

# Impeachment contorts INDems

Open 1st and 5th CDs find  
McDermott and Hale scrambling

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – If you want to see the pressure the impeachment of President Donald Trump is putting on Democratic House candidates who are trying to win in Republican districts, look at Christina Hale (pictured left).



Hours before the Democratic-majority House voted almost strictly along party lines Wednesday night to impeach Trump, Hale, a candidate for the Democratic nomination in the 5th CD, put out a careful statement.

She alluded to Trump's efforts to withhold military aid from Ukraine – and deny President Volodymyr Zelensky a White House visit -- unless the country launched an investigation of former vice president Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, the abuse of power that was at the center of the first article of impeachment. She also referenced Trump's obstruction of Congress, which constituted the second article of impeachment.

The House approved the first article, 230-197,



Continued on page 4

## The education battlefield

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – The casual observer of the recent “Red for Ed” teacher action day probably believes that it was very successful. A massive teacher turnout blanketed the Statehouse and let legislators and the governor know that teachers were fed up with the status quo and weren't going to take it anymore. The event received the intended publicity across the state. Newspapers skewered Republicans. Everyone in power felt the heat.



The last bit of good news regarding “Red for Ed” came on Dec. 10, when Gov. Eric Holcomb announced his 2020 Next Level agenda. Holcomb summed up his priorities by stating that



**“My anticipation based on only anecdotal evidence from what I’ve heard publicly and read publicly is that there will indeed be a correlation between one’s party affiliation on one hand and the votes that are cast on the other hand.” - U.S. Sen. Todd Young, on the coming Senate trial.**



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**Jack E. Howey**  
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"he will put Hoosier students, teachers and parents first. That means listening to our teachers and giving our students the best education possible." Furthermore, Holcomb committed to:

- Retaining and bringing the very best educators to teach in Indiana;
- Changing career-related teacher professional growth points from required to optional;
- Supporting the Teacher Compensation Commission and making Indiana a leader in the Midwest for teacher pay;
- Working with educators to identify unfunded mandates and unnecessary requirements in K-12 education;
- Holding schools and teachers harmless for 2018-2019 ILEARN scores.

**To most folks** this looks like the governor and teachers are moving in symphony and that, soon, all will be right. This probably is not the case. There are deeply ingrained, philosophical issues that will not be resolved anytime soon. If you think that "Red for Ed" was about teacher pay and the educational success of little Johnny and little Mary, then you are living in the land of unicorns.

None of Gov. Holcomb's 2020 Next Level agenda addresses the real causes of educator angst. The real heart of the great educational divide involves:

- Property tax reform;
- School choice;
- Charter schools;
- Vouchers;
- Money following students;
- Redrawing legislative districts.

Once upon a time, prior to Gov. Mitch Daniels, teachers and educators were a fairly happy lot. If your local schools needed additional money, the superintendent went to the school board for a property tax increase and soon the money magically moved from the pockets of taxpayers to the schools. In some school dis-

tricts, the natural increase in property values meant that those schools received a nice increase each year, even with a stable tax rate. Districts with flat or declining property values were required to hike tax rates to keep up with the Joneses or the Carmels.

**This quaint system** of property owner larceny worked fine until property taxes started to get out of control. Gov. Daniels knew the problems caused by out-of-control property taxes and he took bold action, backed by a new Republican legislative majority, to dramatically reform property tax and, along with it, educational funding. While still retaining local property tax decisions on capital funding and transportation, the state took over the responsibility for much of school funding. In fact, school funding now eats up ap-



proximately 53% of the state budget. Instead of increased school funding coming from compliant school boards, superintendents had to go hat in hand to the state legislature every two years to seek their increases.

**About this same time**, Indiana dramatically impacted education by implementing school choice, charter schools, a voucher system and a funding strategy that had state money following the students.

Talk about apoplexy! The average educator viewed these changes as the death knell of all that they hold sacred. The fatted calf of education funding had been sacrificed and served up to an admiring public over the heated objections of

the professional educator community.

With these changes implemented, parents now had the right to seek the best educational opportunity for their child whether it was in their own district, a neighboring district or in a new charter school. Better yet, the funding for the child followed to their new school. Schools viewed as successful prospered. Schools viewed as failures struggled. There was outright rebellion caused by giving parents control over their child's education and the funds to make it happen.

Instead of dealing with the perceived failure of their schools to educate our children effectively, many corporations turned to accusing the Republican-led legislature of the destruction of public schools, racism and classism. Some corporations turned to trying to make their schools more attractive by building athletic Taj Mahals, over-the-top new facilities and slick marketing ploys. A few corporations even tried to improve their educational product.

**The struggle to grab** the most money for their corporations then hit the people who are the most important piece of the educational puzzle, the teachers. As administrative staff and expenses escalated, class sizes grew, teaching demands grew larger and teacher pay stagnated. Forget the new press box at the football stadium. Forget the new athletic weight room. Forget the new electronic sign in front of the high school. Concentrate on the one issue that everyone cares about, little Johnny and little Mary and their noble mistreated and underpaid teacher. To the barricades!

Of course, in the eyes of professional educators,

the one pervasive and critical roadblock to educational Nirvana is the continuing Republican dominance of the Indiana Legislature. Why good old folks like Common Cause, environmentalists, unions and just about anyone who isn't getting their preferred slice of the state budget is convinced that if we had fair, non-political drawing of legislative districts, then all of their problems would disappear. Bring back Pat Bauer and life will be good!

**It is ironic that we only** hear about drawing legislative districts being problematic when Republicans are in control. When Pat Bauer was in control of the Indiana House of Representatives, Republicans won 53% of the legislative votes cast and yet Democrats controlled the House. Where were the teacher unions then?

Gov. Holcomb's 2020 Next Level agenda will go a long way toward addressing many of the festering teacher issues. However, the educational infrastructure and the swamp creatures who dwell within will not be satisfied with this agenda. Nothing less than turning back the clock to the "good old days" will be enough. The sad fact is that "Red for Ed" is not about little Johnny or little Mary, it is about the fat cats that dwell at the educational trough. Students, teachers, parents and taxpayers be damned! "Red for Ed" is about control.

Like my former driver's education teacher Mr. Thompson told me back when I was 16, the best views are looking ahead and not looking in the rearview mirror. ❖

**Dunn is the former Howard County Republican Chairman.**

## Taxpayers saddled with 2 ed mortgages

By PAMELA MISHLER FISH

MUNSTER — In Indiana, many of our state legislators are touting a healthy increase in K-12 education funding for the next two years. Unfortunately, what is not being discussed is how much of that funding is being filtered out of public education and into private, charter and for-profit education, according to Keith Gambill, Indiana State Teachers Association President. Many research groups across the country studying K-12 education funding found that public education K-12 funding in Indiana will increase by about 2% while private, charter and for-profit K-12 education funding will increase by about 10%. According to a 2018 report by the Indiana Department of Education, approximately 93% of Indiana K-12 students attend public schools.



On Nov. 19, the Statehouse in Indianapolis was swarmed by 16,000 "Red for Ed" supporters. Those individuals wanted our state legislators to know that K-12 public education is reaching a crisis. Adequate funding is a monumental part of that crisis. In order to remain fiscally sound, many school corporations must pass referendum after referendum, which increases taxes for residents in those school districts. This action is necessary to keep class sizes appropriate, pay salaries, purchase new supplies and equipment, maintain programs and keep extra-curricular activities and sports. According to the 2019 National Education Association report, Indiana ranks 47th in the country for the money spent on each public school student. Also, the increase in teacher salaries in Indiana during the past 10 years ranks lowest in the country.

**Where is the K-12 education** money going? Why aren't teacher salaries increasing? According to some state legislators and a few news media outlets, the problem lies with mismanagement of funds by local school boards. As a former school board member for Union Township School Corporation and a former member of the budget team and contract negotiation team, I find that accusation to be extremely offensive. During my tenure as a member of our contract negotiation team, we had a choice

of either giving adequate raises to teachers, or cutting many programs. Our school corporation has some of the most outstanding educators in the state of Indiana. Unfortunately, during that negotiation period, the only increase in pay we could afford was a small one-time stipend. It made all of us on the team feel horrible. To play the blame game and point fingers at local school boards as the villains in this funding fiasco is appalling.

