils the foundation principles of our representative republic," Sodrel said. "If federal courts can regulate any speech of the members of a legislative body, then those courts can regulate all speech. The courts are now going beyond interpreting laws, and have begun

inserting themselves in the legislative process. Hundreds of years of precedent argue against this court decision."

**After a series of questions** from WXNT's Abdul Hakim Shabazz, Burton took to the podium and asked, "I don't know who you are or where you came from." Once identified ("I'm Abdul"), Burton told the journalist, "For anybody in the media to come up here and start picking and choosing like you're doing right now is a mistake. It's just not right. We're talking about religious freedom in the legislative branch of government having a morning prayer. That's what this is all about. Our constitution guarantees freedom of speech for everybody. We're talking about the federal courts infringing upon the rights of the state legislature by interjecting a view, which I don't believe will be upheld."

While Sodrel insisted it "isn't about politics" (*See HPR Interview, Page 6*) and ICLU legal director Ken Falk insisted it was, HPR ran into Tony Hinrichs, who instigated the original lawsuit and was beaming over the reaction.

Hinrichs acknowledged that what he's really done is gassed up the church buses for an Election Day rollout. In an environment with Republicans facing potential base suppression, his lawsuit is a double-edged political sword. ❖



## Sodrel surveys the '06 campaign

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - HPR caught up with U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel at the Indiana Statehouse Tuesday morning.

**HPR:** How would you assess the prayer bill's chance of passage?

**Sodrel:** I think I will get bipartisan support. Members from 18 states are cosponsors. We'll reach out to folks on the other side of the aisle and we'll find some bipartisan support. This is not a partisan issue, it's not a political issue.

**Abdul Hakim Shabazz:** Right now we have a speaker who is an honorable man. What happens when we have a speaker without that kind of character? What's the safeguard?

**Sodrel:** We'll never live in a perfect world. There is no perfect government or system. I think a group of 100 that's elected will have more of a right answer than a single person in a black robe who's unelected. If a judge can control any speech in a state legislature, then he or she is capable of controlling all speech. I believe the state legislatures are perfectly capable of establishing their own rules; who may speak, how long they may speak, and what they can say. They don't need a federal judge dictating to them what they can or cannot say on the House floor.

**Abdul:** Judge Hamilton didn't bring this lawsuit. One thing that Sen. Delph said was let's invoke the name of Allah. Well, in prayer, Muslims don't do that.

**Sodrel:** Well, that's their religious heritage. That's their religious tradition. I certainly wouldn't want to dictate to a Muslim what they can or cannot share. I'm confident they will be invited to the floor to give a prayer as well.

**Abdul:** You have an opponent in Baron Hill ...

**Sodrel:** This has nothing to do with politics. There are some things that will be political, this is not political. If you look at that vote in the Indiana state legislature, it was absolutely bipartisan. It will be the same way in the U.S. House. It's a bipartisan issue. Political issues are those where one side believes one thing and the other side believes another. Political issues are about contrast. I don't think there's any contrast here.

**HPR:** Are your constituents worried about the war? Gasoline prices?

**Sodrel:** The questions people ask, given the district

we're talking to, the one common denominator is the cost of health care, and what we have to do to get the cost of health care down, particularly for small business.

**HPR:** Do you see the dynamic and electoral atmosphere shifting much between now and the fall?

**Sodrel:** I think it will shift with the drawdown of American troops in Iraq in 2006. I think it will be less of an issue in November than it is today. Some of the other issues, the price of gasoline is under \$2 a gallon now. But I guess no one really knows what the issues will be in November.

**HPR:** When you were in Iraq last fall, what kind of conclusions did you come to? Are we on track? Making progress?

**Sodrel:** When you visit Iraq, it is much better and much further advanced than what you read here in the United States. I talked with Gen. Casey, who is the commanding general there, and Ambassador Khalizaid as well as individual soldiers. I had lunch with them and they believe in the mission. They believe they are doing what they were sent to do. I think the real key is getting the Iraqi government organized. It's not our style of government. They don't just elect a president. It's parliamentary and they are in the process of forming a government. That's the missing piece. Their economy is moving along. Yeah, their unemployment rate is over 20 percent. That compares to over 50 percent a year ago.

**HPR:** But Sen. Lugar's committee has revealed that oil production is now below prewar levels.

**Sodrel:** Well, a lot of the infrastructure in Iraq is not very well maintained. It hasn't been maintained for over a generation under Saddam. Those are some of the problems that have to be overcome in order to get it moving in the right direction.

**HPR:** Your opponent, Baron Hill, says the Bush administration lied to him about the pre-war intelligence. How do you expect to counter that?

