



### Weary Souder expects one last hurrah

Final term if GOP congressman can defeat the 'self-funder'

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** and **JULIE CROTHERS**

INDIANAPOLIS - With the Washington Post/ABC News poll showing an intense anti-incumbency mood and only three in 10 Republicans "leaning" toward backing an incumbent in the fall, is U.S. Rep. Mark Souder - facing a \$500,000 onslaught from a local auto dealer - on the brink?

"I think we're going to be fine," Souder told HPI as he darted in and out of the House chambers Wednesday afternoon casting votes. "But I've been miserable." A few minutes later, Souder added, "I was thinking this was going to be my last term. This just sealed it."

Auto dealer Bob Thomas, who moved into Fort Wayne to run against Souder, has spent \$245,000 on TV, \$270,000 on radio, has conducted three polls and put another \$60,000 in mailers, Souder estimates. Then there are the mailers and billboards Thomas has used assailing



Souder for his refusal to debate and supporting the cash-for-clunkers program on which Thomas' own auto dealerships made more than \$1 million.

A SurveyUSA poll released by the Mike Downs Center showed Souder leading with 35 percent, Thomas with 29 percent, Phil Toyer at 16 percent, 2 percent for Greg

Continued on page 4

### Top 10 primary upsets

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON - Primary upsets are rare, perhaps, rarer in Indiana. Even in volatile political years when incumbents have been defeated in greater than usual numbers, very few lost in primary elections. On Tuesday, Dan Burton Mark Souder or Dan Coats - who for all practical purposes is an incumbent--might join the short list of primary upset victims, but the odds are against it. Here are ten of Indiana's historic primary upsets in recent years which prove anything is possible in politics:



Chris Sautter Column

1. Bobby Kennedy Over Bra-



"It's an easy enough form to fill out. I filled it out in a Chick-Fill-A parking lot."

- State Sen. Marlin Stutzman, on filling out his financial disclosure form



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**nigin, McCarthy (1968)** Indiana was for Robert F. Kennedy what West Virginia was for his brother John F. Kennedy in 1960 — an inhospitable but necessary stop on the way to the Democratic nomination. RFK had to overcome intense opposition from the party establishment who backed favorite son

candidate Gov. Roger Branigin, organized labor, business, and the Indianapolis Star. Even most anti-war voters were already supporting Senator Eugene McCarthy. That forced Kennedy



in his first test after belatedly entering the presidential race to forge a new coalition made up of "Black Power and Backlash." His unique chemistry with lower classes allowed him to make critical inroads among the state's white blue-collar workers and family farmers. It was in Indiana that Kennedy became the first political leader

to try to bring together an America torn apart by racial divisions and an unpopular war.

### 2. Pete Visclosky Unseats

**Katie Hall (1984)** Katie Hall was the first African American to represent Indiana in Congress after winning a special election in 1982 to succeed

Adam Benjamin who died in office. But facing Democratic primary voters for the first time in 1984, Hall was challenged by Lake County Prosecutor Jack Crawford and former Benjamin aide Peter Visclosky. Most observers predicted Hall would win as Crawford and Visclosky

split the white vote. But Visclosky, originally handicapped as third in the race, prevailed in the Byzantine politics of Northwest Indiana, defeating Hall and her powerful patron Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher by running as a reform candidate and the natural successor to the popular Benjamin.

### 3. Adam Benjamin prevails



**over Ray Madden (1976)** Ray Madden was 84 years old and had served almost 34 years in the House when State Sen. Adam Benjamin took him on for the second time in the 1976 Democratic primary. Benjamin had narrowly lost to Madden in 1972. But now Benjamin was challenging him in a post-Watergate environment and the younger, more dynamic and independent Benjamin was more in tune with the times.

**4. Brent Waltz Upsets Larry Borst (2004)**

Larry Borst, a 36-year state Senate veteran who served as the powerful chairman of the Finance Committee, began with a huge seemingly insurmountable lead over 28-year old conservative Johnson County Councilman Brent Waltz. Waltz's campaign was unrelentingly aggressive, hitting Borst repeatedly for his moderate votes on taxes, abortion, and special perks such as lifetime health benefits. After a recount, Waltz had nosed out Borst by a mere 38 votes.

**5. Greg Walker Knocks Off Bob Garton**

**(2006)** Bob Garton's 36 years and status as Pro-Tem in the Indiana Senate counted for little when political newcomer Greg Walker (pictured) challenged him. Garton had been a moderate Republican, even championing the Equal Rights Amendment in his early days. But like Borst, Garton's moderate views had grown out-of-favor with an increasingly conservative Republican base. Walker, following Brent Waltz's playbook against Larry Borst, won with the help of conservative churches, anti-abortion activists, and insurance magnate J. Patrick Rooney. Garton's role in creating lifetime health benefits for state senators became an albatross as a majority of Republican voters concluded Garton had grown out-of-touch.



**6. Julia Carson Surprises Ann DeLaney**

**(1996)** Ann DeLaney was not an incumbent, but she had been a top adviser to Gov. Evan Bayh and served as the Democratic State Chair. DeLaney's fundraising advantage bought extensive television advertising that along with an Indianapolis Star poll showing DeLaney ahead gave the appearance of DeLaney as the frontrunner. But Carson, a former state Senator and Center Township Trustee, had built an extensive grassroots network that was underestimated by DeLaney and undercounted by pollsters. An endorsement by retiring Congressman Andy Jacobs brought

undecided voters into Carson's camp as her ground troops swamped the opposition. DeLaney, confident of victory and looking ahead to the general election, ended the primary campaign with money in the bank.

**7. Jill Long Thompson Holds Back Jim**

**Schellinger (2008)** Political novice Jim Schellinger was recruited by party leaders to run against Gov. Mitch Daniels and enjoyed strong establishment support and a substantial fundraising advantage over former Congresswoman and Clinton administration official Jill Long Thompson. But Schellinger's inexperience and controversies related to his architectural business undercut the advantages handed to him. Long Thompson, with the help of a key endorsement from the Steelworkers, rolled up large enough margins in the northern part of the state to give her the narrow upset over Schellinger and party officials.

**8. Dan Burton Beats Bruce Melchert (1982)**

Danny Burton's familiar campaign strategy of divide-and-conquer was never better executed than when he won the race for an open suburban Indianapolis seat created by the Republican-controlled General Assembly specifically for State Chair Bruce Melchert. Burton had first been elected to the state legislature when he was 28 years old, but had lost congressional bids in 1970 and 1972. Burton won in 1982 by outlasting Melchert and his three other opponents. He sent volunteers into small Hoosier towns on a fire truck he had purchased for the campaign and benefited by a tough image projected in his TV ads.

**9. Jeff Ellington Sneaks Up On Jerry Bales**

**(1998)** Maverick 11-term State Rep. Jerry Bales was popular and considered close to untouchable in the general election in this Bloomington area Republican seat. But conservative Jeff Ellington edged him in the primary by only 26 votes with the help of Monroe County churchgoers who were upset with Bales over his abortion votes. Pro-life Democrat Peggy Welch defeated Ellington in the general election and has held the seat since.

