

Primary delayed; what about November?



Gov. Eric Holcomb is joined by Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer and Democrat Chairman John Zody last week as they announced a delay in the May 5 primary to June 2.

Pandemic shifts vote from May 5 to June 2; vote by mail for general?

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – For more than two centuries, Hoosiers have participated in democracy by going to their local polling place to vote. In normal times they chat with their neighbors as they wait in line.

These are not normal times.

Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer and Democratic

Chairman John Zody combined in a letter earlier this month calling for expanded absentee balloting in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic that signalled what Gov. Eric Holcomb announced last Friday: A delayed primary until June 2.

“The coronavirus pandemic is causing all of us to consider precautionary measures related to group gatherings and general interaction with other people, and Election Day is no exception,” the letter said. “We recognize that risk to the general public is currently low; however,

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Our deadly virus test

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — It is becoming apparent that Indiana and the U.S. will not duplicate South Korea’s coronavirus response with widespread testing to determine and isolate vectors and victims, which would then reopen society for business and pleasure.

Health experts ranging from the now famous Dr. Tony Fauci to Indiana University’s Prof. Aaron Carroll had been telling us for weeks that testing was the key.

Dr. Carroll, writing in The Atlantic with Harvard University’s Dr. Ashish Jha, said, “We can create a third path. We can decide to meet this challenge head-on. It is absolutely within our capacity to do so. We could develop tests that



“This bill will provide direct funding to Hoosier households and bolster the state of Indiana’s response to this unprecedented public health crisis.”

- U.S. Sen. Todd Young, on the Senate passage of the CARES Act on Wednesday



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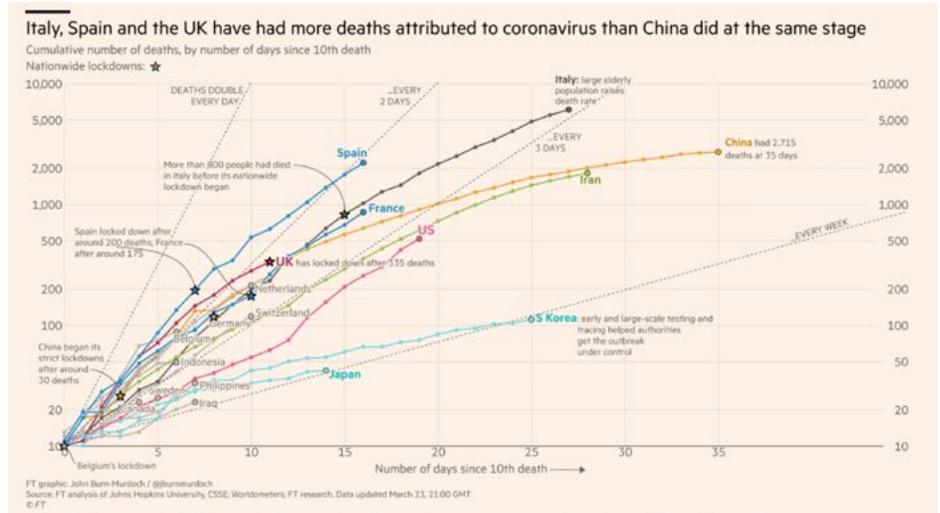
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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



are fast, reliable, and ubiquitous. If we screen everyone, and do so regularly, we can let most people return to a more normal life. We can reopen schools and places where people gather. If we can be assured that the people who congregate aren't infectious, they can socialize."

While the World Health Organization and epidemiologists from around the globe say that widespread testing is the key to defeating COVID-19 and reopening commerce, Hoosier leaders seem to be saying that's not going to happen. Of 6.85 million Hoosiers, only 3,356 Hoosiers had been tested by midnight Tuesday, while the death toll rose to 14 and the number of cases spiked to 477.

Now as the U.S. and Indiana populations steeply head up the pandemic curve, Indiana Health Commissioner Kristina Box said Tuesday, "I want to emphasize we're still in the early parts of this outbreak. We will continue to see more cases. Every state is having to adapt daily as the situation changes. That includes how we investigate cases. Across the country states are finding the traditional approach to investigating cases and tracking every single contact of every person who tests positive is not sustainable. As the cases of COVID-19 cases continue to grow, health officials cannot trace every single individual.

"We will continue to test the highest risk settings like health care facilities, long-term care facilities, jails and Department of Corrections," Dr.

Box said. "So I am asking everyone to take personal responsibility for ourselves and our communities."

What this means is there are thousands of us who are asymptomatic, and are essentially vectors.

At Wednesday's press briefing, Dr. Box explained, "We are testing more people so you're seeing the cases going up. Still, our numbers are running 13 and 15% of individuals tested are testing positive."

With the state's capital city poised to join the ranks of American cities under siege from the coronavirus, as supplies from the federal government are coming in at just a fraction of our needs, the Holcomb administration acknowledged Tuesday afternoon it is relying on "home-grown" solutions.