**Sodrel:** What I read is that he said the Pentagon lied to him, which was a little different take than most people. Most people taking that position say the CIA misled them, or the White House misled them. Or President Bush misled them. In a perfect world, we would all have 100 percent of the information we would like to have at our finger tips. It would be 100 percent accurate. Unfortunately, we don't live in a perfect world. They made the best decision they could with the best decision available. I think it's all you can do. ❖



Rep. Sodrel



## Kokomo battles economic threat with \$15 million grant

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON -- When Kokomo Mayor Matt McKillip delivers his upcoming State of the City address, he'll focus on the central role of education and lifelong learning in strengthening the area's economy and helping it weather setbacks in the manufacturing sector.

As he makes his case, he'll have a multi-million dollar arrow in his quiver. McKillip will have just returned from a meeting in Washington on Wednesday that launched a major Department of Labor training initiative. Kokomo is part of the North Central Indiana Transformation Network, which received a three-year, \$15 million grant as part of a new federal program, Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED).

The Indiana initiative, coordinated by Purdue University, is designed to foster collaboration between academia, business, government and economic development organizations in 14 counties that stretch from the Lafayette to Kokomo. Purdue, Indiana University and Ivy Tech will provide educational and technical dimensions of the program.

The goal is to create high-wage, high-skill jobs by promoting entrepreneurship, increasing innovation in the advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, agribusiness and food processing sectors, and retraining workers in declining industries.

One of traditional businesses that is faltering in the area is bankrupt Delphi Corp., the auto parts maker with big operations in Kokomo. Although the company is still operating in the city, the specter of a shutdown--and hundreds of job losses--looms.

Retooling autoworkers with new skills is a priority. "We can't sit idly by and watch their standard of living decline," McKillip said in an HPR interview.

The federal workforce grant "is clearly something the governor (Mitch Daniels) and I can point to and say we've got \$15 million to retrain workers so that they'll be gainfully employed as the economy of Kokomo transforms."

Fierce global competition in manufacturing, which accounts for 40 percent of payrolls in the north central Indiana, is spurring the change to a knowledge-based economy. That has resulted in moving education to the top of the political agenda.

In his State of the City speech, McKillip will highlight the federal workforce grant and stress the importance of life-long learning as a key ingredient of economic development. He said that he will reach out to local school systems to determine what kind of help they need from government.

### ***Training Development as Political Issue***

Along with policy initiatives, training and education needs to become prominent in political discourse in order to add urgency to the issue. "It should be a dinner table conversation," said McKillip.

Civic advocacy and political leadership is critical in the process of transforming the Hoosier economy, said Victor Lechtenberg, vice provost for engagement at Purdue. Beyond being a catalyst for recasting the north central Indiana economy, the workforce initiative will try to help public officials promote training and development.

"We're trying to figure out the cover they need, if you will, to help nurture this idea," Lechtenberg said in a presentation at the Washington event on Wednesday.

### ***Senate competitiveness legislation***

One Hoosier political leader is advocating legislation designed to strengthen U.S. competitiveness in part by increasing the number of students going into science and engineering. Sen. Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is co-sponsoring the National Innovation Act as well as the Protecting America's Competitive Edge Act. Sen. Evan Bayh also has signed on to both bills. At a press conference in December to launch the innovation bill, Lugar postulated what he called the key question: "How do we offer incentives so that young Americans want to do science, engineering and math?"

Capturing the imagination of students is the key. "Individual choices of careers--some idea of how important this is for our country--really is of the essence," said Lugar. ❖



## Is this how alcohol should be delivered in Indiana?

**Two-thirds of Hoosiers believe continued regulation of wine sales is necessary to safeguard children and ensure product safety and quality.**

Urge your senator to support HB 1190 and keep alcohol sales under control in Indiana

[www.pointclickdrink.com](http://www.pointclickdrink.com)



**Gary Gerard**, *Warsaw Times-Union* - I recall after the 2004 election W was gloating a bit. I remember a press conference the day after the election. W had this to say: "Let me put it to you this way: I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it. It is my style. That's what happened in the – after the 2000 election, I earned some capital. I've earned capital in this election – and I'm going to spend it for what I told the people I'd spend it on, which is – you've heard the agenda: Social Security and tax reform, moving this economy forward, education, fighting and winning the war on terror." Well, I'm afraid W has spent most or all of his "political capital" and then some. Please don't misunderstand. I consider myself a conservative. And I was glad to see conservatives running the show in Washington. But honestly, they aren't acting like conservatives. I don't know what they're acting like, but it's troubling, nonetheless. Sometimes it seems as if they've forgotten it's a democracy.

❖

**Bill Moor**, *South Bend Tribune* - Idle thoughts while waiting for Eastern Daylight Time to kick in: Do you think that Our Man Mitch would let some of my buddies and me rent out part of the Toll Road for a day? And do you think an oasis will eventually be named after him?