**10. Hostettler Surprises Republican Field**

**(1994)** John Hostettler's unorthodox below-the-radar approach to campaigning enjoyed its first success against a large field in the Republican 8th District primary in 1994. Attorney/conservative talk-show host Les Shively was the party favorite and presumptive front-runner while local attorney Jeff Devine had the support of former Governor and Evansville native Robert Orr. But Hostettler, whom party regulars and the media almost completely discounted, quietly worked the churches, evangelicals, right-to-lifers, and gun groups to win the nomination on his way to defeating six-term incumbent Democrat Frank McCloskey in the year of the "Republican Revolution." ❖

**Sautter is a Washington-based Democratic political consultant.**



## Souder, from page 1

Dickman and 16 percent undecided. The poll was conducted April 22-26 and has a +/-5 percent error rate.

"I had been warned about a candidate who can self-fund," Souder added.

Mentioning Souder in the same paragraph with the word "upset" is a lesson we thought we'd learned in 2008 when a Howey-Gauge Poll indicated he was vulnerable just weeks before he easily dispatched Democrat Michael Montano.

But 2010 is an odd and different beast.

In this analysis, the key is the Washington Post-ABC News poll released on Wednesday that revealed that just three in 10 Republicans said they were "leaning" toward backing an incumbent this fall.



The Post's coverage noted that,

"Members of Congress face the most anti-incumbent electorate since 1994, with less than a third of all voters saying they are inclined to support their representatives in November. "Dissatisfaction is widespread, crossing party lines, ideologies and virtually all groups of voters."

A Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey released earlier this week found that 44 percent of likely U.S. voters would vote for their district's Republican congressional candidate, while 38 percent would opt for his or her Democratic opponent. Support for Democrats is up two points from last week, while support for Republicans fell two points.

Heading into this election cycle, HPI noted that if Souder began to spend heavily, that would mean his seat would become an outlier in the fall. But this is the primary and he's spending heavily with \$95,000 going into TV and \$70,000 into radio, in addition to mailers and yard signs, perhaps enough to ward off Thomas. Some thought Thomas has one thing previous challengers, other than Paul Helmke, haven't had - fame. Souder insisted Thomas' "fame" from TV ads for his auto dealerships is "negligible" in part because there are also auto dealers named "Thompson" and "Thompsonson."

Souder has referred to his opponent as "Big Bucks Bob."

Fort Wayne Mayor Helmke also had plenty of name ID when he unsuccessfully challenged Souder in 2002, losing by a landslide. The difference is two-fold: Helmke had much higher negatives than Thomas, and in 2002 there wasn't the anti-incumbency strain polls are detecting today.

"Everything that we had suspected is coming true," Thomas told HPI. "Dissatisfaction about what's going on; federal spending, federal debt; anti-incumbency feeling is

incredibly strong; people are scared to death that this new administration is going to spend their children into bankruptcy."

Thomas noted that Souder has "spent more money" but that the outcome of the election is "really a function of who has a better message and who is the better candidate." Thomas explained, "The biggest thing here is that it's really become a two-horse race, Mark Souder and myself. There's been a lot of attention nationally as well as locally, challenging him on his voting record and most of the media and people want to get a debate and ask questions. He's afraid to debate; he will not get up there and explain his votes."

Souder said he wasn't interested in debating someone who is, essentially, buying an election.

The reason for Souder's confidence are two recent polls at Tea Party and 9/12 events in New Haven and Goshen. Souder said he easily won the New Haven Tea Party straw poll, doubling Thompson, as well as the 9/12 straw poll in Goshen. "If I'm winning those polls, I'm not sure where his support is coming from." Souder added that he believes another candidate, 1992 nominee Phil Troyer, could actually come in second.

As for this being his last race, Souder said that if he ran again in 2012 when a new Congressional seat is drawn, that would put an open seat up for what he believes will be the first mid-term of a new Republican president. Souder also noted that his father and brothers died in their late 50s of heart attacks.

"Because I'm a conservative with this administration, it's been more upsetting here," Souder said. "I've had two tough generals in a row, although this one should be better even if (Tom) Hayhurst has more money than me. It's going to be a Republican year. I've got two grandkids six houses away I rarely see. Nathan is having one in Colorado this summer. You kinda go, 'I'm not enjoying myself.'"

With the stress of this campaign against Thomas, Souder said his doctor warned him recently, "Mark, you're going to kill yourself."

"We have a deep bench," Souder said of State Sen. Marlin Stutzman, State Rep. Matt Bell and Whitley County Republican Chairman (and possible state senator) Jim Banks. "I think we need a congressman in a manufacturing district like ours who can build some seniority." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Souder

## 4th CD: Rokita's to lose

The prevailing consensus from just about everyone we've talked to outside of Sen. Brandt Hershman's campaign is that Secretary of State Todd Rokita will win the primary. He simply has too much name ID, has run well in the district during his two statewide races, and none of the challengers have made much of an impression, including



Hershman. "Things are going very well," said Cam Savage of the Rokita campaign. "We feel good about where we're at. Our opponents are attacking with TV ads, and that makes us pretty confident."

In his TV ad, Hershman accuses Rokita of seeking to repeal the Medicare prescription drug plan. Savage observed, "It seems to be backfiring on them, I am disappointed in him and his negative attacks." Both Hershman and Rokita vow to go to Congress and take on Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Rokita's new TV features his new-born son Ryan. With a picture of the baby, Rokita notes, "He was born \$39,000 in debt" due to the massive budget deficit. Rokita vows to "stand up to the liberals" in Washington.

**Horse Race Status:** Likely Rokita

## **5th CD: Big money spills in**

With more than \$1.85 million spilling into this race - most by U.S. Rep. Dan Burton and his allies - it is difficult to see one of the four main challengers galvanizing enough support to unseat the incumbent.

Burton, who has spent nearly \$800,000, is outpacing his rivals. But, combined, they've spent more than he has. Former state Rep. Luke Messer has spent the most of the challengers, \$456,587, of which \$202,007 was spent in the first two weeks of April.

Luke Messer told HPI, "We've done 70,000 phone calls and intend to do more. Things seem to be trending our way which is exciting. We've launched our new TV ad. At this point in the process it really comes down to turning out your votes. We're very optimistic about where things lie. We've had the strongest grassroots effort, we'll make another 40,000 calls this weekend and have the volunteers to do that."

Messer added that with Burton, "People have a pretty strong and clear opinion of what they think about him."

Thus, data like the Washington Post/ABC News poll showing the anti-incumbency mood give Messer and other challengers hope for an upset. Many observers, however, point to the analysis going back more than a year ago: More than one or two challengers and Burton wins. He faces six on Tuesday. "No one has distinguished themselves," said State Sen. Mike Delph, who has been campaigning with Burton. "Messer, Murphy and McGoff are all saying the same things. They had to contrast themselves with the incumbent and they didn't. They're all muddled together."