That includes state prison inmates making personal protective gear for medical workers and a GM plant in Kokomo preparing to produce ventilators. On Wednesday Gov. Holcomb lauded the dozens of Hoosiers and groups who are stepping up.

"We are going to do everything to throw back COVID-19 that we have," Gov. Holcomb said at a Tuesday afternoon Statehouse press conference. "I will tell you this, the numbers don't lie and if they don't put the fear of God in you to act, and act now and fight back, I don't know what would. We're going to continue to lose people and we know what the timeline has been when you look at

the coastal states. If you look out at the two-week increments ... now was the time to act, yesterday."

Read between the lines and it is becoming clear the missing-in-action element is the federal government, which rejected the WHO test and then let weeks go by without a U.S. option. South Korea's first death coincided with the first American casualty on March 1, and these two nations sharply diverged on how to respond. South Korea tested widely, and is now reopened for business.

"We know personal protective equipment is still a concern and we've requested the rest of Indiana's share from the strategic national stockpile," Dr. Box said on Tuesday. "We're also hoping to receive FEMA supplies. To supplement, industries from all over the state have donated PPE to local hospitals and their health departments. Department of Corrections is making gowns and masks and several manufacturing companies are stepping up to help us out. I was very happy to hear GM of Kokomo is partnering with VinTech Life System to ramp up production of ventilators soon."

By Wednesday, she said that "four or five trucks" from the strategic national stockpile had delivered N95 masks, face shields and gowns for medical personnel. She said that no Indiana hospitals had run out of PPE and said it would be weeks before the state stocks would run out. But this is before the surge of victims hits the state's medical system.

This pandemic has become the ultimate policy curveball that would challenge any government executive. President Trump is now trying to balance the advice from public health experts, and those advisors watching the economic meltdown and urging the reopening of society, saying many people are being hurt by the shutdown.



Gov. Holcomb is seeking balance.

At a Fox News virtual town hall Tuesday, President Trump said that he wanted to reopen society by Easter, saying the "cure cannot be worse than the diseases." Asked if he shared that optimism that society could reopen by April 12 (Easter), Gov. Holcomb said, "I'm hopeful, too, we can get

back to normal. We set a two-week timeline and I'm going to stick to that timeline. I'm going to be focused solely on steps Indiana can take over next 14 days. We're going to learn from the coastal states.

"Look at the numbers in Marion County. Look how they are multiplying," Holcomb said. "One person affects two or two and a half. So that's why we have to isolate to slow the process and flatten that curve, or we'll find ourselves like Italy or New York." The problem is that without widespread testing, we won't know who that vector is.

Asked if the state, with its reserves of more than \$2 billion and another \$1.2 billion coming from the congressional rescue package, will be poised to spring back, Holcomb said Wednesday, "In February we had a record number of people working in the state; more people working in the state of Indiana than ever before. Oh, what a difference a month makes. It will compound itself over a 60-day period. The good news is, as Sec. (Jim) Schellinger mentioned, we went into this in a strong position. The business community went into this in a strong position. They play things through. Our fundamentals were sound going into this. This is a virus we're dealing with. This is not our economy pulling us back or dragging us down. So we will bounce back. The pent up capital, when we sail through this ... as a state, it will play to our strengths of certainty, predictability and continuity." ❖

Election, from page 1

primary voters may have a legitimate concern about voting in person, either absentee at the clerk's office or on Election Day. For their safety, the safety of poll workers, absentee voter board members, and election administrators, and the safety of all Hoosiers, allowing maximum flexibility, while preserving a citizen's right to vote, is paramount."

In announcing the rescheduling of the primary, Holcomb reiterated his view stated on Thursday that the May 5 primary "needed to be pushed back to ensure the safety of county employees, poll workers and voters." He added that he wanted to give Lawson, Hupfer and Zody "time to build a consensus."

On Wednesday, the Indiana Election Commission voted unanimously to move the primary to June 2. At its April 22 meeting, the discussion will likely turn to how the

Nov. 3 election will be conducted.

Epidemiologists and medical experts have flagged the Nov. 3 election and the potential for subsequent coronavirus waves, and that has spurred some to call for universal vote by mail, which is being conducted in Colorado, Oregon and Washington. In 2016, some 24% of ballots cast were by mail from 33 states. Of those states, 23 require a voter to request an absentee ballot.

According to Indiana University pediatrics Prof. Aaron Carroll and Harvard University Prof. Ashish Jha, writing "This Is How We Can Beat the Coronavirus" for The Atlantic: "The real horror show will begin in the fall and crush us next winter, when COVID-19 comes back with a vengeance. This is what happened with the flu in 1918. The spring was bad. Over the summer, the numbers of sick dwindled and created a false sense of security. Then, all hell broke loose. In late 1918, tens of millions of people died. If a similar pattern holds for COVID-19, then while

things are bad now, it may be nothing compared with what we face at the end of the year.”