❖

**Rich James**, *Post-Tribune* - Lake County government is so fraught with problems that one has to wonder if the Good Government Initiative and the Compact with Voters will make much of a difference. There is a train of thought that only a change of sitting officials in certain offices will result in effective government. Could be, but it isn't likely to happen overnight. What's wrong with county government is that there's no one in charge. Oh, there are three county commissioners who have responsibility for the administrative end of things. And there are seven county councilmen who adopt a budget and add and subtract jobs for their friends and enemies without fear of public reprisal. That's why there is no employment office or human resources department in Lake County government. The most connected generally beat out the most qualified for a job. It is an archaic form of government based on the survival of those who are most politically fit. Those responsible for coming up with the Compact with Voters say they are trying to create a change of culture in county government. I think what they are saying is that the culture has to change from political government to effective government. I would tend to agree with that assessment, and it all comes back to the fact that no one is in charge. Watching the three commissioners operate is like a replay of

## Howey column reach spreads

HPR Publisher Brian A. Howey's editorial reach is expanding across Indiana. His weekly newspaper column is now appearing in *The Times of Northwest Indiana*, the *Hendricks County Flyer*, the *Jeffersonville Evening News* and *New Albany Tribune*.



Brian Howey

In addition, it is now appearing in the *Indianapolis Business Journal's* monthly *Forefront* section.

In the next month, the *Plymouth Pilot News* will begin running Howey's column.

Other newspapers carrying Howey's column are the *Auburn Evening Star*, *Angola Herald Republican*, *Albion New Era*, *Anderson Herald Bulletin*, *Bluffton News-Banner*, *Columbia City Post & Mail*, *Crawfordsville Journal Review*, *Crothersville Times*, *Dearborn County Register*, *Decatur Daily Democrat*, *Elkhart Truth*, *Frankfort Times*, *Kendallville News-Sun*, *Lafayette Journal & Courier*, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, *Kokomo Tribune*, *Northwest Allen Times*, *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, *Rochester Sentinel* and the *Sullivan Times*.

Howey began writing his weekly column in 1985 while an editor and reporter for the *Elkhart Truth*.

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an old "Three Stooges" skit with Moe, Curly and Larry beating one another over the head and virtually nothing being resolved.

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**Gary Welsh**, *Advance Indiana* - Just a day after House Speaker Brian Bosma had to eat crow and publicly apologize to a Jewish group because of comments he made in his over-zealous pursuit of Christian only prayers in the House of Representatives, U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel will unveil a bill at the State House today, which he introduced in Congress last week, to strip federal courts of jurisdiction to hear Establishment Clause cases involving state legislatures--a bill we first told you about last weekend. The *Star* gives the announcement of Sodrel's bill front-page billing with no mention of Bosma's public apology yesterday. Apparently the *Star's* State House reporters were taking a nap while that announcement was taking place yesterday--a story which got top billing on WISH-TV news yesterday.

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## Bush's poll numbers sag in Indiana

**TRENDLINE No. 1:** Survey USA released its 50-state tracking poll of President Bush on Feb. 16 and his Indiana numbers are approve 46 percent, disapprove 51 percent. For Indiana's U.S. senators, both Dick Lugar and Evan Bayh do well. Bayh's fav/unfavs are 61-31 percent, and Lugar's are 62-30 percent.

## 2006 Congressional Races

**U.S. Senate: Republican:** U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar. Democrat: Open. **1988 results:** Lugar (R) 1,430,525, Wickes (D) 668,778. **1994 results:** Lugar (R) 1,039,625, Jontz (D) 470,799, Bourland (L) 17,343, Barton (A) 15,801. **2000 Results:** Lugar 1,425,150, Johnson(D) 680,046, Hager (L) 33,896. **2006 Forecast:** Lugar has no opponent. This is the first time in modern Indiana times where we can remember an unopposed U.S. Senator. **Status:** SAFE LUGAR.

**Congressional District 2: Republican:** U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola, Tony Zirkle. Democrat: Steve Frances, Joe Donnelly. **Geography:** South Bend, Michigan City, Mishawaka, Elkhart, Kokomo, Plymouth, Logansport; LaPorte, St. Joseph, Starke, Marshall, Pulaski, Fulton, Cass, Carroll and parts of Howard, Porter, Elkhart and White counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Chicago. **People:** Urban/rural 73/27%; median income \$40,381; Poverty 9.5%; Race 84% white, 8% black; 5 Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 34/50%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 53%, Gore 44%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+5; **2002 Result:** Chocola 95,081 (50%), Long Thompson 86,253 (46%); **2004 Result:** Chocola 140,496 (54%) Donnelly (D) 115,513 (45%) **2006 Forecast:** When President Bush poses for photos today with Hoosiers willing to pay \$4,000 each to help re-elect Chocola, the Bristol Republican will be the first GOP congressman in the nation to get fundraising help from the president for the 2006 elections (Groppe, *Indianapolis Star*). Bush is flying to north-central Indiana on Air Force One to help Chocola because he's a rarity these days: an incumbent in a congressional district that is fairly evenly matched between Democrats and Republicans. That makes Chocola more vulnerable to political currents, which are pulling against Republicans these days because of scandals, a growing public distaste for the war and high energy prices. In addition, Chocola was re-elected in 2004 with 54.2 percent, one of the