**Horse Race Status:** Leans Burton

## **9th CD: Sodrel cries 'defamation'**

Mike Sodrel's 9th CD campaign accused Republican challenger Todd Young of "defamation" related to a TV ad accusing the former congressman of voting for

23,000 earmarks. "We informed the Friends of Todd Young Campaign Tuesday afternoon that we would sue them for defamation if their deliberate, deceptive, and negative ad is not withdrawn by the end of day," the Sodrel campaign said. "Too often politics has become the art of professional deception. Initially, we were willing to concede that the gross misstatement of Mike's record could be the result of inexperience or misinformation. However, when Mr. Young is informed that the ad is grossly exaggerated and he continues to air it, such action is obviously deliberate. This all is not a matter of opinion; it is a matter of record. The ad says in part, "Mike Sodrel not only voted for 23,000 earmarks in one term alone...," which is patently false."

The Sodrel campaign said: "Here are the facts. According to the Office of Management and Budget, the earmarking continued virtually unabated during the ten-year period that ended in 2005. Mike took the oath of office in 2005. According to Citizens Against Government Waste (CAGW), the number of earmarks were reduced each year Mike was in Congress saving the taxpayer billions of dollars. CAGW reported in FY2007 the number of earmarks were further reduced to 2,658, a 73 percent reduction. The taxpayer saw a 55 percent drop in earmark expenditures, over \$15 billion. Someone must bring a semblance of truth to political advertising. Television and radio stations will not take them down, even if they are untrue."

Young told HPI this morning that his campaign discovered last Friday that statistics in his radio ad was incorrect: that instead of 23,000 earmarks, the number was actually 12,000, though that was in only 2 of 11 appropriations bills that passed. "The spending actually went up 6 percent to \$29 billion," Young charged.

Young said the campaign pulled the original ad and replaced it with a new one Monday. "Sodrel voted yes for all these earmarks and we're still paying for it," Young charged.

Sodrel campaign manager Jeff Canada told HPI on Wednesday, "Things are going quite well, we have still another dozen events over the next few days. The real focus is getting the vote out. We spent the last few weeks trying to give people an outline of his platform and why he is the best candidate. Now the focus is on turning those folks out to the polls. If you get the word out and people fail to show up to the polls, it kind of defeats the purpose; from here on out, we just want to lay out what sets him apart."

Young has raised more than \$450,000, a huge amount for any Republican primary challenger. He is banking on the notion that 9th CD voters are tired of the four previous races between Sodrel and U.S. Rep. Baron Hill. What Young has to overcome is Sodrel's 95 percent name ID and stoke the desire for a "new face" in Washington.

**Horse Race Status:** Leans Sodrel ❖



## GOP Senate race still Coats' to lose

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

FRANKLIN - Out of the vacuum, Howey Politics Indiana still believes the Republican U.S. Senate race is Dan Coats' to lose.

A new SurveyUSA Poll released today by the Mike Downs Center shows Coats with a 36 to 24 percent lead over John Hostettler in the Republican U.S. Senate race. State Sen. Marlin Stutzman finished third at 18 percent followed by Don Bates Jr. at 6 percent and Richard Behney at 4 percent, with 16 percent undecided. The poll was conducted April 22-26 and has a +/- error rate of 5 percent.

While there has been media and opposition consternation about Coats' late financial disclosure that was filed on Wednesday - showing he made \$821,887 in income - and the fact that he lent his campaign \$200,000 on April 22, there is nothing that lends credence to the notion that a Marlin Stutzman or John Hostettler can amass enough name recognition to overcome the Coats' advantage in an election where an expected anemic turnout will be dominated by Republican voters age 55 and up. And this group does know who Dan Coats is, despite the fact that he hasn't appeared on a ballot since 1992.

Coats' financial disclosure statement revealed he made \$603,609 in earned and non-investment income from King and Spaulding LLP, \$100,000 from Cerberus Capital Management, \$75,778 from Allison Transmission, \$32,500 from Nanolink, and \$10,000 from Bipartisan Policy Center. "Dan Coats has been committed to filing a transparent and accurate personal financial disclosure form upon its completion," said campaign spokesman Pete Seat. "Dan learned on April 14 that the report was overdue. He has worked to ensure the form is complete and accurate before filing it prior to the primary."

Dan Parker, Indiana Democratic Party chairman, pointed out Coats is a millionaire (Evansville Courier & Press). "It's no wonder he spent an extra 24 days hiding his multimillion-dollar assets from Hoosiers," Parker said.

There were plenty of rumors floating around suggesting this race was tightening. Erick Erickson of Redstate.

com said there is speculation that Coats' support is soft. "This is Dan Coats' race to lose" Erickson said. "Stutzman supporters like me need to be realistic, but with high undecideds and momentum with Marlin, there is a real path to victory."

HPI has seen other internal numbers that suggest the race isn't as close as the SurveyUSA numbers, though all parties suggest the race will tighten somewhat once the undecided decide who to support.

While Coats has been badgered about the financial disclosure for the campaign he thought was due on



May 15, only Stutzman had filed his on time. Creating the perception that Coats was on his heels was the array of headlines over the past week that centered on the financial disclosure story, which has dominated the post-debate sequence of the campaign:

**AP:** Ind. Dems blast Coats for not filing finances form.

**Matt Tully Indianapolis Star column:** Democrats' jab at Coats is well-aimed.

**Fort Wayne Journal Gazette:** Coats chided for tardy disclosure.

**WRTV: Democrats:** Coats Trying To Hide Lobbying Support.

**WTHR-TV:** Democrats question Coats' fundraising.

**WPTA-TV:** Marlin Stutzman Calls Out Dan Coats.

**WXIN-TV:** Coats under fire for not releasing finance report.

Amid those headlines came Stutzman's quote: "I filled mine out in the Chick-Fil-A parking lot at Jefferson



Pointe (Mall) one day. It's not that hard to fill out."

But Stutzman, who was endorsed by former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee on Wednesday, has been in the crosshairs of his own, telling the WXNT debate that he had raised \$125,000 when his FEC report showed just \$74,000 for the first quarter. Stutzman told Politico on Monday that he was relaying the total amount of money he's raised this cycle. "I told you we didn't have our report done yet. That was year to date on what we had raised so far," Stutzman said. "We had a bunch of checks clear April 1 that didn't have to be reported in the Q1 report."

There is a potential additional kink for Stutzman. It comes with his Indiana Senate vote for the unemployment insurance trust fund tax hike in April 2009. Both Stutzman and State Sen. Brandt Hershman, who is running in the 4th CD, had signed an Americans for Tax Reform pledge vowing not to raise taxes. Sources tell HPI that Grover Norquist of ATR could possibly call out the two Republican senators for violating the pledge in the closing days of the campaign.