**What has happened in Indiana** since 2011 is that our state legislators have saddled Indiana taxpayers with two education mortgages: K-12 public education and K-12 private/charter/for-profit education. This demand is breaking the backs of Indiana taxpayers and it is breaking public K-12 education. I have no problem with private, for-profit and charter K-12 education. However, Indiana taxpayers can't afford to fund both. No corporation would ever have a manufacturing facility at a location and then

set up the same exact facility down the street. It would not make good financial sense. That is what we do in Indiana regarding K-12 education. Something else to note: Many private, charter and for-profit schools underperform their public school counterparts and when these schools close, there is no oversight as to where the millions of taxpayer dollars given to them have gone. Stop blaming local school boards and start looking for viable solutions to this funding crisis. Finally, stop breaking the backs of Indiana taxpayers by forcing them to finance two separate K-12 education programs. ❖

**Pamela Mishler Fish is a former Union Township School Board member, serving on the budget team and contract negotiation team. She wrote this op-ed for the NWI Times.**

## 5th CD, from page 1

with only two Democrats voting against. The second article passed, 229-198, with only three Democrats voting against. But Hale didn't explicitly say whether she would have stood with her Democratic colleagues had she been serving in the House rather than running for it.

**"National security is** of primary importance to all Americans," Hale said in the statement. "My dad, a longtime prosecuting attorney, taught me long ago that no one is above the law, not even our president, and that transparency in government is essential to well-functioning democracy. Americans across our country are seriously concerned, and we need to see this impeachment process through in the Senate, and give these articles a fair and open hearing. That said, we must not allow Congress to be distracted from working on the everyday issues affecting people here in Indiana, like making health care more affordable, lowering the cost of prescription drugs and focusing on education and employment."

It seems that Hale favors impeachment. But her spokesman, Andy Bilyk, would not say whether Hale would have cast a vote for impeachment. He repeatedly referred to the statement.

Hale's caution likely is a result of the difficult task facing the front-runner for the 5th CD Democratic nomination, as she tries to win in a district that is R+9 on the Cook Partisan Index but in recent elections has given Democrats hope of flipping it.

**Stretching from Marion** in the north to Carmel and the northern Indianapolis suburbs in the south, the district has been trending Democratic in General Assembly races since 2014. Former state Sen. Mike Delph lost his seat in 2018 to Democrat J.D. Ford. Former Sen. Joe Donnelly won the district last year despite losing his seat to Republican Mike Braun.

But the district has not elected a Democrat to the

U.S. House since Jim Jontz in 1988 when the district had a much different footprint. U.S. Rep. Dan Burton dominated the more modern 5th. Current GOP Rep. Susan Brooks won the seat four times since 2012 with at least 56.7% of the vote each time.

Hale, a former state representative and candidate for lieutenant governor, is likely trying to run as a moderate Democrat given the district's Republican tilt.

Bilyk said Hale's schedule this week didn't permit time for an HPI interview.

Her opponent for the Democratic nomination, Dee Thornton, was more straightforward about impeachment. She said in an interview she would have voted with House Democrats. "It's about protecting the Constitution," said Thornton, a former Xerox executive and the 5th CD Democratic nominee in 2018. "It should not be a partisan vote. It's a vote on principle."

She is confident that her vocal support of impeachment won't hurt her in November. "What people see in me is not a partisan politician," Thornton said. "They see in me a candidate who is willing to do what is right and to serve with honesty and integrity."

**The National Republican** Congressional Committee is prepared to attack Hale and Thornton for backing impeachment. "The Democrats' obsession with impeaching the president will cost them their [House] majority next November and will definitely hurt Democrats in a GOP district like IN-05," NRCC spokeswoman Camille Gallo wrote in an email. "If any IN-05 Democratic candidate comes out in support of impeachment, it will prove they will go to Washington and put their political party above the people of Indiana."

Like the colleagues they want to join in Washington, 5th CD Republican candidates would have voted against impeachment. "It looks like a completely partisan effort to remove the president because [Democrats] know they can't beat him at the ballot box," Indiana Treasurer Kelly Mitchell said in an interview.

The Rev. Micah Beckwith said impeachment will turn out to be a political boost for Trump and other Republicans. "It's great," said Beckwith, pastor of a non-denominational church in Noblesville. "It's going to catapult [Trump] to an overwhelming victory in 2020. It's playing right into the president's hands. It really is going to be a positive thing not only for the president but also for someone like me running in the 5th District."

Democratic and Republican 5th CD candidates agree on one thing – voters rarely bring up impeachment.

Mitchell said she has heard about impeachment from "one person" out of the hundreds she's met at campaign events. Voters "see it as a partisan charade and want it to be done."

Beckwith has a similar take. "Honestly, they don't care about impeachment because they know there's nothing there," he said.

The strong economy will trump impeachment next year, Mitchell said. "It comes down to the kitchen table [issues]," Mitchell said. "Is my life better today than it was four years ago?"

### 1st CD has McDermott changing tune

The mirror of the 5th is the +9 Democratic CPI 1st CD. Last week in a NWI Times interview with Dan Carden, Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr said a censure



Hammond Mayor McDermott changed his stance on impeachment in the open 1st CD.

resolution, rebuking the president for his alleged misdeeds but without the threat of removal from office, would serve the same practical purpose as impeachment while dividing the country far less. If this is all going to end up, ultimately, just partisan politics — the Democrats in the House are going to vote to impeach and the Republicans in the Senate are going to vote to acquit — then why are we going through this exercise?" McDermott asked.

State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon assailed McDermott, saying, "Like Rep. Visclosky, I have supported the inquiry and impeachment. I'm glad that the Mayor of Hammond has finally realized that in a democracy we have a responsibility to question and hold our leaders accountable for their actions for the good of the nation. Like I tell my children, when we know better, we do better."

After The Times reported on McDermott favoring censure, the four-term mayor said Monday he recently changed his mind to support impeachment after watching House committee testimony implicating Trump in wrongdoing. "Even though I felt like we should have headed a different route, once we decided to head down the route of impeachment would I vote against impeachment because I think censure is the right answer? And it's no," McDermott said. ❖

# We all lose in this impeachment chapter

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS — There are no winners. We're all losers, from President Trump down to my kids who will be facing a precarious future filled with climate and fiscal challenges. That's what I was thinking Wednesday afternoon, watching the mind-numbing tribal parade of congressional Republicans and Democrats stating their rote impeachment talking points.



By late that night, Donald John Trump became only the third American president to be impeached, and in payback Washington, perhaps only one of many to come before we know whether we can really keep our republic going.

And you could see this coming from miles away, with "The Squad" talking about impeachment months before President Zelensky was even

elected president of Ukraine, to Trump's George Stephanopoulos interview last June when he was asked if he would accept foreign assistance to win reelection in 2020. "I think you might want to listen, there isn't anything wrong with listening," Trump answered. "If somebody called from a country, Norway, 'we have information on your opponent' – oh, I think I'd want to hear it."

**The very day after** President Trump appeared to have dodged criminal liabilities from Special Counsel Robert Mueller — though it was far from "exoneration" with Volume II detailing a series of obstruction of justice incidents that Mueller refused to prosecute against a sitting president — he was on the phone to Zelensky, in what appeared to be a shake-down for dirt on the Bidens in exchange for \$390 million in congressionally approved aid for a country battling occupation from President Putin's Russia.

To insist this was just a normal "perfect" call as Republicans would have you believe is an ESPN "C'mon man" moment.

The question of whether this rises to an impeachable offense" is the practical consideration. Speaker Nancy Pelosi's initial instincts were right that her party should deal with President Trump next November in an election and not in the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate next month. For proof, just look at the contorted congressional

campaigns of Mayor McDermott in the 1st CD and Christina Hale in the still ruby red 5th CD, and the fact that the Democratic presidential contenders (other than Tom Steyer) have mostly side-stepped this whole shitstorm, to see how impeachment is playing here in the heartland.

**After the Senate acquits** President Trump, then what? Impeach him again after he seeks campaign dirt deliverables from Shanghai? Trump's whole business career was built on circumventing the law, taxes and traditional norms while sliming and outlasting his opponents and the feds.

Trump loses in all of this because he becomes just the third president to be impeached. There's been a spate of recent stories suggesting Trump has at least a 50/50 chance of being reelected (See Sabato's Crystal Ball on page 17), but the Fox News Poll early this week should be sobering for Republicans: 50% of registered voters said they favored Trump's impeachment and removal from office; another 4% supported impeachment but not removal; and 41% opposed impeachment altogether.

Our president's six-page letter to Speaker Pelosi was an embarrassment worthy of a middle school president. He spent a day last week tweeting more than 120 times, which raises the question of doesn't the POTUS and Leader of the Free World have better things to do with his

time?

And deep down, I think Trump really wanted this; he knows that on the week of his 1999 Senate trial acquittal following the Monica Lewinsky scandal, President Bill Clinton's Gallup Poll approval reached its historic apex at 73%.

So here we go. Where America ends up in early 2020 after the third presidential impeachment is anyone's guess. Regular Hoosiers I know aren't paying much attention and are polarized by President Trump. I'll restate past thoughts on these alleged high crimes and misdemeanors:

- 1.) Impeachments are messy and unpredictable.
- 2.) Impeachment is an American tragedy that won't end well.
- 3.) Impeachment will result in unintended consequences.
- 4.) Hoosiers are prepared to render a verdict on President Trump at the ballot box next November.
- 5.) If we get into a mode where we're impeaching an American president every 20 years, the fragile American experiment will be doomed.