lowest re-election margins in Congress and a poorer showing than the 56 percent Bush captured in the north central Indiana district. **Status:** *Leans Chocola*

**Congressional District 7:** Republican: Ron Franklin, Eric Dickerson. Democrat: U.S. Rep. Julia Carson, Bob Hidalgo, Kris Kiser, Joseph "Hippie Joe" Stockett.

**Geography:** Indianapolis. Media Market: Indianapolis. **People:** Urban 99.7%; median income \$36,522; poverty 13.5%; race white 63, black 29.4%, Hispanic 4.4%, Asian 1.3%; blue/white collar 26/58%; **2000 Presidential:** Gore 55%, Bush 43%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** D+6. **2002 Results:** Carson 77,478 (53%), McVey 64,379 (44%). 2004 Results: Carson 121,303, Horning (R) 97,491, Campbell (L) 4,381. **2006 Forecast:** Kiser is calling for debates with Rep. Carson. **Primary Status:** LIKELY CARSON.

**Congressional District 8:** Republican: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. Democrat: Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, J. Bernard Peter. **Geography:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Greencastle; Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Pike, Martin, Daviess, Knox, Sullivan, Greene, Owen, Clay, Vigo, Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Warren and part of Fountain counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Indianapolis. Lafayette. **People:** Urban/rural 58/42%; median income \$36,732; poverty 10.7%; race white 93.7%, black 3.7%, Hispanic .9%; blue/white collar: 32/52%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+8. **2002 Results:** Hostettler 98,952 (51%), Hartke 88,763 (46%), **2004 Results:** Hostettler 145,576, Jennings (D) 121,522, Garvin (Green) 5,680. **2006 Forecast:** The National Journal observes: Every year, Republican Hostettler looks like he's just not doing enough to hold this swing seat and every year, he bails it out. But the Democrats have a solid recruit in Ellsworth, who, in our eyes, has a better resume than any war veteran: Ellsworth is in local law enforcement, and those credentials might do more to sell the public on an agenda that includes "cleaning up Congress." J. Bernard Peter, Ellsworth's primary opponent, said Monday he filed for Congress because clients of his insurance business and friends had asked him over the years if he would consider running for office. "I'm not mounting a serious campaign in any way, shape or form," he said (*Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press*). "I don't expect to remain a candidate, either, to tell you the honest truth." **General Status:** TOSS-UP

## 2006 State Races

**Senate District 27:** Republican: State Sen. Allen Paul, Richmond City Council President Bruce Wissel.



Democrat: Open. **1998 Results:** Paul 22,679. **2002 Results:** Paul 22,841. **2006 Forecast:** Sen. Allen Paul (R-Richmond) is not a Major Moves supporter because of issues he says the legislation leaves unaddressed or that he doesn't like. He senses it's too good to be true. "Nothing's free, they're not going to hand you a bunch of money," Paul said. "I cannot vote for Major Moves." Wayne County Auditor Chris Beeson voiced his concern about the Legislature changing property tax formulas effective this year, Paul told him he doubted any property tax changes would survive this session (Richmond Palladium-Item). Beeson worried that changes to property taxes would cause property tax bills to be issued late. But Paul said the House sent over a bill that offered no way of providing an alternative to property tax funding. The Senate has two weeks to figure out how it could make the bill work. "You can't do it in two weeks," Paul said. "It would be a nightmare to try to do it." **Status:** *Leans Paul*

**Senate District 49:** Republican: Posey County Councilman George Postlethweight. Democrat: Posey County Councilman Bob Deig, Paul Swanson, Kevin Winterheimer. **2002 Results:** Lutz (D) 21,891, Alvey (Socialist write-in) 590. **2006 Forecast:** As the Friday deadline passed for candidates to file for the 2006 election, most of the local Statehouse races will have competition (*Evansville Courier & Press*). Another Democrat threw his hat into the race for the Senate District 49 seat. Sen. Larry Lutz, D-Evansville, decided not to seek reelection and Kevin Winterheimer filed to run in the primary. Winterheimer, 51, runs a private practice and represents the city of Evansville. He graduated from the University of Evansville and Indiana University School of Law in Indianapolis. He now lives in Posey County. "People around me have been telling me that somebody like me should run for an office like this - that my concerns are their concerns," Winterheimer said. "I gave it a lot of thought and said this is the opportunity to do it." Winterheimer joins fellow Democrats Bob Deig and Paul Swanson on the primary ticket. Republican George Postlethweight will be unopposed in the primary election. **Primary Status:** *TOSSUP*.