Hostettler is networking through the mega churches across the state. He met with former aide Chris Crabtree, Micah Clark, and a pastor from a Johnson County church with 2,000 members at a deli in Indianapolis Tuesday morning and he's been doing that with other pastors as he's conducted town halls across the state. It is a strategy that he used to win a crowded 8th CD primary in 1994. Again, some sources tell HPI that in a low turnout election that is anticipated on Tuesday, that kind of networking could be significant.

**What keeps the notion that Coats'** is still in the driver's seat is that the Hostettler and Stutzman statewide name ID is low. Their advertising has been very light. And the anti-Coats vote will be split up four ways. Another way to look at it is that Coats is the only truly statewide candidate compared to the other regional candidates. Coats also has access to the Indianapolis TV market, where he has lingering name ID. That market makes up 58 percent of the population and reaches 65 percent of Hoosier Republicans.

"I think Dan will win because he's got statewide balance and the other candidates tend to be more regional," said U.S. Rep. Mark Souder, who has been on Coats' staff but also helped draw up the campaign strategy for Sen. Stutzman prior to Coats' entry into the race in February. Souder also served in Congress with Hostettler for 12 years.

As for the dominating Indianapolis TV market, Souder said, "I suspect that Dan is going to have the most advertising up and has the most recognizable name and will poll well with the establishment. Dan will run first or second in our (Fort Wayne/Northeast Indiana) region, he'll probably run second to Hostettler southwest. Northwest I doubt anyone will get up on Chicago TV and Coats has an

advantage. The more people who vote is better for Coats."

Souder also noted that in the 1998 U.S. Senate primary where John Price got 30 percent of the vote, as well as Eric Miller's 2004 gubernatorial run, the "hard core conservative vote is about a third."

**"When you're a candidate** and you have four candidates running to your right, by definition that means Coats' is going to get most of the moderate vote," Souder said. "It's tough for me to see, if you let that moderate vote fall to one size that you're going to have a kind of party establishment vote. With John (Hostettler), he lost to Ellsworth in his own district. Why would you think he'd run stronger statewide? But nobody's been attacking John or Marlin, so nobody knows their weaknesses."

Souder said that Coats has opted not to run negative or even contrasting ads even as some believe the race may tighten in the final days. "He wants to be able to pull everybody together," Souder said. "If he thought he was running behind, he might want to identify Hostettler a little bit, but he doesn't want to alienate anybody."

A press conference with the entire field hosted by Indiana Republican Chairman J. Murray Clark is probable in the week following the primary, HPI has learned.

In the 2004 gubernatorial GOP primary, Mitch Daniels resisted the notion of attacking Miller, and was able to fully pull the party together as they took on Gov. Joe Kernan.

Thus, the Coats campaign has decided not to release any of its internal polling data by Public Opinion Strategies for fear that a tightened race due to his refusal to go negative would create higher expectations. In essence, Coats is trading a potentially thunderous primary win for the sake of the fall race against U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth.

Souder also offered this: Coats has already achieved the number one goal, which was to get U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh out of the race. "Bayh was very similar to where he was" in 1998 when Coats decided to retire. Had Bayh stayed in the race and the GOP field was sans Coats, "Bayh would have crushed them." Souder noted that more money is being spent in his own 3rd CD primary than the rest of the Senate field, excepting Coats, has raised.

**"Coats is trying to stand back** and hope he can hang on so he can bring the party together when he's done," Souder said.

HPI has weighed the various elements of this race: Hostettler's subterranean networks, Stutzman being everyone's second choice. At this point, even with the former senator's lofty financial disclosure earnings, which will almost certainly bring criticism in the coming hours, we still don't see a likely scenario where Coats loses. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Coats ❖



## 4 GOP House incumbents appear vulnerable

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

FRANKLIN - Four Indiana House Republican incumbents are on the brink of losing their primary races next Tuesday. HPI is projecting that State Rep. Jacqué Clements will likely lose to former legislator Heath Van Natter.

HPI also has three incumbents - State Reps. Bill Ruppel, Jack Lutz and Dan Leonard - in tossup races. The "tossup" designation means the races could go either way. In weighing the races, HPI uses a number of elements in gauging races, including tenure, geography, the amount of money raised by challengers, legal or ethical problems of the incumbent, and the general anti-incumbency mood impacting the environment.

Reps. Lutz and Leonard are rated tossups, in part due to the anti-incumbent environment. A dozen House Republican incumbents are facing primary challenges, including State Reps. Woody Burton, Don Lehe, Dave Wolkins, Tom Dermody, Tom Knollman, Tim Brown, Dick Dodge and Doug Gutwein

Here is our breakdown of competitive races.

### **HD15: Lehe has rematch with Anderson**

State Rep. Don Lehe is facing a primary rematch with Art Anderson in a rematch from 2006. Anderson of Monticello told the Lafayette Journal & Courier that this race is different because voters are very upset with many current officeholders. "People are not satisfied with things that have happened in government," Anderson said. "When you vote for someone to go down to Indianapolis, you want to send someone to help you out, not (help themselves). "Voters are just tired of it." Lehe said he's been campaigning as he normally would, talking to voters about key issues. He's heard from most people that they want more tax relief and less government spending, and those are issues he plans to continue working on if reelected. Jim Gilbert, who is vice chairman of the Benton County Republican Party, said he doesn't think the anti-incumbency movement being touted by some voters will have too much of an impact in District 15. "I think most people are satisfied with Mr. Lehe's conduct in the office," said Gilbert. "But who knows? It's a primary race." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Lehe



### **HD18: Wolkins facing clerk-treasurer**

State Rep. Dave Wolkins is facing a challenge from Winona Lake Clerk-Treasurer Retha Hicks. Wolkins, a former teacher, has been a member of the Indiana House since 1988, where his contributions have included a significant bill addressing eminent domain and multiple environmental bills (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). He was criticized in the past session for golfing trips made at lobbyists' expense, but he supported the ethics bill that emerged from the session. Hicks offers no criticism of the incumbent, but does offer enthusiasm for the job that Wolkins seems to have lost. The clerk-treasurer of Winona Lake for the past 17 years, she has a record of promoting efficiency within her own office and, statewide, as president of the Indiana League of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers. She has worked to provide training for local elected officials and has organized meetings to develop countywide efficiency. Hicks was instrumental in efforts to protect public investments, encouraging the state's participation in a program that provides multimillion-dollar FDIC insurance on certificates of deposit held by public entities. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Wolkins

### **HD22: Ruppel in a toss-up race**

State Rep. Bill Ruppel is facing an intense challenge from Rebecca Kubacki and several sources tell HPI the race could go either way. Kubacki has waged an aggressive door-to-door campaign. She is a Republican who could benefit from the anti-incumbency environment this spring. Ruppel has not campaigned aggressively, sources tell HPI, telling supporters he has had health problems. Kubacki, a well-known community volunteer with no political experience, has spent most of her time campaigning by knocking on doors. And, according to a campaign finance report filed April 16, she has slightly more cash on hand than Ruppel. "Anybody that runs is a serious challenger," Ruppel told the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette's Nicki Kelly. "This is about choices, and I want to show that I am good for the district." Kubacki told the Journal Gazette, "There is so much bickering and partisanship that nothing gets done. We need to establish some credibility, because constituents are starting