Conviction today is not attainable or achievable. Any one who touches it or embraces it is playing with fire. Trump's political fate needs to be determined by voters next November at the ballot box. ❖

## The coming political crack-up

By MARK SOUDER

FORT WAYNE — F. Scott Fitzgerald issued a book called "Crack-Up" in 1945. He made an observation that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." Conservative writer R. Emmett Tyrrell wrote two books in the 1980's called "The Liberal Crack-Up" and "The Conservative Crack-Up," in which he discussed the incongruities within each movement. They, in his words, "resuscitated the term" F. Scott Fitzgerald had used. In other words, neither internal contradictions nor the seeming eminent break-up of political parties is a new concept.



**In recent state and city elections** in Indiana, the Republican Party, particularly in the suburban and higher-income areas, is showing some very sharp fissures. The Democrat Party divisions could not have been more sharply illustrated than when the far-left flank shockingly

topped incumbent Congressman Joe Crowley of New York in a primary. He was a top favorite to be the replacement for leader Nancy Pelosi, until he was purged.

I know from personal experience that this phenomenon is not new. In 1969, I was in Indianapolis after just being elected as Indiana College Republican state chairman. While there, I was invited to a small birthday party for Lt. Gov. Richard Folz. State Treasurer John Snyder, southern Indiana political boss Seth Denbo, and two Snyder aides, Deputy Treasurer John Price and my predecessor as CR chairman, Dave Tudor, were also there.

**Two things I remember most.** One was Folz, leaning back in his chair and rhapsodizing poetically about the beauty of looking out over the Ohio River, something I had never heard before. Secondly, they were discussing the upcoming (brutal) internal fight for control of the Indiana Republican Party. The election centerpiece was the nomination to oppose Sen. Vance Hartke but internally, GOP officials were removed, from district chairman to ultimately multiple switches of state GOP chairmen. License bureau managers were among the many patronage employees who were terminated.

But the Folz birthday party memory related to politics I retained was someone turning to me, probably Seth Denbo, and saying: "You'll learn that battling the Democrats is enjoyable, but there is nothing like a good primary battle." He may have said "war."

It was 1969. In 1968, the Democrat mayor of Chicago had ordered the tear-gassing of fellow Democrat protestors near the lakefront in Lincoln Park. In Indiana,

the Democrat governor, Roger Branigin, had been the favorite stand-in for the incumbent President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. The anti-Vietnam flank had divided into two factions, one backing Eugene McCarthy and the other supporting Bobby Kennedy. Kennedy won the hard-fought, divisive primary. And then Kennedy was murdered, like his brother had been in 1963, and Martin Luther King Jr. had been earlier in 1968.

**When people** talk about divisiveness being irreparable today, it is pretty mild by historical standards. It is not even the socialist turmoil of the early 20th Century, led by supporters of Eugene Debs. It is not the Teddy Roosevelt-William Howard Taft massive Republican true crack-up during the same period. It is not 103rd ballot convention of the 1924 Democrat Convention, at which the key factions were southern Ku Klux Klan forces pitted against Catholics backing Al Smith from New York.

Divisions do cost elections. The 1968 election was close, and having southern Democrat George Wallace siphoning off votes probably hurt Humphrey more than winner Richard Nixon. In 1992, Bill Clinton would likely have been defeated had not Ross Perot decided not to oppose President H. W. George Bush for largely personal reasons.

In the Fort Wayne 2019 mayoral election, it was a classic confrontation along the two current Republican fault lines, social issues and economic issues. Tim Smith defeated long-time City Councilman Dr. John Crawford by sharply delineating their differences. Basically, Tim aggressively implied that pro-lifers should not vote for Dr. Crawford because he was not pro-life and, on the economic front, that Crawford was a big government, old guard, tax-increaser whose entire career hurt Fort Wayne.

**The abortion issue**, in particular, resulted in harsh comments from Dr. Crawford after Mayor Tom Henry swept to victory. In part, he raised a fundamentally difficult question: If pro-lifers expect to gain any support from people who are not pro-life, can they always refuse to support any pro-choice candidate in primaries? One could ask the Democrats the question in reverse, as they punish pro-life candidates. And where does one draw the line on any single issue? What about gun regulation? Immigration reform? It should also be noted that there is big difference between a primary vote and uniting after a primary. But even for primaries, how harshly a campaign is run will impact a fall race.



The second issue doesn't grab media attention as often as social ones because, in my opinion, of media personal bias, but the economic division has long loomed large in both parties. Actual splits have come more from economic differences than social ones. The more socialist wing led by Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, pushed by some of the new radical leftists in the U.S. House, is more likely to split the Democrats than social issue differences are going to split the Republicans.

Among Republicans, it was for 150 years more of the Main Street versus Wall Street argument but, for example, in Fort Wayne it was more Main Street versus a more libertarian, anti-Chamber of Commerce business view. No tax is good. It is not about federal power that flows from taxation. Almost any tax is

wrong, apparently, even at the local and state (e.g. vehicle user tax) levels. Tim Smith bashed Dr. Crawford for all his tax votes. It was on that basis that he dissed Crawford's entire career on the city council (which Smith has admitted was too harshly stated). The criticisms were of Fort Wayne Main Street businesses, not Wall Street.

**The sharpness of the scorn** for the business leaders who have worked with the city and that has led to the downtown revival in Fort Wayne set teeth on edge. It is one thing to oppose government assistance, or argue that government should not be picking winners and losers in development, but the tone of calling opponents RINOs (i.e. anyone disagreeing with you) has made it difficult to reunite.

Tom Henry's ads featured, for example, Marcia Crawford who was furious about the denegation of her husband's career. Henry featured Chuck Surack, a sort of financial godfather right now for the city and generally a Republican donor. Other Republicans also spoke out for Henry as well. (I did not. Both candidates had been good friends for over 25 years.)

The question in both political parties is not whether people are going to drop differences. They will not. The primary system is meant to offer choices to voters. However, unless a party desires to lose, its candidates must not detonate nuclear bombs on each other in primaries. Otherwise, either side can implode. Whichever side best succeeds in holding its factions together will win. Our parliamentary system requires coalitions within two parties. It is messy, but works better than the alternatives. ❖

**Souder is a former Republican congressman.**

# Mayor Pete finally gets debate septuagenarian showdown tonight

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — At 8 tonight at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg's primetime moment arrives. It is a dynamic his upstart campaign has been seeking since its national breakthrough moment last spring: A less crowded debate stage where the 37-year-old mayor can match his policy chops with the septuagenarian frontrunners Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders.

Missing will be Rep. Eric Swalwell, Beto O'Rourke, Sen. Kamala Harris and that other Rhodes Scholar mayor, Sen. Cory Booker. Tonight could also open up a new era in this Democratic presidential race where the so-called frontrunners affix a bulls-eye to Mayor Pete's back.

Buttigieg joined this race's upper echelon with his startling \$24 million second quarter FEC report. He then had to endure five debates on a stage crowded with 10 participants, the first divided into two nights. There were glares with Rep. Swalwell and showdown with O'Rourke over gun reforms. Tonight promises the most vivid contrast exposure between the young mayor and the old farts, with a Democratic presidential nomination on the line.

According to Vox Media, mid-December national polls from NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist, Quinnipiac University, and USA Today/Suffolk University show that most Democratic voters have a candidate they are considering, but have yet to actually make up their minds. That suggests the ranking of the candidates – which has remained fairly consistent in recent weeks – could be shaken up in the new year. Former Vice President Joe Biden topped all three polls, with 23% in the Suffolk survey, 24% in Marist's, and 30% in Quinnipiac's. Sen. Bernie Sanders was second in all three, with support ranging from 14% (Suffolk) to 22% (Marist). Sen. Elizabeth Warren was third, with support ranging from 13% (Suffolk) to 17% (Quinnipiac and Marist); Mayor Pete Buttigieg was fourth, his support running from 8% (Suffolk) to 13% (Marist).

Vox continued: "These national numbers underscore a reality that has existed for the duration of the race. While the field has seen individual candidates' polling spike

and decline, Biden and Sanders, the two men who entered the race with the highest name recognition and the most distinct bases of support, have maintained their spots atop the field in a remarkable fashion. That could all change, beginning tonight."

Buttigieg has been mixing it up with the septuagenarians. Biden accused him of "stealing" his "Medicare for All Who Want It" plan.

Sanders took aim, saying Buttigieg is attempting to preserve an unfair health system. "If you maintain a system where millions of people continue to get their private insurance from their employers, the average worker in America making about \$60,000 a year is paying \$12,000 for their health care," Sanders told a crowd in Burlington, Iowa. "That's 20% of somebody's income. If Buttigieg or anyone else wants to maintain that system, I think that is really unfair to the working families of this country."