**Senate District 41:** Republican: Senate President Pro Tempore Robert D. Garton, Greg Walker. Democrat: Terry Coriden. **1998 Results:** Garton 26,499. **2002 Results:** Garton 21,918, Gividen (L) 3,350. **2006 Forecast:** Another bad week for the president, all stemming from the legislator health care for life issue. The *Indianapolis Star* gave his primary opponent, Greg Walker, a front page Saturday exposure on the issue, quoting him as saying that Garton's hand was caught in the "cookie jar." *Star* columnist Matt Tully mentioned it in his "questionable moves" column on Sunday, saying, "Disastrous news conference: I can't stop thinking about the news conference Senate leaders held Wednesday. They were there to announce changes to their lifetime health-care pro-

gram. But the changes were minimal, and the senators did nothing more than remind everyone about the overly generous perk. I can't understand why senators -- from both parties -- thought drawing more attention to the issue with a no-news conference was a good idea." And then there was a Columbus Republic interactive poll on its website, where 92 percent weighed in and said Garton should end the health insurance perk. For Garton, a man all about controlling processes, this issue is an angry steed kicking at his china cabinet. If Walker has any political acumen (and we've yet to see this), and drops 10 pieces of direct mail like those that helped defeat Sen. Borst, Garton could be in a big trouble. Being a process guy, any aspect out of his control (in addition to a primary opponent) truly gets under Garton's skin. So he finds himself torn between the loyalty he feels for his flock (in the Senate and retired) and the political realities at hand. Most Statehouse observers we've talked with don't believe he is in significant political trouble, but other than HPR, no one thought Borst would be defeated, either. We're not so sure. If Walker shows any political sophistication, then watch out. Another note: Former Sen. Dick Thompson called to question HPR about a Right to Life "endorsement" of Walker. Walker told us that he was recruited by "national" Right to Life sources, as well as former Rep. Jon Padfield, who is affiliated with Indiana Right to Life. Thompson said that Indiana Right to Life is not opposed to Garton. The point? Garton is working to ensure those forces are not actively aligning against him. While this doesn't appear to be the case, there are some elements within the RTL community that are searching for an alternative. RTF was an essential element in the Borst defeat. Any splintering of this group in a low-turnout primary is potentially problematic. **Primary Status:** *LIKELY GARTON*.

**General Status:** *LEANS GARTON.* ❖

**House District 1:** Republican: Open. Democrat: State Rep. Linda Lawson, Lake County Councilman Ron Tabacynski. **2002 Results:** Lawson 5,867, Myra Rosenbloom (R) 3,012. **2004 Democratic Primary:** Lawson 2,963, Pucalik 2,684. **2004 Results:** Lawson, 11,926, Baffa (R) 7,820. **2006 Forecast:** Tabacynski represents Hammond and Munster from a Lake County Council seat he is vacating to run against Linda. He is a clever young man, who served in the legislature in the same seat before Lawson during the 1990's. However, his campaigning skills leave a lot to be desired. Tabacynski ran last fall in a precinct committeeman election for a vacancy in the county treasurer's race last October and was beaten 232-135 by Merrillville town clerk-treasurer John Petalas. **Primary Status:** *TOSSUP*.

**House District 8:** Republican: Open. Democrat: State Rep. Ryan Dvorak, Roseland Council President Dorothy Snyder. **2002 Results:** Dvorak (D) 10,949, Baxmeyer (R) 9,008. **2004 Results:** Dvorak (D) 19,457. **2006 Forecast:**



Republican Marcus Barlow has dropped out of this race to take over press secretary duties for Rep. Chocola. **Primary Status:** SAFE DVORAK.