**Rebecca Kubacki is challenging State Rep. Bill Ruppel**





to think that we are just like Washington, that we don't do anything." She also said the Indiana Economic Development Corp. isn't doing enough to look for jobs for Hoosiers, including cultivating good relationships and offering proper incentives. "I want a clean bill," she said. "It irritates me that the intent of the bill at the beginning doesn't even resemble it at the end and that so many compromises and deals are made. Why are all these practices so accepted? We need new people in there questioning the way things have been there, because it's not effective." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

### **HD35: Lutz on the radar**

State Rep. Jack Lutz is facing a challenge from Muncie attorney and businessman Eric Welch. Welch is the first candidate to challenge Lutz in the GOP primary since Muncie attorney Brad Steele lost to Lutz by about 300 votes in 2002, according to the Muncie Star Press. "I think we are going to re-energize the Republican Party and get people excited," Welch said about his campaign. Welch, a 37-year-old married father of four, said his platform revolves around mandatory term limits for elected officeholders, aggressive job creation programs, taking the politics out of redistricting, and further property tax relief. Welch moved to Muncie from Cincinnati six years ago to found Welch & Company LLC, which has grown from two employees to 16. He said his company represents local banks, credit unions and "people who are struggling financially. Delaware County makes up 60 percent of the district, leading some observers to believe that Lutz could be vulnerable." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

### **HD38: Van Natter favored over Clements**

Former State Rep. Heath Van Natter is rated as a favorite over State Rep. Jacquie Clements. Van Natter is expected to run strong in Howard County. If he can win 20 to 30 percent of the Clinton County vote, he will return to the seat he held for less than a year after Jim Buck gave it up for the Senate. Van Natter was seated in HD 38 in a GOP caucus, which then turned around and nominated caucus for the November election nomination. Clements has since run afoul of Clinton County officials for her relationship with a computer vendor. She was rebuked by the county commissioners. He has a sizable fundraising advantage in the race so far, with \$47,810 in contributions this year compared to the \$14,931 taken in by Clements. Clements told the Lafayette Journal & Courier she isn't taking anything for granted in the primary race, saying she's approached the campaign "as if we're a vote behind." She's out talking to voters about her belief in no new taxes and in securing a balanced budget. Van Natter said his campaign has knocked on more than 4,000 doors in the district and he's

pleased with the progress he's making. "I'm a conservative Christian and I think we need more regular people in office," he said. "We need to get rid of lifelong politicians, like my opponent." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Van Natter

### **HD50: Fusselman pressing Rep. Leonard**

Huntington businessman Ron Fusselman (pictured) is challenging State Rep. Dan Leonard. Fusselman has pressed Leonard on his vote against the property tax caps and the recent use of House franking privileges. Leonard pulled a scheduled mailer earlier this month in the wake of criticism. "This just goes to show you how out of touch Rep. Leonard is with the voter," Fusselman said. "To spend your hard earned tax dollars on an obvious campaign piece just smells like politics as usual. People are tired of the status quo and no one epitomizes politics as usual more than my opponent and I would call for Dan to repay the Indiana taxpayers for this campaign mailing. From my opponent's votes to increase his salary and benefits, to being only one of 23 representatives to vote against putting property tax caps in the Indiana Constitution proves he is out of touch with his constituents and chooses his own interests and the interests of the lobbyist over the people he is supposed to represent." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup



### **HD58: Burton faces challenge from West**

State Rep. Woody Burton is facing a second challenge from Johnson County Council President Ron West. "I just don't like the self-interest in politics," West told the Indianapolis Star. "You see it especially at the federal level, but it filters down a little bit to the state level, too. I just think after 20 or 30 years of being in the same office, they think it's their inherent right to be there." West also has criticized Burton for votes the legislator has made in favor of property-tax relief that West claims helps Burton's business interests as a real estate agent and landlord. Burton has fired back at such criticisms, pointing out that West serves on the county council and receives money as a county contractor for helping to take care of a county-owned golf course. West said in response that the arrangement produces little in the way of personal profit. Burton, who has served 11 terms in the General Assembly, says he takes nothing for granted. "I never underestimate my opponent," Burton told the Star. "We've been running flat-out. I've knocked on 3,700 doors, and I'm going to every kind of function that gives me an opportunity to talk to people." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Burton ❖



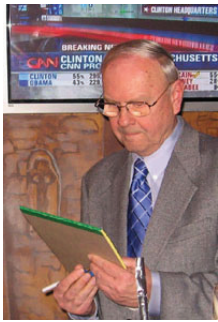
## Can anybody beat the beatup Dan Coats?

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND - Dan Coats is being beat up by Republicans as well as Democrats. But can any candidate in either party beat him?

First come four opponents Coats faces in the May 4 Indiana primary election race for the Republican nomination for the Senate - for the seat Evan Bayh is vacating.

A televised debate here last week provided the best chance yet for one of the four to overtake Coats, the former senator who is regarded as the front-runner, but a potentially vulnerable candidate who is not exactly pulling away in the race.



Results? Coats and the four Republicans who have been beating him up over his recent return to the state, his past lobbying and his votes when serving more than a decade ago in the Senate all sounded much alike. All espoused conservative Republican doctrine, calling for repeal of health care reform legislation, lower taxes, less government and opposition to President Obama on just about everything from domestic issues to foreign policy.

There was no clear winner, except possibly Coats, who will win on name recognition and substantial (though not uniform) party organization support unless one of the others breaks from the pack to capture anti-incumbent and "Tea Party" votes.

The others are:  
**State Sen. Marlin Stutzman**, a thoughtful legislator from Howe, who could have the best chance to take some organization support away from Coats. He has backing from fellow legislators and others in regular party ranks. But he began as a political unknown outside his northeast Indiana district and still faces statewide name recognition problems.

Former Congressman John Hostettler, endorsement by Libertarian Republican Congressman Ron Paul. His fierce in criticism of Coats results in speculation that he could be the top challenger. But Hostettler was trounced and knocked out of Congress by Brad Ellsworth, the Evansville Democrat who will be that party's nominee for the Senate.

Tea Party activist Richard Behney of Fishers, who made a plea in the debate for fellow activists to support him and not split their votes among the others. His flat-out denunciation of reaching across the aisle to compromise

causes some Republicans to fear he might lose the key middle ground in the fall to Ellsworth, a moderate Democrat.

Financial adviser Don Bates Jr. of Winchester, is banking everything on appeal as a political outsider. He hopes GOP voters will regard the governmental experience of Coats, Hostettler and Stutzman as negative. His own lack of political experience, however, worries some other Republicans looking at a tough fall campaign.

**Meanwhile, Ellsworth** runs unopposed. And raises more money, while the Republicans spend what little they have remaining in seeking the nomination.