As for Warren, Buttigieg may have set off his most conspicuous trap when he called her Medicare for All plan's funding "evasive" in September. That may have helped launch Warren's spiral down in recent polls after she announced a fantastic, gargantuan \$20 trillion plan. "His plan is not offering full health care coverage to anyone," she told reporters in Iowa on Monday. "His plan is still about high deductibles, about fees, about co-pays and about uncovered expenses. What I'm offering is full health care coverage."

Into the Warren polling vacuum, Buttigieg's numbers have gone up in Iowa and New Hampshire; Warren has gone down.

Warren has been taking aim at the mayor's fundraising and bundlers, as well as his McKinsey portfolio. Buttigieg released both, but according to Politico, his campaign omitted more than 20 high-level fundraisers from a list of top "bundlers" it disclosed to the public last week. Expect Warren to take aim at that tonight.

"His pressures on Warren and some of the farther left policies is expanding the Democratic base, allowing some more moderate people to feel like they have a voice in this race," Bryce Smith, the Democratic Party chairman in Dallas County, Iowa, told the New York Times."

That same day, Buttigieg added two more Iowa legislators to his endorsement column, both of them from Des Moines' South Side, according to Iowa Starting Line. State Sen. Tony Bisignano and State Rep. Brian Meyer announced their support for Buttigieg, adding two well-known legislators to his endorsement list that includes many local elected officials. State Sen. Bill Dotzler of Waterloo endorsed Buttigieg earlier this month. "People are underestimating his traction," Bisignano told Starting Line.



## Buttigieg's South Bend endorsements

Buttigieg picked up the endorsements of 11 current, former and future elected officials in a South Bend Tribune op-ed (Howey Politics Indiana) including Kareemah Fowler, former city clerk; City Clerk Dawn Jones; Councilman Gavin Ferlic, at-large; Councilman John Voorde, at-large; Council President Tim Scott, 1st District; Councilwoman Sharon McBride, 3rd District; Councilwoman Jo Broden, 4th District; Councilwoman Rachel Tomas Morgan, at-large; Councilwoman-elect Lori Hamann, at-large; Councilman-elect Troy Warner, 4th District; and Councilwoman-elect Sheila Niezgodski, 6th District.

In a South Bend Tribune op-ed, they wrote: "The story of South Bend that many of us saw growing up or raising our own children is one of a city on the ropes, where we were told often it was a former shell of itself. That started to change in 2012. Pete Buttigieg had campaigned on a promise that with the right ideas and the right leadership, our city could come to believe in itself again. Then, after sparking a can-do mentality and working alongside many of us, he actually delivered on that

promise. As mayor, Pete has demonstrated every day the leadership our nation needs. Whenever a resident, or a Common Council member, comes to him with an idea or concern, he listens carefully and is always open to adjusting course to take into account new input. When a particularly difficult problem presents itself, he brings together stakeholders to find a solution that works – even when it requires tough decisions. When gun violence strikes our communities, or natural disasters devastated our neighborhoods, Pete has been there, helping to hold our community together."

## Buttigieg's Latino plan

Buttigieg rolled out a sweeping set of policy proposals on Monday aimed at reversing the Trump administration's "discriminatory" actions toward Latinos and bringing about a "new era" for Latinos in the United States (The Hill). The proposals – dubbed collectively as "El Pueblo Unido/A People United: A New Era for Latinos" – come as Buttigieg scrambles to boost his appeal among nonwhite voters. ❖



# Melton seeks to reallocate \$300M for teacher pay hike

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — State Senate Eddie Melton has announced how he will address teacher pay in 2020. A news release indicated Sen. Melton will file a bill that would reallocate a portion of the \$300 million in additional revenue that the governor plans to use to cash fund capital projects to instead increase Teacher Appreciation Grants (TAG).



The bill, which has no chance of passage with the GOP super majorities, would drive \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2020

and another \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2021 to TAG. "I have found at least one option to put more money in teachers' pockets by June 30 without negatively affecting the current budget plan, without touching the surplus and without raising taxes on Hoosiers," Melton, D-Gary, stated. "My Republican colleagues in the House and Senate now have an opportunity to prove they value and respect our teachers by supporting this bill, or they can further double down on their unwillingness to pay our teachers what they deserve."

Holcomb has consistently said he wants a "sustainable" teacher pay increase plan and has vowed to

submit one for the 2021 biennial budget session should he reelected in November.

The Indiana State Teachers Association is asking for what it calls a \$75 million "down payment" on a promised fix to the salary structure. Holcomb says he needs to know more than what he's heard in news reports. He's said he wants to boost Indiana to the top three in the Midwest in teacher pay in five years, but he notes he's said repeatedly he wants a sustainable solution, not a piecemeal approach.

The ISTA says if Indiana's going to meet Holcomb's five-year target for reaching the top three, it can't wait to get started. Holcomb argues it has. Legislators approved Holcomb's request to pay off local pension liabilities in this year's budget, freeing up \$150 million on top of what schools were awarded by the state funding formula. Schools were urged, though not required, to use that money for raises, and Holcomb says local superintendents "kept their word." He says teachers are getting raises in all but five districts, and three of those five haven't reported their numbers yet (Berman, WIBC).

Meanwhile, Holcomb told the IndyStar his campaign will focus on the "good news" happening across the state. "I think we have such a good story to tell here in Indiana. Certainly my campaign will be one that's focused on sharing the good news and folks who aren't experiencing in that good news, trying to get them connected to it," Holcomb said. "

## Statewides

## AG Hill's law license in doubt

Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill's law license

should be suspended for at least two years, according to a proposal filed late Monday by the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission (Associated Press). The proposal is only a recommendation to the hearing officer in Hill's disciplinary case. The hearing officer will then make her own recommendation to the Indiana Supreme Court, which will have the final say over Hill's fate. The commission's proposal is the first indication of what kind of punishment Hill could face for sexual harassment. It's not immediately clear what a two-year suspension would mean for Hill's ability to continue holding office, but state law requires the attorney general to have a law license.



### Westercamp announces endorsements

With the 2020 party conventions less than a year away, Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill's challenger to become the Republican AG candidate says he has a growing list of supporters within the Indiana GOP (Covington, Indiana Lawyer). John Westercamp, a Bose McKinney & Evans attorney, said Tuesday he has received more than 120 public endorsements from Hoosier Republicans. Westercamp announced in June that he would challenge Hill to become the GOP attorney general nominee. The attorney, who says he has visited all of Indiana's 92 counties once and is about a third of the way through doing so again, issued a press release Tuesday listing his supporters, which include local Republican officeholders and party leaders. Among those endorsing Westercamp are state Rep. Dave Heine and former University of Indianapolis President Gene E. Sease. Westercamp also highlighted an endorsement from Rex Early, veteran Republican Party leader and former Trump for Indiana chairman.

### Congress

#### 1st CD: Democratic field grows

After U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky's decision not to seek another term, the 1st CD field has expanded to five: Sabrina Haake; 2018 secretary of state nominee Jim Harper; Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.; North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan Jr.; and State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon. "This is a critical time in our country's history. We need bold, progressive ideas to make the country more fair," Harper said (Post-Tribune). If elected, Harper said he would fight for the middle class by working on infrastructure projects and with organized labor. He said he would work to address climate change by looking at ways to implement green infrastructure and invest in training in emerging green industries. Fighting for the middle

class also means addressing spiraling healthcare costs.

### Congress

#### Mrvan, Harper, Haake on impeachment

North Township Trustee Frank J. Mrvan and Valparaiso attorney Jim Harper both said they too would vote for impeachment because they believe impeachment is the sole tool for holding a dangerously corrupt president accountable to his oath of office (Carden, NWI Times).

"As a member of Congress, I'm not going to sit idly by as the president tramples on our democratic institutions," Harper said. "It should be a last resort, but the evidence is abundantly clear. It is plain that the president used American foreign military aid to try and obtain personal, political advantage. That is not only inappropriate, it's not only undermining our democratic institutions, it's also a threat to our national security." Mrvan, meanwhile, rejected the suggestion impeachment will make impossible for Congress to tackle its other tasks while the matter is pending in the House or a trial is underway in the Senate. "The concept that that is going to stall progress in Congress? They really haven't gotten anything done anyway over the last three or four years. So I think that's a myth," Mrvan said.

The fifth Democratic candidate in the race to succeed Visclosky, Gary attorney and real estate investor Sabrina Haake, said her campaign exists because she's "horrified about what's happening to our democracy. I can't be strong enough in support of getting this jackass out of office," Haake said. "To me, if trying to sell our military aid of \$350 million for a personal favor and a political favor is not impeachable, then nothing is."

### Cities

#### Charlestown: Hodges wins recount

Charlestown Mayor-elect Treva Hodges, Democrat, is still the winner of the election, following the official recount of the vote Saturday (Schmelz, News & Tribune). Hodges won on Election Day, in November, by 32 votes, over sitting Mayor Bob Hall, Republican. The three-person recount commission hand-counted each vote and determined the vote total was closer, with just 24 votes keeping Hodges ahead.