**House District 12:** Republican:Open. Democrat: Alicia Lopez-Rodriguez, Mara Candelaria Reardon, Hilda Rodriguez. **2004 Results:** Aguilera 11,485, Fagen R) 9,749, Brickman (L) 527. 2004 Democratic Primary Results: Aguilera 2,920, Lopez-Rodriguez 2,784 **2006 Forecast:** State Rep. John Aguilera, D-East Chicago, will not seek another term, preferring to focus on a possible 2007 challenge of Mayor George Pabey (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). "I have had an interest in public service in the city of East Chicago for a long time," Aguilera said Friday. "I formed a exploratory (political action committee) last year in October with the view of looking at my options for the future. We'll see if I have enough support for looking at potentially running for mayor." Aguilera, the only Hispanic member of the General Assembly, has served there since 2000. He is supporting Mara Candelaria Reardon, one of three Democrats running for the 12th district House seat. She will square off against Alicia Lopez-Rodriguez, an East Chicago city employee, who gave Aguilera a tough challenge two years ago, and political unknown Hilda Rodriguez of Highland. Hilda Rodriguez listed a Port DeLeau Court address on her filing papers but did not provide a phone number or e-mail address. Slating same-named candidates in an attempt to confuse voters is a Lake County political tradition. Aguilera, 46, retired from Mittal Steel last April. By stepping down from the Legislature this year, he will be able to keep his state health insurance and the 24 percent premium he currently pays will never increase. "It didn't really play a factor in my decision," Aguilera said, adding that he now will be able to spend more time with his three teenage daughters. Aguilera said his newfound lame-duck status won't make him any more likely to support Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels' plan to lease the Indiana Toll Road to a pair of foreign firms. "I don't see anything that would change my mind on that at this point," he said. Aguilera and Candelaria Reardon spent Friday morning in Indianapolis, meeting with House Minority Leader Patrick Bauer, D-South Bend, and Indiana Democratic Party Chairman Dan Parker (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). Candelaria Reardon said her agenda will include a focus on reducing Lake County property taxes. Her husband, Matt Reardon, is a Republican precinct committeeman in Munster. "It's not a secret, she said. "Everyone who knows us knows we don't agree on everything. It makes for an interesting marriage." **Status:** LEANS LOPEZ-RODRIGUEZ.

**House District 15:** Republican: State Rep. Don Lehe, Art Anderson. Democrat: Newton County Sheriff Myron Sutton, John Anthony Malan. **2002 Results:** Lehe 9,975, Baranowski (D) 5,641. **2004 Results:** Lehe 16,623,

Childress (D) 8,153, Bell (L) 565. **2006 Forecast:** Our sources from both the north and south end of this district believe Lehe could be in real trouble this fall, and perhaps even in the primary against Anderson. Anderson is a White County Councilman from Monticello. Lehe really did the flip-flop on the time zone issue and was pictured on the front page of the *Star*. The Illinois border counties are surprisingly strong against switching to Central, primarily because of Lafayette. Our Lake County sources say that if there is no property tax relief, that will put Lehe on the defensive.

**Primary Status:** LEANS LEHE

**House District 17:** Republican: State Rep. Steve Heim. Democrat: Nancy Dembowski. **2004 Results:** Heim 14,100, McLiver (D) 8,321, Foley (I) 854. SD5 Results: Heinold (R) 24,753, Dembowski (D) 24,398. **2006 Forecast:** Dembowski finally files. In a normal election cycle, Heim would be in relatively good shape. But with the controversies surrounding the toll road lease and time zone switch, and Dembowski's history as a mayor and former senator, this is going to be a race worth watching. **Status:** LEANS HEIM

**House District 20:** Republican: State Rep. Mary Kay Budak, LaPorte School Trustee Tom Dermody. Democrat: LaPorte City Councilman Andrea Renner. **2002 Results:** Budak 12,551, Gillon (L) 2,540. **2004 Results:** Budak 12,944, Spevak (D) 10,013, Schadowsky (L) 1,038. **2006 Forecast:** Will the governor endorse Budak? There is no clear answer available. He could need her vote against in three weeks on Major Moves. **Primary Status:** TOSSUP

**House District 24:** Republican: State Rep. Richard McClain, Cass County Commissioner Rick Eller. Democrat: Open. **2004 Results:** McClain 14,825, Southern (D) 7,089. **2004 Results:** Walorski 13,753, Kaser (D) 7,737. **2006 Forecast:** There appears to be no "Get McClain" movement (Dave Kitchell, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*). An Incumbent rep hasn't been defeated since 1968. McClain beat Sabatini, who was the most popular Cass Democrat in the last 40 years, so he does not appear vulnerable. The one issue Eller could claim would be the time zone thing, but Eller voted to recommend Central based on comments he heard, so he'll have a hard time making a case. There is some movement on claiming credit for an ethanol plant. Eller has quieted down on that one after campaigning four years ago and saying he would bring one here. McClain's staff member this week wanted it known that Sen. Weatherwax had been quoted as saying legislation McClain started was responsible for the plant being located here. **Primary Status:** LIKELY McCLAIN