If that should occur, would Indiana be wise for planning for a vote-by-mail election over the next six months? While states have flexibility when it comes to scheduling and postponing a primary election, it would take a change in federal law to delay the Nov. 3 election.

“The perspective here should be: How do we hold the election in November? Not whether,” Edward Foley, an election law professor at Ohio State University, told USA Today in March. He suggested a robust absentee-ballot effort and more states allowing vote by mail.

The Indiana Election Commission will reconvene on April 22 and Chairman Paul Okeson said there will be a discussion of a vote-by-mail system.” Democrat commission member Anthony Long said the June 2 election could have “unintended consequences” with the expanded absentee voting. Long continued, “We’ll see how this mail-in system works and what problems will be and there will be some.” Lawson, who was not available for comment, said last Friday, “Clerks were concerned about capacity if everybody voted by absentee.”

Hupfer told HPI that he and Zody simply wanted to open up the absentee ballot process in the face of the pandemic. “We’re hopeful that moving the election to June 2 will allow for in-person voting,” Hupfer said. “But we’re following conditions as they occur over the next several weeks as we get closer.”

Zody reacted to Wednesday’s Election Commission decision, saying, “This is a historic expansion of Hoosiers’ voting rights. For the first time, any Hoosier who wants will be able to vote by mail. I’m grateful for the action taken to remove barriers to the ballot box and protect Hoosiers’ safety. Hoosiers shouldn’t have to choose between putting their health at risk and exercising their constitutional right to vote. In addition to moving to no-fault absentee voting for the primary, the Commission took action to allow for greater flexibility in how ballots and traveling voting boards are managed and committed to expanding opportunities to apply for an absentee ballot.

“The Commission has committed to meeting again on April 22 to discuss the pieces needed to conduct the June 2 primary entirely by mail, as well as how we can best conduct our state convention in June,” Zody said. “The authority to move the primary election rests with the Election Commission and the General Assembly. Today’s action affirms that authority and takes major steps to ensure the health and safety of Hoosiers, while expanding



Sec. Lawson and Chairman Hupfer at last Friday’s Statehouse presser.

their options to vote on June 2.”

Bill Moreau, president of the Indiana Citizen Education Foundation, believes the rescheduling of the primary to June 2 will spur turnout. “As we head toward the 2020 elections, Indiana should aspire to increase voting turnout substantially, with the goal of moving from the bottom 10 to the top 10 of states. Our nonprofit is aggressively pursuing that recommendation, which we estimate will require a 20% increase in turnout in November. We wholeheartedly support a decision to delay the primary election by four weeks, because it so closely aligns with our mission.”

Moreau suggested that the wider absentee primary voting ... “should improve turnout for the primary election – or at least head off a decline in turnout – and serve as a model for improving turnout for the Nov. 3 general election. In addition, we strongly support the recommendation to allow absentee voting by any registered voter, sometimes referred to as no-fault absentee voting.”

Should the state consider vote by mail?

While Zody saw a breakthrough with the expanded absentee primary balloting, Hupfer isn’t inclined to move toward a permanent mail-in voting system. “Initial anecdotal evidence is that wouldn’t be possible during that time period,” Hupfer said of the next six months. “We certainly could expand absentee balloting if necessary.”

Hupfer continued, “Voting in person has worked. People want to vote in person. They like to vote in person. We know that it provides for safe and secure elections. I don’t see any reason to change that moving forward.”

Indiana absentee ballot process

Indiana’s normal absentee ballot process requires at least one reason for doing so:

- Having a specific, reasonable expectation that you will be absent from your county of residence on Election Day during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open;
- Being an election official;
- Confined on Election Day due to illness or injury during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open or caring for a confined person at a private residence;
- A voter with disabilities;
- 65 years of age or older;
- Caretaker of an individual(s) confined to a private residence due to illness or injury and prevented from voting during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open;
- Scheduled to work for the entire 12 hours that the polls are open;
- Prevented from voting due to observing a religious discipline or holiday during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open;
- Participating in the address confidentiality program;

- Being a member of the military or a public safety officer;
- Prevented from voting due to not having transportation to the polls;
- A voter with disabilities who believes the polling place is not accessible;
- A voter who is physically unable to complete the ballot and sign the affidavit on their own.

How does a vote by mail system work?

Vote-by-mail states tend to be in the Western U.S. In Colorado, all registered voters will receive mail ballots no later than 18 days before Election Day. Completed ballots must be received by the county clerk and recorder no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day. Postmarks do not count.

Oregon has a vote-by-mail process. Instead of using traditional polling places where voters go to cast ballots on Election Day, a ballot is mailed to each registered voter. The ballot is then voted and returned to the county election office to be counted. In Oregon, ballots are mailed between 14 and 18 days before the election. After it is voted, the ballot may be mailed or hand-delivered to the county election office. In order to be counted, the ballot must be received by the county election office or designated drop site no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Utah is primarily a vote-by-mail state, meaning that almost all registered voters will receive their ballots in the mail before Election Day. Mail-in ballots must be postmarked by the day before the election in order to be counted.