Ellsworth will be selected as the Democratic nominee May 15 by the Democratic State Committee, empowered to make the pick after Bayh's sudden skedaddling left the party with no candidate filed in the primary for the Senate nomination.

Lack of a Democratic primary race doesn't mean there is no Democratic campaign effort. The effort is to beat up on Coats with daily criticism, hitting at the same potential vulnerability that the Coats' Republican opponents cite.

Why hit mostly at Coats and not the other possible Republican nominees/

"He's the hand-picked candidate coming out of Washington," says Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker. So, Parker presumes the Republican strategists "know what they're doing" and that Coats will be the fall opponent.

**Parker adds that the vulnerability** of Coats as a lobbyist recently moving back to the state offers too good a target to ignore.

If one of the others wins, Parker says, Democrats will continue to push for Ellsworth as the candidate more in touch with Indiana voters than are any of the Republicans making "right-wing" appeals "out of the mainstream."

Indiana Republican Chairman Murray Clark says it is Ellsworth who is "out of the mainstream" in Indiana because of his vote for the health care reform legislation and other support of the Obama administration.

Clark says the Republican nominee, no matter who emerges, will be well funded in the general election and will win in what he sees as a Republican year in which the GOP no longer faces what would have been "an uphill battle" against Bayh. ❖

**Colwell has been covering Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune. He is a regular HPI columnist.**



## Perfection

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

FRANKLIN - Deep in a friend's basement lounge in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood, all of us were standing during the final timeout of the NCAA Men's Championship game on April 5. I looked at a friend and said, "In the next 13 seconds, we may have the next Bobby Plump."

Of course, we all know how the story turned out. Butler forward Gordon Hayward missed an arching baseline shot over his 7-foot defender that would have made him a real life "Hoosiers" hero, and after a quick foul, two free throws by Duke (one made, one missed) and then a second Hayward half-court desperation bomb that ESPN's Sports and Science analysis determined was a mere 3-inches off, this was perfection denied.

Butler's Bulldogs had missed the national title by a matter of inches (perhaps even centimeters on that first shot). Most of us slumped to the floor or a nearby chair, denied a kind of pent-up exultation that might have set off a 7-mile march of triumph from Lucas Oil Stadium to Hinkle Fieldhouse. In essence, we missed out on a real life sequel to "Hoosiers."

I kept thinking about how mere inches kept us from perfection.

It is something many of us strive for, whether it's an exam, a political campaign, a ballet performance, the start of a pitcher, or a perfectly cadenced lecture or sermon.

**Outside of Christianity**, perfection mostly resides in the realm of sports. Chicago White Sox fans got to experience this last July 23 when pitcher Mark Buehrle hurled a perfect game over the Tampa Bay Rays, retiring 27 hitters without a hit, a walk or an error. But even that was so tenuous. Outfielder Dewayne Wise robbed Tampa Bay's Gabe Kapler of a home run with a 9th-inning acrobatic catch he almost dropped. The fol-

lowing game, Buehrle pitched another six innings of hitless ball before he returned to earth. After that, the pitcher won only a couple of more games as the Sox faded from contention. Wise is no longer with the team.

There was the perfection facing the Indianapolis Colts until the penultimate regular season game last December against the New York Jets when Coach Jim Caldwell pulled the regulars in the third quarter. The Colts still had a regular season finale in Buffalo, which was played in blizzard conditions (did GM Bill Polian have a long-term forecast in his pocket?) The Colt management insisted that winning the Super Bowl was the real goal, not perfection, though the look on Peyton Manning's face as he stood on the sidelines revealed a recalcitrant acolyte.

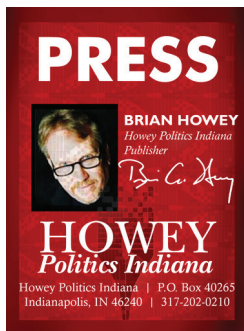
**Would a victory over the Jets** in late December simply have set up the Colts for a Patriot redux from two years before? You know the story of that one - 18-0 New England was one victory away from a perfect season until an Eli Manning pass caught on the side of David Tyree's helmet set up the winning touchdown for the New York Giants. Plaxico Burris caught the winning pass. He now resides in prison after shooting himself in a disco.

Peyton Manning still had a shot at a Super Bowl title, until a fourth quarter interception was returned for a New Orleans Saints game clinching TD. Many of us strive

for perfection that we are almost assuredly denied. Certainly there's an error in this column, this newspaper, this website. The Colts' brain trust angered many of us by allowing perfection to willingly slip away. Some how, some way, did karma delve a payback several weeks later? If Manning had played the entire games against the Jets and Bills, might he had learned that a cornerback could figure out the nuance of throwing a third-down stick route?

My advice? Perfection sought makes us better even if we ultimately measure a cut below. Genes didn't make Mozart what he was; practice did.

Amen. ❖



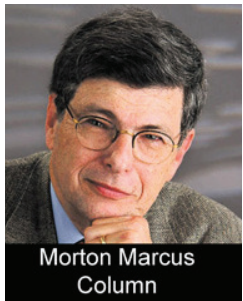


## 90 counties show income improvement

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - Last week the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis released personal income data for each county in the nation. These data include earned income, interest, dividends, rent, and transfers (social security and unemployment compensation). When divided by population, we get per capita personal income (PCPI). In recent years, local and state politicians have latched onto PCPI as a yardstick of economic performance and well-being.

Thus it was an outraged Alexander Hamilton (not the fellow on the \$20 bill) who rang my doorbell. "My county is not first? How could that be? We are the elite of the state. We have wider streets so that more drivers can be first at traffic lights. We have the most growth which shows how popular and virtuous we are."



Morton Marcus  
Column

"Alex," I said calmly. "It happens. PCPI in Boone County surpassed Hamilton County several years ago. You just weren't watching."

"But why? Why is Dan Boone's county on top and not mine any-

more?" he asked.

"Suburban Pioneers," I replied. "Wealthy people, often when their children have moved on, leave the urban core seeking space, fresh air, distance from newcomers and exclusivity, while maintaining close contact with the core."

"As Hamilton County grew, adding stores, jobs and traffic, people responded and your county began to lose some of its desirability. Then a few pioneers migrated west within the county. Later, pioneers were entering Boone County for the same reasons that gave rise to Hamilton's growth in the past."

**"Now who is moving** into Hamilton County?

People with children. Children don't earn money. They wear and eat money. Even if newcomers earn as much as the settled population, those children will cause PCPI to grow slowly or even fall."

"But now we're second in the state," Alex moaned. "We look better in gold than silver. And look at who's just below us: Porter, Hancock, Dubois, Floyd, and Warrick. Where are these places? For whom were they named? What do people do there?"

"I think," I said, "the more interesting aspect of those PCPI figures is that the spread between the wealthiest and the poorest counties in the state has hardly

changed in twenty years. Back in 1998, when Hamilton was number one, its PCPI was 2.35 times higher than bottom-dwelling Starke County. In 2008, number one Boone was 2.26 times higher than last place Lagrange County."