**House District 26:** Republican: Tippecanoe County Councilwoman Connie Basham. Democrat: Joe Micon. **Geography:** Lafayette, West Lafayette, Tippecanoe County. **2002 Results:** Scholer 5,630, Micon 4,731. **2004 Results:** Micon (D) 10,077, Basham (R) 9,471. **2006 Forecast:** This



race got nasty in the homestretch and it may have cost Basham the seat. She was publicly upset over ads the House Republicans ran on her behalf. She came within 500 votes. Micon has been a steady freshman. We believe he will benefit from a general dynamic favorable to Democrats. But this race is winnable and this district might fit the description of the House prayer issue getting Basham's base motivated. Basham says that she learned a lot from that race and will return this year as a more, "self-reliant, confident, energetic" candidate (*Lafayette Journal & Courier*). Basham, a co-owner of Basham Rentals and former member of the Tippecanoe County Council, said she has told the state party that she will not tolerate attack ads being used in the campaign this year. "I do believe that is important to contrast candidates," she said. "I also said I want my campaign to reflect my ideals and my personality." We expect to be watching this race in October. **Status:** *LEANS MICON.*

**House District 43:** Republican: Bobbi Ann McPeak. Democrat: Clyde Kersey **2004 Results:** Kersey (D) 16,462. **2006 Forecast:** Bobbi Ann McPeak, 51, a teacher and author of children's books, enters the race. "This is something that I've always wanted to do," McPeak said. With both of her children in college, she now has more time and she also learned late last week that Terre Haute Councilman Ryan Cummins had decided not to run. McPeak assisted with the gubernatorial campaign of Republican Rex Early several years ago. She's interested in the issues of education and jobs for young people. "I'd really like to help Indiana keep its young people here" and stop the "brain drain," she said. "I'd like to be part of helping make more jobs become available to Indiana's young people." Kersey said he has 10 years of experience representing District 43. "I think I have a pretty good feel for my constituents, especially in terms of education, labor and senior citizen issues. I think I have a pretty good record on those three issues," he said. **Status:** *LIKELY KERSEY*

**House District 71:** Republican: Greg Marquart, Joe Theobald,. Democrat: State Rep. Carlene Bottorff, Steven Stemler, James McClure Jr. **2002 Results:** Bottorff (D) 9,385, Singleton (R) 5,388. **2004 Results:** Bottorff (D) 17,949. **2006 Forecast:** Three Democrats and two Republicans will battle in the May 2 primaries for the chance to represent the 71st House District, the seat held for 15 years by Jim Bottorff, who died in December (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). Rep. Carlene Bottorff of Jeffersonville, the widow of the former lawmaker, is the incumbent in the race. She was chosen by Democratic precinct committeemen late last year to serve the final year of her husband's term. Bottorff, who retired last year as an administrator for the Census Bureau, wants to keep the seat, but to do it she'll have to defeat Democrats Steve Stemler, a former Jeffersonville city councilman, and James

McClure Jr. of Clarksville in the Democratic primary. Yesterday was the filing deadline. Stemler, who manages a family business, said he's pleased there are several candidates in the primary field. "That will give us a good debate on the issues," he said. Stemler serves on the Indiana Port Commission and just finished a stint on the board of River Ridge Commerce Center. The winner of the Democratic race will face either Greg Marquart or Joe Theobald, both of Clarksville. Marquart just received a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash., and is waging his first campaign for public office. He said he's running because government is "way too old and way too stagnant." Theobald, a 24-year veteran of the Army Corps of Engineers, said in a statement yesterday that his focus will be finding a way to finish the Ohio River bridges project. "The job growth possibilities in Clark County are staggering, but we need to finish those bridges to realize our full potential," he said. Clark County Republican Chairman Glenn Murphy called Theobald "one of the area's most well-respected civic leaders." Bottorff said in an interview with the Louisville Courier-Journal that she is not comfortable with Major Moves. "Early in discussing the bill, Gov. Daniels made a trip down to our area and spoke to folks at the Interpretive Center saying that getting the bridges would be dependent on whether legislators from Southern Indiana vote for this," Bottorff said. "This was such a major package of legislation for us to deal with, and I thought that it really was inappropriate for us to deal with it without having had some hearings, without some public meetings where people are able to learn about it in more detail. I don't think we should be expected to sell something to the public we don't fully understand or have questions about. I felt better since he had a press conference saying the bridges are no longer in jeopardy and in fact they are in the (highway department's) 10-year plan, which I thought was the case beforehand." Asked about her constituents, Bottorff said, "It has overwhelmingly been negative among the constituents." **Primary Status:** *LEANS BOTTORFF; LEANS THEOBALD*