#### Columbus: Recount preserves Dem council

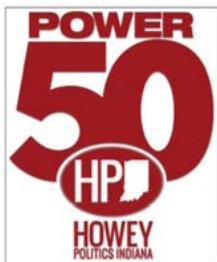
Columbus City Council District 1 Councilman-elect Jerone Wood has prevailed by a single vote for the council's District 1 seat after a two-hour recount (Thomas, Columbus Republic). Wood, a Democrat, won over his opponent, Republican incumbent Dascal Bunch, by one vote. "I can take a deep breath now," Wood said. On Nov. 5, it appeared that Wood was one of four Democrats who won city council seats, giving the Democrats their first majority since 1983. ❖

# Another year of transition coming for HPI's Power 50 list

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — As we experienced last year with the change in Indiana Senate leadership, the 2020 Howey Politics Indiana Power 50 list is in for some significant revamping.

It's our annual exercise of rating the who's who in our movers and shakers HPI invites its influential readership to weigh in. Some of you submit full lists. Others



will nominate a specific person and reasons for inclusion. We invite both.

Not only has there been the Indiana House speaker transition from Brian Bosma to Todd Huston, U.S. Reps. Pete Visclosky and Susan Brooks are retiring, and Gov. Eric Holcomb's fiscal team has changed. And there are close to 20 new mayors.

There is also change in the administration's opioid crisis team, as well as the Alex Azar/Seema Verma drama within the Trump administration.

Send me your thoughts, or an entire list. We'll publish our 2020 list on Tuesday, Jan. 7, kicking off what should be a fascinating election year of the best political coverage in Indiana.

## 2019 Power 50 List

- 1.. Gov. Eric Holcomb
2. Vice President Mike Pence
3. Speaker Brian Bosma
4. Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray
5. Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown
6. Senate Appropriations Chairman Ryan Mishler
7. U.S. Sen. Todd Young
8. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch
9. U.S. Sen. Mike Braun
10. National Intelligence Director Dan Coats
11. Reps. Todd Huston and Holli Sullivan
12. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett
13. South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg
14. Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer
15. U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky
16. State Sen. Ron Alting and Mike Bohacek
17. U.S. Rep. Andre Carson
18. U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski
19. RNC Committee Members John Hammond III and Anne Hathaway
20. Budget Director Jason Dudich and OMB Director Micah Vincent
21. Joe Donnelly, John Gregg, Baron Hill and Christina

- Hale
22. Bob Grand
23. CMS Director Seema Verma
24. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke
25. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.
26. U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks
27. U.S. Rep. Jim Banks
28. Commerce Sec. Jim Schellinger and Elaine Bedel, president of IEDC
29. Indiana Manufacturers Assn. President Brian Burton
30. ISTA President Theresa Meredith
31. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry
32. Purdue President Mitch Daniels
33. State Sen. Travis Holdman
34. Drug Czar Jim McClelland, Health Commissioner Kristina Box and FSSA Sec. Jennifer Walthall
35. HHS Sec. Alex Azar
36. Surgeon General Jerome Adams
37. Attorney General Curtis Hill
38. Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight
39. State Sen. Jim Merritt
40. Earl Goode
41. Marty Obst
42. U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon
43. Rod Ratcliff
44. Chamber President Kevin Brinegar
45. Anne Hazlett of USDA
46. U.S. Rep. Greg Pence
47. U.S. Rep. Jim Baird
48. Senate Majority Leader Mark Messmer
49. Luke Kenley
50. Victor Oladipo ❖



## Holcomb, Pence crest power apex

Governor approaches historic threshold while vice president astride President Trump's tempest

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

The next 350-plus days promise to be a watershed year. We could be watching the most powerful governor operate and consolidate in the state's history. We could be witnessing the ascension of a fourth Hoosier president.

We will be watching the first true "opioid budget" coming with looming billion-dollar price tags as Hoosiers in all socioeconomic classes grapple with this insidious evil. And we will be scanning the horizons to determine whether this has become a true one-party state.



This year's Power 50 list reflects the emerging prowess of Gov. Eric Holcomb, who has accumulated an unprecedented array of political and policy attributes. It is a biennial budget year with a new leadership and fiscal team in the Senate, and new players in the House.

Continued on page 3

## Instinct alarms sounding

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** — Sometimes the instincts of a leader, or a political operative, or a journalist lock into high gear. It's the Radar O'Reilly factor, when you can sense the medical choppers coming in before you hear the blades and feel them thumping in your chest.

And my radar is going off these days. We are on the precipice of something big and, perhaps, unfathomable. I certainly got that feeling in late October 2016. The polls showed Hillary Clinton leading Donald Trump just over the margin of error. But I could see events unfolding on the ground, with all those homemade Trump



"We are redefining that even a consensual relationship with an intern is now going to be unethical."

- State Sen. Liz Brown, on coming changes to the legislature's sexual harassment policy.

# A tale of two South Bends

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – This is a tale of two cities. Of two South Bends. And of how the contrast might be portrayed by a guy named Charles Dickens, famous for something. Was it as a legendary county Democratic chairman from long ago?



The contrasting descriptions of South Bend do make seem like two different cities. It was the best of times since Studebaker folded. It was the worst of times for crime and racial turmoil. It was the age of wisdom – smart streets, smart sewers, enlightened leadership by Mayor Pete. It was the age of foolishness – spending on a beautiful downtown and parks, when so many neighborhoods aren't so pretty.

It was the epoch of belief, with so many buying into the rallying cry of Mayor Pete: "South Bend is back!" It was the epoch of incredulity, with critics scoffing at claims of progress and telling of a terrible place.

When Mayor Pete Buttigieg began his long, long long-shot campaign for president earlier this year, he was a salesman for the South Bend, telling at every appearance around the country and on national television that the city, described not so long ago as "dying," had a new optimistic outlook, finally recovering from decades of doldrums after Studebaker, with economic development, more jobs and decent housing and population gain. The Chamber of Commerce couldn't have afforded such positive publicity.

**Mayor Pete** also was selling his candidacy, with startling success. Now, he isn't that much of a long shot. While he's not leading in any national polls, Buttigieg is a top-tier candidate for the Democratic nomination. He's ahead in some polls for

that first test with voters in the Iowa caucuses. So, his tale of South Bend success is under scrutiny by the national news media – to be expected for any serious presidential candidate – and under attack by competitors for the Democratic nomination.

Buttigieg backers, knowing how important it is to capture more of the black vote in South Carolina and elsewhere, are unhappy with comments by two of the most quoted black critics of the mayor, outgoing Council Members Oliver Davis and Regina Williams-Preston, as contributing to a negative tale of the city. They note that both were trounced in seeking the Democratic nomination for mayor in the primary, not even carrying their own districts.

**Thus, a group of black leaders**, including some who fared well in the election, including Council Member Karen White, top vote-getter among council candidates in winning re-election, met to tell of a more positive image of South Bend and its mayor.

That's when some protesters, unhappy with a positive tale of the city, when there is of course racial tension still lingering from a dispute over police tapes and a shooting that remains under investigation, disrupted the meeting, promoting a tale of a divided city.

Some of the protesters were identified as supporting Bernie Sanders. Bernie, however certainly didn't direct a white protester to grab the microphone from a black woman, an elected council member.

What's the story? Real black leaders speaking out with a positive tale? Or proof that Mayor Pete has a real problem with blacks in his own city?

Not all the tales are of disputing by political figures. Business Insider looked at other figures, data of how

South Bend did under Buttigieg in comparison with other cities of similar size. Great in comparison with lower unemployment, better than the median income percentage gain, but poorly in reducing the housing vacancy rate despite fixing up or tearing down 1,000 vacant and deteriorating houses in 1,000 days.

A tale of two cities? Two South Bends? The best of times? The worst of times? Or is it really one city, with a lot of progress and still with a lot of problems? ❖



**Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.**

# Why trust matters

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON — To me, it was a thunderclap. Years ago, when I was in Congress, we were in the midst of a tense, contentious debate. Members had gotten irritated, levying charges back and forth, and tempers were rising. It was starting to look like we might just go off the rails. Then one member stood up, asked for our attention, and said to us, "Let's remember: Trust is the coin of the realm."



His statement at that moment hit me broadside; if we were to have any hope of progress, we had to have some faith in one another – even our opponents. Apparently, other members of Congress came to that same realization. The debate got back on track, with less acrimony

and mean-spiritedness. It was a lesson I've never forgotten. Our system rests on all sorts of values – open-mindedness, an informed citizenry, honesty, civility, competence. But at its heart, representative democracy is about how we resolve our differences in order to move the country forward, and if the parties lack trust, then it becomes hugely more difficult to do so. In many ways, trust is at the center of this democratic experiment.