Washington State votes by mail. Your ballot is mailed to you at least 18 days before each election. Your voter registration address must be current.

George Stern, clerk and recorder of Jefferson County, Colo., said in a USA Today op-ed, "Given that voters receive their ballots so far in advance and have a range of options for turning them in, it is no surprise that Colorado has finished among the top states for turnout in the past several election cycles – 72% participation in 2016 and 63% in 2018, compared with 60% and 50% nationwide. Further, by significantly reducing the number of in-person voting places required, Colorado has also cut its election costs by as much as 40%."

Stern added, "Mailed ballots mean a paper trail. Not only are paper ballots more secure than election hardware, they can also be retained and audited once the election is over. Colorado has pioneered a post-election audit model that limits the risk of machine or human errors, and that security experts say should be replicated nationwide. Moreover, each ballot envelope must be signed by the voter, and that signature is compared with the person's signature on file before the ballot is counted, ensuring that the right person is voting and that he or she is voting only once."

Turnout has been low in Indiana. According to the 2019 Indiana Civic Health Index released last November, the highest rate of midterm election turnout (56.4%) oc-

curred in 1982 and was followed by many years of lower participation rates, including a 35.1% rate occurring in 2014, the lowest in the 44 years. Most recently, in 2018 – with a contested Senate race at the top of the ballot – the voter turnout rate surged to 49.3%, an increase of 14.2% over the 2014 rate. However, this marked increase in voter turnout only moved Indiana from a rank of 47th in 2014 to 43rd in the nation in 2018, due to the record mid-term turnout across the country.

In the most recent presidential election year (2016), Indiana ranked 41st, placing in the lower 25% of states. Approximately 58% of all eligible Hoosiers came to the polls in the 2016 elections compared to 61.4% of all eligible Americans. Indiana's voter turnout rate was the highest (68.9%) in 1972, exceeding the national average of 65.5%. In 2016, Indiana's voter turnout rate was 58.3%, lower than the national average of 61.4%.

New primary deadlines

In response to recommendations from Gov. Holcomb, Secretary of State Lawson, and the leadership of Indiana's major political parties, the Indiana Election Commission has issued an order making it easier for Hoosiers to vote in the June 2 Primary Election. The Commission's order included the following changes, which will apply to the June 2 Primary only:

- Moves all election dates by 28 days.
- Avoids reprinting ballots and other forms that have the May 5th, 2020 date.
- Allows everyone to cast an absentee ballot by mail without having a specific reason to do so.
- Grandfathers applications already received for an absentee ballot, which did not state an excuse permitting the person to vote by mail.
- Permits county election boards to conduct meetings electronically rather than in person.
- Encourages counties to appoint medical professionals to act as traveling absentee boards to help voters confined in medical facilities to cast a ballot.
- Permits family members and caregivers of a confined voter to personally deliver and return a ballot.
- Allows county election boards to consolidate voting locations and vote center sites and to take spacing measures to ensure the safety of voters.
- Loosens restrictions on students who wish to serve as poll workers or absentee board members.
- Allows county election boards to begin expeditiously counting ballots at 6 a.m. on Election Day.
- Advises county election boards that election results must be determined by 3 p.m. on June 12th.

"As we take precautions to protect Hoosiers from the threat of COVID-19, it is vitally important to protect citizens' right to vote," said Lawson. "I am pleased that our bi-partisan recommendations have been adopted, and I thank the Indiana Election Commission for their expeditious work. With these changes, I am confident our primary will move forward with minimal disruption." ❖

We are still aren't doing enough on COVID-19

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE — No individual human life is possessed of infinite value. At least, none of us actually behave as if it does. No matter how fully each of us wish to live, we inevitably take risks. We ride in automobiles, eat food prepared by unknown hands, trust in medicines and



home appliances tested by scientists. At some point, nearly all of us take some risks to save another, care for or comfort a loved one, or volunteer for some public service that risks injury or death.

Economists have long worked to place a dollar value on individual human life. We do this so that we can better understand how rational people value their own lives and

those of others. Some of that calculation is readily tractable. It is straightforward to estimate lifetime earnings or the contributions someone can make to their care of their family. Estimating the value that others place upon a life is harder. We acknowledge that companionship has value but is much harder to calculate than lifetime earnings.

Of course, people don't do mental mathematics this way anymore than a teenage gymnast on the uneven parallel bars solves differential equations in her head. Instead, we have social norms that help guide us. These are in full display in decisions of life and death. Here an example tells a clear story.

Suppose we were to find ourselves in a burning building with others. The strong help the weak, the fleet support the slow. We expect children, the elderly, and the disabled to be evacuated first. Perhaps we do this with the implicit knowledge that at some time, nearly all of us find ourselves as children, disabled or elderly. More likely it is because that is what is expected of us by society. This is tacit acknowledgement that individual life possesses existence value. Successful societies develop rules of thumb to recognize that value.