**House District 80:** Republican: Kevin Howell. Democrat: Phil GiaQuinta, Geoff Paddock. **2004 Results:** Ben GiaQuinta (D) 9,767, Howell (R) 5,397. **2006 Forecast:** State Rep. Ben GiaQuinta is retiring. So far, Phil GiaQuinta – a local political enthusiast who gets his father's established name recognition – faces off with Geoff Paddock, a Fort Wayne Community Schools board member known for hard work (*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). Paddock challenged State Sen. Thomas Wyss more than a decade ago and lost. We give Phil GiaQuinta the early advantage due to his famous family name, but Paddock has his own constituency in the education community and could shift this race. **Primary Status:** *LEANS PHIL GIAQUINTA ❖*



## Buck gets SB1 compromises passed

INDIANAPOLIS - State Rep. Jim Buck's (R-Kokomo) amendment to Senate Bill 1 on local government reform passed out of the House Government and Regulatory Reform Committee by a vote of 9-0 (*HPR*). Rep. Buck authored an amendment to consolidate the fire departments of the townships, fire protection territories, and the airport authority in Marion County. If this bill becomes a law, to take effect the legislative body of the city must adopt an ordinance before Aug. 1, 2006, to consolidate the fire departments and the mayor of the consolidated city must approve the ordinance. "I am pleased that this bill has come out of committee as amended," said Rep. Buck. "We are still a long way from home, but with bi-partisan support and with the Speaker's guidance, we are hopeful to can reach an agreement that allows townships in Marion County and the city of Indianapolis to come to a consensus." A Metropolitan Board of Fire Commissioners will also be established. Deputy Indianapolis Mayor Steve Campbell called the amendment "a good start" but added "We're still not there yet. There are still some discrepancies that need to be worked out." Last week, 56 CEOs urged the legislature to pass Mayor Bart Peterson's Indy Works proposal.



## Espich scales back tax increase projections

INDIANAPOLIS - A key state lawmaker said yesterday that property tax increases for a typical homeowner this year probably will average about 7 percent — although the amount could vary widely from county to county (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). But House

Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jeff Espich, R-Uniondale, warned that increases in 2007 could be double that amount if lawmakers don't act this year to make changes in the tax system. Espich released the numbers yesterday after reviewing new data from the Legislative Services Agency, which provides fiscal analysis for both parties at the General Assembly. The estimate is significantly less than Espich had projected last year when lawmakers were working on the two-year state budget, which includes an appropriation to reimburse local governments for tax credits that lawmakers have used to try to keep homeowners' bills lower. At that time, Espich had said homeowners might suffer double-digit increases in 2006. Since then, he and his fellow Republicans have been working on plans to provide some immediate relief to homeowners.

## Senate strips abortion bill

INDIANAPOLIS - A Senate committee significantly watered down two abortion bills Wednesday before passing them onto the full Senate for consideration. The Senate Health and Provider Services Committee removed the majority of House Bill 1172 (*Evansville Courier & Press*). Scrapped provisions include those requiring a doctor to tell a woman at least 18 hours before an abortion that: A fetus may feel pain; Anesthetics are not available for a fetus until it reaches at least 20 weeks; Anesthetics may be provided for a fetus after it reaches 20 weeks of gestation; Insurance may or may not cover the cost of the painkillers. Life begins at conception. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Howe, sponsored the bill in the House and said he wouldn't agree to the changes, sending the bill to a conference committee where two House and two Senate members will try to hammer out a compromise. Committee Chairwoman Sen. Pat Miller, R-Indianapolis, said she agreed with many

of the requirements in the original bill but ran out of time when drafting amendments that would have allowed a doctor to opt out of certain provisions if he disagreed.

## Bayh, Anderson seek Electoral College reform

*Knight Ridder* reports that a bipartisan group of ex-congressmen is launching a campaign to change how Americans select their president by reforming the Electoral College system, saying campaigns for the White House should be reliant on the nationwide popular vote rather than simply the outcome in a handful of swing states. The group plans to announce its proposal Thursday and begin a state-by-state effort to amend the Electoral College so the winner reflects the view of the country instead of an individual state or two with a close vote on Election Day. The plan, called the Campaign for the National Popular Vote, will be unveiled in Washington by former Indiana Sen. Birch Bayh (D), former Rep. John Anderson, R-Ill.; and other former members of Congress. The effort begins in Illinois, where legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly, followed by California and other states." Speaking of the plan, Bayh said, "It's not going to be ready by the 2008 election, but I think it's certainly going to be ready by 2012."

## Curley seeks to remove 11 Lake County 'Democrats'

CROWN POINT - Lake County Republican Chairman John Curley believes he has found Dems in GOP clothing (*Post-Tribune*). Curley will seek to have 11 Republican candidates — 10 for precinct committeeman positions and one running for Dyer Town Council — removed from the spring primary because they last voted as Democrats. Curley said he will file official challenges to the 11 candidacies by Friday. ❖