A representative democracy rests on a straightforward premise: Because nothing gets done without others, whether in our communities or our legislatures or in Congress, you have to have confidence in people and believe that they will do what they say they will do. Without that trust, you simply can't engage productively in negotiations, compromise, debate, and all the mechanisms we use to resolve differences in our society.

**As the country** has grown bigger, more complex, and more diverse in all sorts of ways, and as the changing media world has given us all our own echo chambers and undermined the shared sources of information on which we once relied, resolving conflict has become much tougher. When we don't trust one another, or don't trust one another's facts, reaching agreement and drafting laws becomes infinitely more difficult. Governing becomes fraught with complexity, as efforts to implement and enforce laws, regulations, and standards come under constant fire. The result is that often, cynicism, suspicion, and lack of confidence in the system hamstring our democracy.

To be sure, it's pretty much impossible to deal with people you don't know well without wondering about their integrity, honesty, and motivations. It's what you've got to work through

when you're trying to resolve differences. Healthy skepticism about adversaries is natural and appropriate, but you can't let it override everything and bring progress to a screeching halt.

Both nationally and internationally, we manage this by striving to tie things down; by law, by regulation, by treaty, and above all by verification. Nonetheless, some measure of trust is required. And when it's missing... Well, I would argue that one reason our government no longer works as well as it once did and should now, is that our trust in one another has diminished.

**So what can we do** about this? In the end, I believe that building, or rebuilding, trust is both a human and a systems issue. On the large scale, government has to be effective at meeting the needs of citizens, delivering the goods, services, and protections that people expect. But I also think it's vital that elected officials, especially of opposing parties, spend time with one another, learning to see one another as human beings who all, regardless of party, care deeply about the country. Similarly, the more ordinary people participate regularly in organizations, political parties, and even ad hoc efforts to improve their communities and states, the more likely they are to learn the fundamental importance of trust. In short, the more interaction you have with others, even with your adversaries, the more common ground you can find, and the more confidence you can have in them – and the more likely you can move forward.

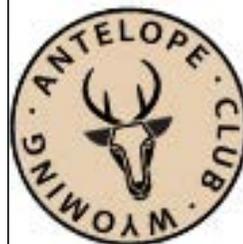
The fact is, in a system that depends on negotiation, compromise, and cooperation to achieve our goals, finding ways to build trust is essential. Without it, our democracy simply won't work. ❖

**Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.**

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

# Slow growth in 2020, but no recession

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE — I released my 2020 economist forecast last week, projecting the U.S. economy to slow significantly next year. The model I use projects that annualized growth rates will slip from 1.9% in the first quarter of 2020 down to 1.7% by the year's end. Here in Indiana,



my forecasting model has growth slowing to 1.6% in the first quarter and to 1.4% by the year's end.

This is agonizingly slow economic growth. Like most of the Midwest, Indiana's economy slowed through 2019 and is almost certain to end the year with fewer jobs than we had last January. This is not a nationwide recession, though it seems likely Indiana will continue to shed jobs

through at least the summer of 2020.

My forecast is wrong, of course (as all forecasts inevitably are). However, in reviewing the direction of error, I find most of my mistakes are in the optimistic range. I certainly hope that changes, but right now little evidence suggests otherwise.

In thinking about our current economy, it is important to discuss the current policy environment. The Federal Reserve is busily engaged in a form of quantitative easing to the tune of close to \$400 billion. Interest rates are near historical lows and our federal deficit topped \$1.1 trillion last year. More pointedly, the farm bailout is now much larger than the auto bailout in the summer of 2009.

Taken altogether, it is a simple fact that our federal government is currently engaged in deeper economic stimulus than we saw in the first year of the Obama presidency. That was in the midst of the darkest days of the Great Recession. Whatever good we can note about our recent economic performance has to be calibrated against those facts.

**There is a moral lesson** here for many Hoosiers. If you were outraged by the Obama Administration's stimulus and bailouts and are sympathetic to the worries of the Tea Party in 2009, you face a clear choice. Today, you must be either much more livid or have abandoned any appearance of personal integrity on these matters.

It is worse than run-of-the-mill intellectual dishonesty to compare unfavorably the Democrats and President Obama's bailouts of 2009 with the Republicans and President Trump today. The 2009 stimulus and bailouts occurred in the midst of the deepest economic crisis since the 1930s. Today's vast stimulus and bailout occurs at the

tail end of the longest economic expansion in 175 years. The current fiscal environment is unsupportable.

In short, the 2019 and 2020 economies are sizing up to be the worst non-recession years in post-World War II history. They are going to be worse for manufacturing-intensive states. Right now, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois have fewer factory jobs than we started the year with. Some of this is doubtless due to a return to trend of declining manufacturing employment, but the trade war is most responsible for this downturn. But, there is also good news.

Wage growth, which has been very sluggish through the recovery, has been strong and growing for well over a year. The unemployment rate is well beneath the level most economists thought would cause rapid inflation, yet there is no evidence of inflationary pressures. Jobs across the nation are abundant; perhaps not great jobs, but jobs nonetheless. The strength of demand for workers spills over into other measures of labor market health.

**The broadest measures** of unemployment, which includes the underemployed and those who work sporadically, is down year-over-year. The size of the labor force is growing; up 1.6 million potential workers since 2018. Moreover, the employment-to-population ratio has nearly recovered to the peak of the early 2000s without accounting for Baby Boomer retirements.

These strong labor markets mean that consumers are still buying. Consumer spending doesn't cause economic growth, but it stabilizes an economy by giving confidence to businesses and investors. Even with a clear economic slowdown, people are buying homes, filling them with furniture, buying consumer electronics and otherwise translating the fruits of their labor into consumption.

For 2020, the job losses in manufacturing simply won't be enough to push our economy into a recession. But, in a world where fiscal and monetary stimuli are more akin to the Great Depression than a long recovery, and all the global ills surround an unpredictable and highly idiosyncratic trade war, forecasting certainty is hard to come by. ❖

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

# Seasonal changes and challenges

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — As long-time readers will recall, each year at this season, I visit with Elvin Elfenhausen, one of Santa's senior helpers and long-time spokesman for Local 1 of the North Pole Union of Wish-fulfillers.



"How's ya bin ol' fella?" he asked.

"What gives with the phony dialect?" I asked. "Voice detection devices," he whispered. "Folks are falling all over themselves installing them. I think The Big Guy himself may have been struck by the fad."

"What do you have to hide?" I whispered in return.

"Requests for toys, bikes, and other fun things are down," he confided. "People, even the young ones, seem hung up wanting soft stuff – pillows, stuffed animals, comforters. It's putting a strain on our sewing staff and idling our wood and metal crafts folks."

"What could have caused this disruption of your workshop?" I asked. "Probably the harsh reality of nations worldwide gone nuts with distrust and fear of the more aggressive elements out there? Does The Big Guy know about this?"

"No," Elvin said. "He's got other concerns."

"What's he worried about after all these years?" I questioned.

"Well," Elvin hesitated. "It's the rooftops and the streets. Lots of folks in many parts of the world don't have rooftops because of the storms this year. Even when he tries to land in the streets, they are torn up and dangerous for the reindeer. Many places don't have good street signs and too many places don't have street addresses."

I was stymied. Elvin continued: "Everywhere, even in the 'developed' countries, from school age to old age, anxiety is spread about a future world of instability."

"You're telling me that Santa is distressed by climate change, artificial intelligence, and the municipal poverty of first-world cities?" I was astonished.

"It's true," he said. "Santa's travels take him to all parts of the globe. He sees so much extravagant private luxury contrasting with public and private adversity, it's getting to him."

"But times are good and getting better," I said.

"Oh, come on!" Elvin snapped at me. "Look about where you live. Get out of your cozy neighborhood and look around. Anxiety about those "good times" is on the rise wherever the good times roll. Elsewhere, extreme economic and political distress already exist."

"So, Santa's concerns are what the kids are feeling

too, resulting in a desire for soft stuff?" I suggested.

"You got it," he said. "Santa's not jolly when he comes into homes where guns are about for 'self-defense' or being stored to overthrow a repressive government. Cookies and milk can't offset environmental damage and emotional tremors being felt everywhere."