The poets tell us that risk or sacrifice we make for one another is a noble thing, or a supreme sign of love. To this cold-hearted economist, it is instead evidence of a unvarnished rationality, or the simple calculus of survival. In the midst of COVID-19, we find ourselves squarely in the realm of these calculations. I write this to make clear that those who think we are overreacting or should immediately re-open our economy are profoundly mistaken.

Epidemiologists in the U.S. now estimate that without extreme actions, COVID-19 will infect more than 70 million Americans, and as many as 150 million. The case fatality rates in the most densely infected places

runs more than 6%. In the best places it is more than 1% percent. As I mentioned in my last column, combining treatment costs and value of life estimates reveals that the expected cost of the COVID-19 disease is about \$7 trillion.

Hopefully the epidemiologists are very wrong about the widespread risks of transmission; maybe they have incorrectly calculated the case fatality rate. Perhaps the value of life estimates should be lower than average because this illness afflicts mostly older persons. Still, these are estimates from scientists who've spent a career not just studying but materially adding to the science on these issues. It takes a special hubris and ignorance to disregard these warnings.

Those of us who do the mathematics of modeling disease or recessions must do so with some humility. Some of the various estimates of the disease are surely wrong, but error is not asymmetric. Outcomes could be far better, or far worse than the mathematical predictions suggest. So, the \$7 trillion cost estimate for the U.S. employs the more optimistic estimates. It could just as easily be far, far worse.

To prevent having to bear a \$7 trillion cost, most of the world's leaders have chosen responses that guarantee a recession. That recession of choice is now upon us. According to a study published last week by my center, about one in six U.S. jobs are at risk from our extreme social distancing. First quarter corporate earnings reports will be shocking. Job losses in March, April and May will break all records. This is a recession of choice, in the same way rationing in World War II was a choice. We endure something bad so to prevent something worse, and we bear the burden unequally.

We are not overreacting to this disease. Indeed, thus far, a back of the envelope cost-benefit analysis argues that we have profoundly underreacted to these risks. The loss of \$7 trillion is a full third of GDP this year, and as of this writing we've spent nothing like that to reduce risk. Moreover, the immediate costs of entirely closing our economy for a month are perhaps \$550 billion. Of course, we aren't shutting down most of our economy. Healthcare, schools, government, food production and delivery all operate.

I don't know how long we should remain shut down to limit transmission of this disease. Such a decision must combine what we know about the spread of this disease and the costs and benefits of our policy choices. What I do know is that public policy in the form of federal relief can substantially reduce the costs of this shut down. I also know that a rigorous and unemotional benefit-cost analysis concludes that the current economic shutdown can continue for many months before the costs of doing so outweighs the benefits. ❖

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What comes first? Public health or the economy?

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS — Do we live to support the economy or does the economy live to support us? Do we learn new skills to keep the economic engine humming? Or do we learn new skills to advance ourselves and our careers to the betterment of our families and futures? The answers to these questions, being debated in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, are beginning to fracture the Republican Party.



On one side sits Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, a Republican in the high-risk age demographic, who lamented that he was not consulted before states imposed stay-at-home orders. "No

one reached out to me and said, as a senior citizen, are you willing to take a chance on your survival in exchange for keeping the America that all America loves for your children and grandchildren? And if that's the exchange, I'm all in."

He, like other Republicans, believes the economy is paramount. Public health is no reason to grind to a halt the wheels of economic growth, mobility and vitality. When given the choice, as we are seeing right now, Patrick's preference would be to allow the market to operate unhindered and for businesses, and Americans, to choose their own adventure.

President Donald J. Trump, according to media reports, is similarly concerned about the stability of the markets and the ability of the economy to weather this storm. The fundamentals of the economy, as they say, are sound. But the ravaging effects of COVID-19 are washing away jobs, wages and savings in a New York minute. Therefore, Trump declared that he wants the United States "opened up and just raring to go by Easter," regardless of where the curve sits.

Among their allies is the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board which wrote that there will be a "tsunami of economic destruction that will cause tens of millions to lose their jobs as commerce and production simply cease."

There's also a gaggle of Fox News hosts who began parroting the president's belief that "we cannot let the cure be worse than the problem itself" – a clear nod to the economic side of the ledger.

On the other side are people like Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Cheney, a Republican who happens to be the daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney. She tweeted her belief that "there will be no normally functioning economy if our hospitals are overwhelmed and thousands of Americans of all ages, including our doctors and nurses, lie dying because we have failed to do what's necessary to stop the virus."

Her contention, in case it wasn't clear, is that there is more to life than the economy. The stock market can slide, retirement accounts can be plundered, some businesses may go under, but keeping the American people safe and secure is the most important job of government, not being the visible hand that guides the economic current. Yes, lacking economic means leads to poverty and poverty leads to crime and health issues, but is putting at risk the lives of millions of Americans worth keeping a local restaurant open to in-person dining during a time where social distancing is required?