"So what!" Alex said. "The rich stay rich and the poor stay poor. Tell me something I don't know."

**"OK," I said. "Only two Indiana** counties had declines in PCPI between 2006 and 2008: Lagrange and Elkhart. The other 90 counties advanced (without allowing for inflation, which hardly mattered in this period). While PCPI for the nation increased by 6.5 percent, Indiana rose by only 5.2 percent during this period (41st among the 50 states).

"Every county (except Shelby) in the Indianapolis metro area lagged the state in PCPI growth. So too did St. Joseph, Vanderburgh, Jefferson, Allen, and Howard counties. But all is not as it may seem. Take your county, Hamilton..."

"Yes? Something good?" he asked eagerly.

"Hamilton," I fed him slowly, "led the state in population growth from '06 to '08 with a 7.3 percent increase. That depressed its growth in PCPI despite seeing a 10.5 percent advance in personal income. Similar results can be found in all five of the state's fastest growing counties in population, all of which were in metro Indianapolis."

"So who had strong growth in both income and population?" Alex asked.

**"I thought you'd never ask,"** I replied. "Jasper, Hamilton, and Porter counties were the top three. But, as I said earlier, Hamilton's population growth (1st in the state) was so strong it offset much of the gains in income (17th), leaving the county ranked 85th of 92 in PCPI growth."

"Then," Alex said, "if growth of PCPI is the target, the best thing is to raise income and decrease population."

"Exactly," I said. "Try suggesting that in public." ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, speaker, and writer formerly with IU's Kelley School of Business.**



**Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star:** It's TV. It's politics. It's phony. I get it. Still, leave it to U.S. Rep. Dan Burton to take the world of political ads to an even higher level of phoniness. Along the way, he has once again exposed his arrogance and given me another reason to complain about him -- after promising myself I was through. In Burton's new commercial, a series of everyday-looking people offer testimonials about their congressman. One man stands in a yard holding a rake and tells viewers that Burton "has been a consistent conservative voice for us." Another says, "He's one of us." By one of us, he apparently means Ohioans. Because Burton's advertising agency didn't think it was important to have actual Burton constituents -- or even Hoosiers -- play the role of Burton constituents. So a few weeks before the May 4 primary, Burton's opponents in the crowded 5th District Republican primary have fresh material. Former state Rep. Luke Messer was first up, staging one of the most perfectly backdropped news conferences I've seen. "After 28 years in Congress, you'd think you could find someone in the district who would say some nice things about you," Messer said. As he talked, Messer stood in front of the Indiana Repertory Theatre -- a smart dig at the acting in Burton's ad. ❖

**Raymond Dix, Post-Tribune:** Some time ago, I stated that the election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States had the potential to set race relations back in this country. People who know me scoffed at this idea, as you may well do so upon reading this now. However, I point to the all-out focus in the lives of some who criticize him at all costs and the same pathological focus of those who defend him at all cost. Foremost, President Obama is a full grown, accomplished and by all indications intelligent person. He is full able to defend himself regarding his beliefs and or policy initiatives. In my opinion, it is unhealthy for anyone to criticize without knowledge or cause. But make no mistake, unhealthy as it may be, it is not only legal but a right for all citizens to express their criticisms in any manner by which they choose within the boundaries of our laws as a nation. In addition, I believe it to be equally unhealthy to focus upon those with whom we have disagreement to the point that it consumes valuable energy needed to improve our own lives. For example, the effort by the media to stir up black people, and whites for that matter, by stating that the tea party movement is inherently racist is a shameful attempt to divide people by ethnicity and prevent a serious conversation concerning the direction of this country. ❖

**Doug Ross, Times of Northwest Indiana:** The video of U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh interrogating Housing and

Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan last week is required viewing. Bayh's stern exchange with Donovan took place at a Thursday hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs -- after I wrote my column about federal aid to address Gary's blight but before it was published. Bayh and Clay need to press hard to get that money from HUD, I said last week. Bayh did. "It's terrible," Bayh told Donovan at the hearing. "These are people without means, the city is struggling, these aren't rich people, they're not contributors, they need a helping hand to make a go of it." And yet when the first round of federal stimulus money for razing blighted structures was doled out, Gary wasn't given any money for tearing down any of its thousands of blighted buildings. Donovan told Bayh, "We ran a competition for that \$2 billion, we had \$15 billion in applications, and their application fell short." So why wasn't Gary chosen in that first round? "We chose the applications that we thought were strongest based on the criteria of the competition," Donovan said. Bayh's response: "So there were more places that were more hard-pressed and more deserving than Gary -- including these not-for-profit organizations -- were more deserving of these funds than Gary, Indiana." Donovan: "Again, I agree with you that the need is substantial in Gary." And yet Gary's application didn't succeed in that first round. ❖



**Leslie Stedman Weidenbener, Louisville Courier-Journal:**

There's been a so-called "push-poll" in the district. That's a phone call to voters that initially appears to be a typical poll, a survey measuring support for different candidates in the race. But a push poll then veers in a new direction -- often, and in this case, a deceitful one. The questions become ways to give voters new information meant to tarnish the voter's image of a candidate. In this case, for example, the caller asks the voter (and I'm paraphrasing here) if he or she could support Republican Todd Young knowing that he misrepresented his years in the military. Before I go on, let me say that I have no reason to believe Young has done so. He has said repeatedly that he spent 10 years in the military. That includes five years as a Marine Corps officer, four years as a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy and one year as an enlisted sailor in the Navy. "That's 10 years," Young said recently. "That's not a lie." Young is blaming Republican Mike Sodrel's campaign for the calls, primarily because Sodrel is using a pollster that has been connected to some push polls in the past. But I'm not convinced it was the Sodrel campaign. First, campaign aid Jeff Canada denies it and relayed to me a story about once using a push poll in a mayor's race, losing and then vowing never to do so again. ❖



## Bayh passed over as NCAA chief

INDIANAPOLIS - Mark Emmert, introduced Tuesday evening as the new NCAA president, has such an affinity for athletics that he painted part of his home in the school colors of purple and gold during his time as chancellor of Louisiana State University. Emmert was selected from a group of four finalists that included Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., according to people with knowledge of the situation. USA Today reported the other two finalists were Beth Brooke, a former Purdue basketball player and executive with accounting firm Ernst & Young, and West Point superintendent Lt. Gen. Franklin "Buster" Hagenbeck. The four finalists were interviewed Tuesday. Bayh missed a Senate vote Tuesday but declined to comment on his candidacy for the NCAA's top job.



## McDermott says INDOT retaliates

HAMMOND - Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. says "it appears" the Indiana Department of Transportation is retaliating against Hammond for his criticism of INDOT's decision to not rebuild the Cline Avenue Bridge (Carden, Times of Northwest Indiana). A project to install new lighting on Calumet Avenue between Sheffield Avenue and Indianapolis Boulevard was supposed to be almost entirely paid for by federal stimulus money routed through INDOT. Hammond's share of the project, however, jumped from \$480 to \$459,182.02 after McDermott told the transportation department he was not satisfied with its replacement plan for the shuttered Cline Avenue Bridge.