"Gosh," was all I could say. "I didn't realize in how many places and how many different ways the 'climate' is changing." ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at [mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com](mailto:mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com).** ❖



# Impeachment reaction

**Howey Politics Indiana**

INDIANAPOLIS — Here is reaction to the impeachment of Presiden Trunp ffrom Indiana:

**U.S. Rep. André Carson:** "The vote I have taken to impeach President Trump was done with a heavy heart but with the strongest conviction. The President of the United States takes an oath of office to uphold the Constitution and the laws of this nation. He takes an oath to work as a representative of the people he serves, and a stalwart defender of our nation's interests abroad. But instead, President Trump abandoned his oath to America in favor of his own personal and political interests. When Congress did its job to hold him accountable, he repeatedly obstructed our efforts. Every American should be extremely concerned by these actions. In our country, no one is above the law, not even the president. When my colleagues and I took our Congressional oath of office, we swore to protect the rule of law, and our Constitution. We did that work today, and throughout this impeachment inquiry. The resounding vote in favor of both Articles of Impeachment is a reflection of that thorough, fair, and eye-opening investigation. When a President abuses the power entrusted to them by the people, we all have a responsibility to condemn this behavior in the strongest terms to protect our Democracy. As this impeachment decision moves to the Senate"

**U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon:** "For over three years, House Democrats have been obsessed with impeaching President Trump because they simply cannot accept the results of the 2016 presidential election and are fearful for the results of the 2020 election. That is why from the outset, this sham impeachment process has been nothing more than a partisan exercise to influence the outcome of the 2020 election. Speaker Pelosi herself established the standard for impeachment when she said the only way she would move forward with impeachment was if the case was compelling, overwhelming, and bipartisan." ❖

# Trump's reelection campaign comes to focus

By **KELLY HAWES**

ANDERSON — Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who leads the Senate Judiciary Committee, has already made up his mind on the impeachment of President Donald J. Trump.



"If House Democrats are looking for an 'Abuse of Power,'" he tweeted, "they should look in the mirror."

Appearing on Fox News, Graham said he hoped to finish the coming Senate trial as quickly as possible. He saw no reason, he said, to call any witnesses.

"This thing is a sham," he said. "I want to get it over with."

Speaking of shams, one of the president's favorite conspiracy theories took a hit when a long-awaited inspector general's report concluded that there was no so-called "deep state" working to undermine the president. Of course, that didn't sway the president's private attorney, Rudolph Giuliani, from continuing to push that theory.

Giuliani, a former federal prosecutor and New York City mayor, told Sinclair Broadcasting's Eric Bolling that the U.S. State Department was filled with people from the "deep state."

"It isn't that they disagree with his policies and even that they try to undermine his policies a bit," Giuliani said. "That's been going on for years."

No, he said, these folks have far more ambitious objectives.

"They want to get him out of office any way they can," Giuliani said. "How you can miss that this is a coup attempt is beyond being intelligent."

**Democrats are leading** the coup, he said, and the mainstream media is cheering them on. It would be easy for a prosecutor to investigate a Rudy Giuliani, he said. And it's worth noting that a federal prosecutor is doing just that.

But investigating a liberal icon such as former Vice President Joe Biden? That would take courage.

"If I were to prosecute Biden," Giuliani said. "I'd get attacked as, 'You're doing it to help

Trump. You're interfering in the election.'"

You have to marvel at the audacity of a comment like that.

In the meantime, the president's defenders have come up with a new rationale for why the Democrats are out to get him.

U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan, a Republican from Ohio, says it's not just that they hate the president.

"They don't like the 63 million people who voted for this president," he said during a House Judiciary Committee hearing. "All of us in flyover country, all of us from Ohio, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Texas. They don't like us."

Actually, it's not really all of us.

Certainly, the president is more popular in those so-called "flyover states" than he is in places like New York and California, but it's a gross exaggeration to suggest that everyone in any part of the country lines up on the same side of our nation's political divide.

Of course, when Jordan suggests the two sides don't like each other, he's not wrong. A few short minutes on social media will tell you that.

**Still, while Jordan is talking** about how many folks supported the president in 2016, he might do well to remember the president didn't actually win the popular vote. He won the Electoral College by winning those battleground states in "flyover country," and he might do it again next year.

Or he might not.

It all depends on how he does in the suburban areas that handed the U.S. House of Representatives to the Democrats last year.

The strategy is clear: Portray impeachment as a partisan sham. Villify the president's critics and question their motives. Keep pushing conspiracy theories regardless of the facts. And make the election not just about the president but about "us."

Those evil Democrats, his supporters will say, are out to destroy our country.

Will the voters buy it? Stay tuned. ❖

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# A 50/50 presidential race

By **KYLE KONDICK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – The House of Representatives made history Wednesday, impeaching a president for just the third time. It made for an occasion that was both momentous and monotonous. Momentous in that Donald J. Trump appears likely to be the first impeached president who will nonetheless appear on general election ballots after that happened, creating a truly unprecedented American political situation, and monotonous in that a predictable, almost entirely party-line vote sets up a Senate trial where the result (acquittal) seems preordained.

In other words, the specific circumstances of impeachment and what led to it are remarkable, but the reaction by the nation’s political actors is routine.

This is, ultimately, the Trump presidency in a nutshell. As we head into the fourth year of his presidency, the year where voters are poised to cast the verdict on his first term, stability is the watchword. The most important overall number in determining Trump’s odds for next year is his approval rating (the individual candidate head to heads matter later, but it’s still early to obsess over them). Based on the RealClearPolitics and FiveThirtyEight polling averages, Trump’s approval has been consistently in the low-to-mid 40s for essentially the entirety of Trump’s presidency. That is bad, though not fatal.

**Impeachment has not markedly** changed the president’s approval rating one way or the other; the most recent surveys, actually, have been slightly better for him than usual, but are still within the aforementioned range we’re accustomed to. Public opinion on impeachment itself is divided and largely stable, although some recent surveys have shown a slight improvement in the president’s position.

Just to illustrate the stability, we thought we’d use our last issue of the year to look back on our initial assessments for president, Senate, and House, and see how they’ve changed over the course of this off-year.

**President: Initial Electoral College assessment: Feb. 28, 2019**

With an approval rating in the low-to-mid 40s -- and, perhaps more importantly, a disapproval rating consis-

tently over 50% -- it would be easy to say that President Trump is an underdog for reelection. The president won only narrowly in 2016 and did so while losing the national popular vote, making his national coalition precarious. He has done little to appeal to people who did not vote for him, and a Democrat who can consolidate the votes of Trump disapprovers should be able to oust him unless the president can improve his approval numbers in a way he has demonstrably failed to do in the first half of his term. At the same time, the president’s base-first strategy could again deliver him the White House, thanks in large part to his strength in the nation’s one remaining true swing region, the Midwest. He’s an incumbent, and incumbents are historically harder to defeat (although it may be that incumbency means less up and down the ticket in an era defined by party polarization).

**We could’ve** written the exact same thing today and not had to change a single word.

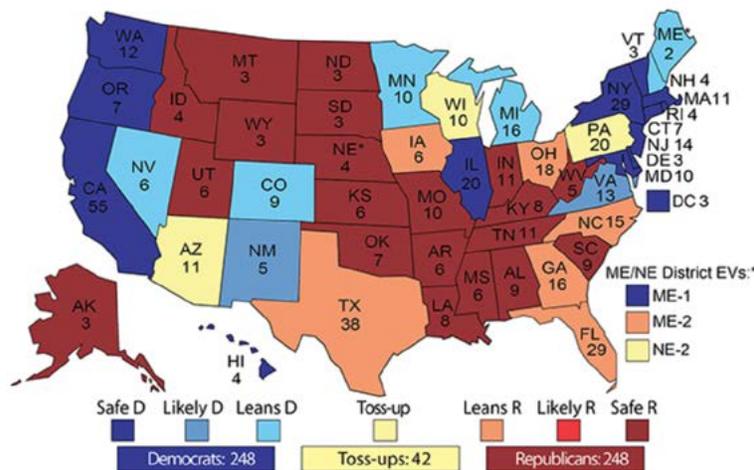
Our initial ratings had 248 electoral votes at least leaning to the Republican nominee (Trump, almost certainly), 244 electoral votes at least leaning to the Democratic nominee, and 46 Toss-ups. Since then, we’ve made only one significant change, pushing Hillary Clinton’s most narrow 2016 victory, New Hampshire, from Toss-up to Leans Democratic, leaving a 248-248 split with just 42 electoral votes’ worth of Toss-ups (Arizona, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Nebraska’s Second Congressional

District). The 2020 race still looks like a 50-50 proposition to us.

As for the Democratic nomination race, it is still very much in flux, although polling leader Joe Biden has proven to be durable despite his problems. We looked at Biden’s standing and the Democratic primary race in detail a couple of weeks ago. If anything significant has changed, it may be that the threat of an election-year recession -- which would seriously hamper Trump’s reelection chances, at least based on history -- appears to have abated. The U.S. economy is steaming ahead with low unemployment, and modest wage growth is balanced by low inflation. Even if one grants that the benefits from economic growth are often unevenly felt, this is a positive backdrop for Trump. A normal president who avoids unnecessary disputes might well be cruising to reelection. However, almost no one would call Trump normal on this score. ❖



**Map 1: Crystal Ball Electoral College ratings**



The 2020 race still looks like a 50-50 proposition to us.