Most frustrating is not that this debate is taking place during a global pandemic, but that we didn't have this conversation a long time ago. There has been an undercurrent of tension between the economy-first-at-all-costs segment of the Republican Party and those who think continually referring to Americans simply as "workers" is demeaning and inhumane.

This debate, like the tug-of-wars taking place between capitalism and socialism and whether we should act on climate or sit and wait, will determine the Republican Party's long-term destiny. Good thing we have

plenty of time to think about this while we are all trapped at home. ❖



Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokesman for former Director of National Intelligence and U.S. Senator Dan Coats. Currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group in Indianapolis, Indiana. He is also an Atlantic Council Millennium Fellow and author of the 2014 book The War on Millennials.

Can Congress make democratic governance work in time of crisis?

By **LEE HAMILTON**

INDIANAPOLIS — This is a time of great testing for Congress. As it considers responses to the nation’s health and economic crises, it faces close scrutiny by ordinary Americans, financial markets, and businesses large and small across the country.



The pressure to move quickly is intense, and it is not an institution built for that purpose.

Yet Congress acts with unaccustomed swiftness when needed. The House passed the first relief measure – providing paid leave, enhanced unemployment benefits, free coronavirus testing, and food and health care aid – while the administration was still coming to grips with the dimensions of the crisis. The

Senate acted the following week. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s words to the GOP caucus were instructive: “I do not believe we should let perfection be the enemy of something that will help even a subset of workers,” he said. In other words: Do this now. And clearly, lawmakers took the need for speed to heart, and in a bipartisan way. The measures passed overwhelmingly in both houses.

There’s a key but basic fact to remember about how Congress works: It’s governed by a majority. This seems like a very simple thing to say, but the reality is that it is not always easy to achieve. I lost track of the number of times, when I served in the House, that I counted members, looking for ways to get to 218 votes (a

majority of the 435 members) for a bill I supported. It was a constant question within the party leadership: “How many votes do we have? Can we go to the floor and expect to win?” This is compounded when, as now, each chamber is under the control of a different party. Still, while there are never any guarantees, at times of national crisis the math becomes much easier to achieve.

That’s despite the fact that members can vote any way they want to, and

Congress is where all the cross-currents and needs of a complicated nation converge. Congress — at all times, but especially now — is beset by organized interests weighing in. Industry, professional groups, labor unions, farm organizations, veterans’ groups, and hundreds of others all have something to say. These groups are highly organized, effective, and sophisticated. They and their lobbyists are powerful, talented, and deeply knowledgeable of the process. Members of Congress are also listening to the no-doubt-urgent messages they’re getting from their constituents and making the political calculations that, even at the most dire times, are very much in the mix on Capitol Hill. You can see why arriving at agreements swiftly is such difficult work.

Which is why, now more than ever, everything depends on the leadership. Even in calm times, the key to the functioning of Congress rests overwhelmingly with the presiding officers of the House and Senate, and with their teams. At the moment, both McConnell and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi are conveying that they intend to keep Congress on an even keel as they work on relief and stimulus legislation. Nonetheless, it is also up to ordinary Americans to keep pressure on the politicians, and especially their own representatives, to make sure that Congress performs as we need it to. I don’t think people are unrealistic about what can be done; they don’t expect miracles. But members of the public do need to remind elected officials that our eyes are on them.

This is obviously a time of great peril, with immense stakes. We are a democracy, unlike the more centrally governed countries that have reacted forcefully to their own crises. Our challenge — and Congress’s in particular — is to respond as the situation demands while preserving the best that democratic governance offers: Solutions to the country’s problems that reflect the best thinking and collective wisdom of a great, diverse, and creative nation. It is not written in the stars that Congress can make it work, especially as members grapple with illness in their own ranks. But the evidence so far is that

in this crisis, when we need it to come through, Congress can do important work well and do it in a bipartisan way. ❖

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

What did we learn from past pandemics?

By **LINDA CHEZEM**

MARTINSVILLE – Do you remember the long hot summer when the pools were closed because of a polio outbreak? Do you remember lining up at school for the first polio vaccine? I thought not. Call me a Boomer but I am ready to call out some groups as #clueless.

Maybe you remember SARS and the outbreak in Ontario and how the months of March and April 2003 became the “Spring of Fear?” As the SARS outbreak and aftermath unrolled, I served as the chair of the Morgan County Board of Health.



I had been on the bench 22 years, first as a trial court judge and then on the Indiana Court of Appeals. I was shocked by how little legal guidance we had for dealing with an outbreak. Luckily, my colleagues at the Uni-

versity of Louisville and I were able to write a successful grant application to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). With our funding secured to focus on public health law, we wrote the first public health law bench book in the country. We collaborated with international experts including two excellent Canadian judges, Justice Archie Campbell and Judge Ian Cowan.