Calls to the INDOT fiscal specialists who revised the city's invoice were not returned Wednesday. A spokesman for INDOT did not return several telephone calls after saying he would look into the situation. The revised bill was sent to the city April 15, the day INDOT publicly announced its plan to tear down the bridge over the Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal and reroute traffic onto Dickey Road, Riley Road and Michigan Avenue. On that day, McDermott called INDOT's plan a "disgrace" and said the needs of Northwest Indiana are not taken seriously by state officials. But McDermott said that's not the first time he told INDOT it was making a mistake. He said details of the plan were known among community leaders one week before the public announcement and he told INDOT he would not support its plan. On Wednesday, McDermott told The Times the timing of the sudden increase in the city share of the lighting project is suspicious, especially because the project is supposed to be paid for with federal stimulus funds, not state funds. "It appears as though it's related to the Cline Avenue situation," McDermott said. "I'm not saying it is, it certainly appears that way, and it's hard to not feel that way when you're sitting in my seat." Hammond City Attorney Kristina Kantar sent a letter to INDOT on April 21 asking for an explanation of the price increase. The city also has not heard back from INDOT, the mayor said. McDermott plans to lead a protest of the bridge decision at 10:30 a.m. Friday outside of the Genesis Convention Center in Gary, where Gov. Mitch Daniels will be speaking to the Gary Chamber of Commerce.

## Bennett faces the heat in South Bend

SOUTH BEND - Tony Bennett stood alone. Microphone in hand Wednesday, the state schools superin-

tendent faced more than 100 people in the Century Center's Bendix Theatre who've spent nearly two months wondering about the fate of three high schools: Bendix, Riley and Washington (South Bend Tribune). Teachers raised issues with the ISTEP test data from 2008 that put the schools on academic probation for the fourth year in a row. Bennett replied that the state is working on a better way to assess students. But one point doesn't change, he said. Students are performing below state standards on the test. "As a community, you should not be pleased with these results," he said. "You should have a fierce urgency to change them regardless of what the metrics are. You just didn't end up in this case overnight. My question is: Why weren't these things addressed before now?" Bennett came for a public forum on what happens next with the three schools. An hour later, he took questions from the South Bend Community School Corp. board. On Friday, South Bend's top school officials submitted their proposed plan to turn the schools around in the next year — to avoid state takeover.

## Lugar backs away from Obama

WASHINGTON - After reaching out earlier this week to members of Congress such as Republican Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana to develop a bipartisan approach to the politically dicey issue of immigration reform, President Barack Obama acknowledged late Wednesday he has found little appetite among legislators to deal with the issue now (Straub, Evansville Courier & Press). Lugar, when contacted by the president, demurred, maintaining that the effort would prove time consuming and was unlikely to reach the Senate floor anytime soon. The president telephoned Lugar from Air Force One earlier this week to gauge his interest in tackling



the issue in the wake of a law adopted in Arizona that essentially permits local and state law enforcement to detain individuals who can't show proof that they are American citizens. Obama has sharply criticized the law, asking the Justice Department to look into whether it violates civil rights. Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada — locked in a tight re-election race — quickly indicated that the Senate would tackle immigration, which is an issue that has proved divisive and insoluble in a bitterly split chamber. Reid subsequently backtracked, but the announcement angered Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who had crossed the aisle to work on both immigration and climate change legislation. Graham withdrew from both efforts, leading the White House to cast for alternative GOP support. Lugar was viewed as a potential ally, one administration official said, because he has worked cooperatively with Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on numerous global affairs. Lugar spokesman Mark Hayes, paraphrasing his boss, said Lugar told Obama, "Please don't count on me."

## **Jobless claims drop for 2nd month**

WASHINGTON - The number of Americans filing claims for unemployment benefits dropped for a second consecutive week, further evidence that the job market is slowly improving (Associated Press). The Labor Department said Thursday that initial applications for jobless benefits dropped by 11,000 to 448,000, the lowest level in four weeks. The new total was slightly higher than economists had expected. The four-week average for claims edged up slightly to 462,500, still above the level that economists believe signals sustained improvements in the job market.

## **Porter candidate shifts on RDA**

VALPARAISO - Porter County Council candidate Jim Biggs said he now supports the council's decision to continue its legal battle to withdraw from Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority after learning the county had no say in joining the regional group (Times of Northwest Indiana). "I believe the council had no choice but to appeal it at that point," he said.

## **Hill, Pence vote against pay raises**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, D-Ind., and Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., voted against congressional cost-of-living pay raises Tuesday night. The bill would stop stop automatic pay increases for members of Congress next year. It passed 402-15 (Columbus Republic). Hill was a cosponsor of the legislation. "In these challenging times, with unemployment still high and the economy recovering, southern Indiana families are being forced to make hard decisions and cut spending to make ends meet," Hill wrote in a Wednesday morning release. "Washington should follow their lead, which is why I voted to block a pay raise for members of Congress. Our focus must be on getting people back to work, strengthening our economy, and reducing the deficit."

## **Muncie to rehire 32 firefighters**

MUNCIE - Muncie will be rehiring at least some of its 32 laid-off firefighters, Mayor Sharon McShurley said this week (Muncie Star Press). But just how many and when they will return to work remains unknown as the city awaits a formal announcement from the Federal Emergency Management

Agency on its application for financial assistance through the agency's SAFER grant. "We've been told that at this time it looks like we are going to receive the money," McShurley said.

## **Karras sentenced to a year in prison**

HAMMOND - The last of former Calumet Township Trustee Dozier Allen Jr.'s deputies was sentenced Wednesday to a year and a day in federal prison, her plea for leniency neither fully granted nor ignored (Times of Northwest Indiana). Chief Judge Philip Simon sentenced Ann Marie Karras, 67, to a prison term about half as long as the minimum sentence recommended by federal guidelines followed by two years of supervised release. Her lawyer, James Meyer, asked Simon to sentence her to home detention, while Assistant U.S. Attorney Gary Bell suggested some prison time. Meyer said an appeal is planned. The sentence followed a tearful plea for mercy that contrasted with her three comparatively stoic co-defendants sentenced Tuesday. Karras asked Simon to spare her prison time so she could care for her husband, former professional football player Ted Karras, who has Alzheimer's disease.

## **Terre Haute councilman resigns**

TERRE HAUTE - Former Terre Haute City Councilman Turk Roman gave a letter of resignation to city officials on Wednesday, just two days prior to his sentencing hearing in Vigo County court (Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Roman, who faces sentencing Friday for impersonating a police officer, submitted the brief resignation letter to the Terre Haute City Clerk's office. "I have made the decision to resign from my position as City Councilman of the 2nd District for the City of Terre Haute," the letter states.