**Frank Bruni, New York Times:** Finland just elected the world's youngest prime minister, Sanna Marin, who's 34. Time magazine named Greta Thunberg, 16, its youngest-ever "Person of the Year." Even before I could mention their names to Pete Buttigieg, who's vying to become the youngest American president, he brought them up. He also brought up Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister of New Zealand, who was 37 when she took office, and Emmanuel Macron, who became the president of France at 39. That's how old Buttigieg, now 37, would be at his inauguration. "You're seeing a generation of leaders around the world emerging, and it feels like the kind of thing that the U.S. would be on the forefront of, just because we're a country that values a look to the future," he told me in an interview on Thursday morning. "I think it's our style." "This country was founded by 20-somethings," he added, referring to the fact that Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, for example, were in their 20s on July 4, 1776. Thomas Jefferson was 33. John Hancock was 39. And even now, after first-place finishes in some recent polls of Democrats in Iowa and New Hampshire, he's pressed about whether someone with his short résumé, capped by two terms as the mayor of a city of just 100,000 people, could possibly be up to the presidency and pass muster with enough Americans to get elected. Age has played out in surprising ways in the Democratic primary. While Buttigieg is unusually young, the other three candidates grouped with him at the head of the pack — Joe Biden, 77; Elizabeth Warren, 70; and Bernie Sanders, 78 — are unusually old. Sanders had a heart attack in October, and Biden's energy has visibly dimmed. "You know the stat about three of the last four presidents emerging from the summer of 1946?" he asked, referring to Trump's birth in June 1946, George W. Bush's in July of that year and Bill Clinton's in August. "It means that one generation has been in charge for a very long time." ❖



**Gerald Seib, Wall Street Journal:** When Donald Trump launched his presidential bid in 2016, he did so almost as an independent, openly disdainful of the Republican Party establishment, and enjoying little support within it. When the House votes on impeachment Wednesday, Mr. Trump is likely to enjoy complete support from that same Republican Party, and will be dependent upon that support for his survival. That represents one of the most remarkable transformations in modern American politics. More than that, it suggests that, while impeachment will be remembered for many things, one of the most important is how it may be completing the tribalization of politics in America. In a sense, the politics of impeachment is the logical conclusion of the ideological, geographical and socio-economic sorting of the two major parties. Republicans in Congress now tend to represent more clearly conservative sectors of the country, which increasingly lie outside urban areas and in places where traditional cultural norms

prevail. Democrats represent more clearly liberal areas, increasingly centered in coastal urban states that are more diverse and have shifting cultural values. This expectation is reflected in support and opposition to President Trump. Republicans have swallowed their misgivings about Mr. Trump and the pressure he put on the Ukrainian government because he now is captain of their team, and the team is what really matters. ❖

**Michael Kruse, Politico:** He wasn't expected to win. It was a surprise to some that he even had run. But on the evening of Dec. 5, 2002, in a sweaty, crowded classroom adjacent to the main lecture space at Harvard's school of government named after John F. Kennedy, Peter Buttigieg, 20 years old, stood before 50 or so of his peers as one of two people seeking to be the president of the Student Advisory Council at the university's esteemed Institute of Politics. From practically the moment he arrived he had been ubiquitous at the college's premier political organization, where undergraduates stoke their appetites for public service and strivers hobnob with the biggest names in politics to launch careers to come. Buttigieg was by all accounts a standout among standouts: thoughtful, articulate, poised and mature. But he was reserved, too, a bookish, diligent wonk who didn't immediately register as one of the campus' overt and charismatic climbers who more nakedly considered themselves future members of Congress or residents of the White House. Now, though, here he was, making his pitch for a post. In a short but forceful speech, Buttigieg told them he was "running because the IOP has the most potential of any organization we've ever encountered." He said, "We want to look forward, not inward." Less public but no less key to his candidacy, Buttigieg shrewdly had made private, back-channel overtures among a group of leaders and influencers who were especially involved at the IOP. Managing, too, to present himself as the candidate of change because of the reformist, left-leaning company he kept, he nonetheless had brought with him an unlikely running mate, not one of his friends and fellow Democratic political junkies but a woman who was a Republican—a canny, pragmatic pick, in the estimation of many of those who were there, to try to widen his coalition of support. And when the votes were counted, the winner was not the favorite—another unusually eager IOP participant, a determined worker in her own right, a woman who would go on to success as a trusted aide to two of the most famous women in politics. It was Buttigieg. To many who cast votes that night, the election marked a transformational moment — the debut of a young man who was steeped in history and political theory but had yet to actually apply those ideas in political combat. "That election," Heather Woodruff Grizzle, who was the outgoing SAC vice president and is currently a strategist in New York, told me, "demonstrated that Peter really had the chops to do politics." ❖

## Sens. Young, Braun on Senate trial

WASHINGTON — Indiana's Republican U.S. senators almost certainly will vote to acquit President Donald Trump at the end of his impeachment trial, even if only one is willing to say he will (Francisco, [Fort Wayne Journal Gazette](#)). "I will listen carefully in the trial itself," Sen. Mike Braun said Wednesday. "But from everything we know, there will not be any new information; it will be just a different presentation of it. And when it comes to everything I know so far, I will vote to acquit. But that doesn't mean that I'm not going to listen and be objective in the trial itself." Braun said the House "has not made the case, and it was founded on shaky basis when you were talking about impeachment even before you knew what the impeachment topic would be. I think the process was tainted." A day earlier, Sen. Todd Young declined to say how he might vote. He did drop a hint. "My anticipation based on only anecdotal evidence from what I've heard publicly and read publicly is that there will indeed be a correlation between one's party affiliation on one hand and the votes that are cast on the other hand," Young told reporters during a conference call. And so Democrats will vote to convict the GOP president and Republicans will vote to acquit him early next year in the Senate, where Republicans have a 53-47 advantage. Convicting Trump and removing him from office on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress would require a two-thirds majority vote, or 67 votes. Braun said senators have a "political predisposition" and that "many minds are made up on our side" based on House impeachment hearings. "I don't see that there will be any new evidence," he said about the abuse of power and obstruction charges against Trump related to his request that Ukraine investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, Trump's



possible opponent in the 2020 election.

## Banks, Walorski on impeachment

WASHINGTON — U.S. House members representing northeast Indiana repeated their steadfast opposition to the impeachment of President Donald Trump ahead of voting Wednesday on charges he abused his power and obstructed Congress (Francisco, [For Wayne Journal Gazette](#)). Rep. Jim Banks, R-3rd, tweeted that "none of the articles of impeachment we're voting on today even allege the president broke any law." Banks also tweeted that "there's ZERO evidence of wrongdoing" and contended that House Democrats "are trampling on our Constitution!" "There's only one party in Washington abusing the power of their office. It's the irrational Democrats who refuse to work with Trump and pursue endless impeachment to all of our detriment. Shame on them," Banks wrote on Twitter. Rep. Jackie Walorski, R-2nd, said during floor debate that Democrats "failed to uncover one piece of evidence to justify impeachment." Walorski added: "This impeachment obsession is not about accountability, it's not about justice, it's not even about the Constitution. It's about pure partisan politics at its worst, and you're watching it right here, and the American people see right through this today. "They've seen the rigged process, they've seen the lack of transparency, and the complete absence of any supporting evidence." All seven House Republicans from Indiana voted against the two articles of impeachment, and both Democrats from the state voted in favor of them.

## Pelosi may hold up Senate trial

WASHINGTON—The morning after the House voted along party lines to impeach President Trump, it

was uncertain when and under what procedures the Senate would conduct his trial ([Wall Street Journal](#)). But the timing of that step depends on when Speaker Pelosi chooses to send the impeachment articles across the Capitol. At a news conference after the votes Wednesday night, Mrs. Pelosi raised the prospect of delaying sending the articles of impeachment to the Senate until Republicans there set trial rules that she considers fair.

## USMCA vote delay until 2020

INDIANAPOLIS — A vote in the House is reportedly coming Thursday on the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement after House Democrats agreed to a deal with the White House last week. The Senate, though, will wait until 2020 for a vote. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says it will have to wait until after the impeachment trial. Indiana Republican Senator Mike Braun says the holdup on USMCA is only because of the schedule (Pfeiffer, [Hoosier Ag Today](#)). "Now, that wasn't necessary because I think Speaker Pelosi sat on it for much longer than what was necessary, but I won't talk about that because I'm just really glad it's close to getting across the finish line. Like anything else, if you're going to get it across the finish line, there's stuff in there that you don't like. So, you have to take it in its totality."

## Indiana to host global conference

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana Economic Development Corp. has announced plans for the inaugural Indiana Global Economic Summit, an event billed as the Midwest version of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland (Inside Indiana Business(. The event is set for April 26-28 in Indianapolis and will bring together CEOs, business and academic leaders from around Indiana and the globe to "foster collaboration and accelerate conversations on the future."