Our research and collaboration ultimately produced trainings for judges and justice system personnel and 14 public health law bench books. We also performed assessments for states and recommended action steps. In all, it was a project that seemed to be setting the stage to avoid last week’s confusion, that should never have occurred.

While our work was clear and forthright, the lasting results are sporadic. What happened to the effort to prepare for outbreaks? While we can agree that public health law is usually not very sexy, at CDC it seemed to be taken over by sexually related legal issues. No one was worried about influenza or SARS anymore.

Canada moved forward. Judge Ian B. Cowan published “The Day SARS Came to Town: The Court’s Role in Preventing Epidemics, Judicial District of Peel outside of Toronto” (Court Review: Volume 39, Issue 4). His account is instructive for trial court judges, even in the U.S. courts, for any kind of infectious outbreak. His concluding paragraph remains sobering. “Other courts must be prepared, with appropriate procedures in place. Any court in a major city of the world with an international airport has to be in a position to deal with the legal issues arising from the spread of an infectious virus. Perhaps the procedures we

adopted – set out separately on the preceding page – will help others to address these issues. Hopefully, as in our case, the procedures will never have to be used but if they do, the court will be an essential link in the health chain that will save lives.”

Nationally, Canada created the Commission to Investigate the Introduction and Spread of SARS in Ontario, chaired by the Honorable Archie Campbell. The report of the commission is also instructive and again, sobering. The first paragraph which seems apropos and applicable to today’s SARS-COVID19 states:

“The evidence discloses no scapegoats. This was a system failure. The lack of preparation against infectious disease, the decline of public health, the failure of systems that should protect nurses and paramedics and others from infection at work – all these declines and failures went on through three successive governments of different political stripes. So too, in a sense, we as citizens failed ourselves because we did not insist that these governments protect us better.”

But that is not all. We, Hoosiers and all of the United States, might now find this paragraph pertinent, although rather chilling because it was so prescient. SARS taught us lessons that can help us redeem our failures. If we do not learn the lessons to be taken from SARS, however, and if we do not make present governments fix the problems that remain, we will pay a terrible price in the face of future outbreaks of virulent disease.

What happened here in the U.S.? What did we learn?

Michigan is a good example. The state has kept their training current and updated their Public Health Law Bench Book in 2016. Other states like Florida have ongoing efforts to remain prepared while incorporating updated medical science and public health practices. Hawaii also works to keep the planning and training up to date. In Indiana, nothing much happened until last week. Indiana has had little interest in preparing for an infectious outbreak, except for blaming opioids.

Federally, between the bureaucracy and the constant political hijacking of the public health mission, the CDC has not been particularly well-prepared. The whole testing shortage is an example. The professionals must withstand the congressional vagaries of funding. Since SARS-2003, the United States has elected presidents of both parties. None appears to have had a clue about the local community nature of public health disease control and prevention.

Now what will we in Indiana and the U.S do? As we lurch around the current outbreak, I remain hopeful that we will not, through fear, accept whatever looks like a quick and cheap solution. We may be tempted to delude ourselves that a massive government response is a good outbreak solution. Do we want to sell our heritage for a mess of potage? An alternative would be to educate ourselves and exercise self-control. We could plan and prepare, rather than panic. Prohibition is a great example

for public health law; it was a colossal failure. Education over regulation is the better strategy when we want to influence personal control and health decisions.

Finally, more serious than health is our liberty. We should be on guard to protect the constitutional rights of Hoosiers. Just because a statute exists does not mean it or a court's decision is constitutionally sound. Now is the time to question. If we let fear and ignorance drive old responses that allow massive curtailment of our rights, we will neither gain security nor health.

How frightened are we that we are willing to risk those rights that this country was formed to protect? "Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)." ❖

Chezem is a former Indiana appellate court judge. She practices law in Martinsville.

Journalism and pandemics

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News Indiana

ANDERSON – I got a note from a reader seeking to explain why previous pandemics did not result in the same level of panic brought about by the coronavirus. "Maybe, just a wild guess, we did not hear from our media folks wall-to-wall 24/7 coverage blaring at us every day, ..." he wrote. "Just saying."



My first thought was to send him a note saying I hoped he was right. Wouldn't it be great if this crisis had been blown entirely out of proportion, if all of our worst fears were unfounded? The fact is, though, that journalists aren't making this up. They're reporting what government officials and medical experts are telling

them.

Still, my skeptical reader isn't alone. Republican Congressman Devin Nunes of California offered similar sentiments in a talk radio interview several days after the president declared a national emergency. "The media is absolutely responsible for this, ..." he said. "Ninety percent of them are working for the Democrats, working for the left. ... There's no reason to be in this panic."

In an interview with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin agreed that steps aimed at minimizing the crisis might have gone too far. "We don't shut down our economy because tens of thousands of people die on the highways," he said. He stopped short, though, of saying the danger had been overblown. "I'm hoping when all is said and done, maybe we have overreacted," he said. "But the fact that we're acting the way we are, I think, will really increase our chances of dropping that growth curve of this."

All of this serves to illustrate our nation's partisan divide. A survey carried out from March 10 to 16 by the Pew Research Center found that 62% of respondents believed the news media had at least slightly exaggerated the risks presented by the coronavirus. Among Democrats, that number was 49%. Among Republicans, it was 73%.

On the other hand, 41% of Democrats thought the media had gotten the risks about right, while only 17% of Republicans offered that assessment. Overall, respondents gave news coverage relatively high marks. Seventy percent said journalists were doing at least somewhat well in their coverage of the crisis. Still, almost half said they had seen at least some news they thought had been made up.

These views seem to be shifting, though. In interviews conducted on March 10 and 11, 42% of respondents saw the virus as a major threat. That number had risen to 55% in interviews carried out between March 14 and 16.

And it's worth noting that the survey ended on the same day President Donald J. Trump seemed to change his tone about the crisis, acknowledging for the first time that it might extend well into the summer. "If we do a really good job, people are talking about July, August, something like that," he said.

In contrast to some of his earlier remarks, he urged older Americans and those with chronic health conditions to stay home. He also encouraged all Americans to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people, and he acknowledged for the first time that the virus was far from under control. "It's not under control for any place in the world," he said.

Of course, the president is unlikely ever to admit he might have played a role in our nation's lack of readiness. "We were very prepared," he said. "The only thing we weren't prepared for was the media. The media has not treated it fairly."

In the end, of course, the facts will speak for themselves, and history will be the judge. ❖

Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com. Find him on Twitter @Kelly_Hawes.

Trump gets a modest pandemic poll bump

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — In the midst of this pandemic crisis, President Trump has received a polling bump. The latest came Tuesday in a POLITICO/Morning Consult poll, 25% of voters surveyed said Trump is doing an “excel-



lent” job handling the virus, and another 17% said he is doing a “good” job. But almost as many, 39%, said he’s doing a “poor” job, and 13% rate his handling of the crisis as “just fair.”

A week ago, an ABC/Ipsos

Poll showed that 55% of Americans approve of the president’s management of the crisis, compared to 43% who disapprove. That was up from 43% approval the week before. It probably reflected the shift in tone during Trump’s March 16 White House pandemic briefing, when he said, “It’s bad. It’s bad. We’re going to hopefully be a best case and not a worst case. We have an invisible enemy, we have a problem that a month ago nobody ever thought about.”

Prior to March 16, Trump had downplayed the pandemic, suggesting a “miracle” would make it go away and characterizing it at a MAGA rally as a “hoax.”

In the Real Clear Politics polling composite on Trump’s job approval as of Wednesday, 46.3% approved and 49.9% disapproved. “Presidents tend to get a bump in wartime as Americans rally around the flag, so it would be no surprise that in a time of crisis the president’s approval rating took a turn in a more positive direction,” said Tim Malloy, the polling director for Quinnipiac University.

In 2001, President Geoge W. Bush saw his Gallup approval rocket from 51% to 86% following the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush went from 64% to 82% approval after the Operation Desert Storm liberation of Kuwait. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy went from 61% approval before the Cuban Missile Crisis to 74% afterwards.

“Looking at poll averages, there is no clear impact on Trump’s overall approval rating and that’s what’s most politically relevant,” Mark Mellmann,

a Democratic pollster, told Politico. “We aren’t seeing the kind of rally-around-the-president effect, that we see in cases of international crisis. That’s measured by the overall approval rating.”

Another historical polling comparison would be President Jimmy Carter, who went from a 38% Gallup approval after Iran took U.S. hostages to 51% in November 1979. Carter went on to lose to Ronald Reagan a year later.

A NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll had Democrat frontrunner Joe Biden leading President Trump 52% to 43%. An average of all polls this month puts Biden’s advantage at a similar 7 points. Trump is the first incumbent president to be trailing at this point in the general election cycle (i.e. late March in the election year) since Harry Truman in 1948. Truman went on to upset New York Gov. Thomas Dewey.

“The LameStream Media is the dominant force in trying to get me to keep our Country closed as long as possible in the hope that it will be detrimental to my election success,” President Trump tweeted Wednesday.

Trump campaign seeks cease & desist

The Trump campaign on Wednesday demanded

that television stations not air an produced by a political action committee ‘formed by Barack Obama loyalists’ were attacking the president with ‘deliberately false and misleading’ political advertisement. “PUSA (Priorities USA Action Fund) stitched together fragments from multiple speeches by President Trump to fraudulently and maliciously imply that President Trump called the coronavirus outbreak a ‘hoax,’” read a cease and desist letter released by the Trump campaign.



Governor

Myers virtual town hall tonight

Presumptive Democratic gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers will be hosting his second virtual town hall

Polling Data					
Poll	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove	Spread
RCP Average	3/11 - 3/24	--	46.3	49.9	-3.6
YouGov	3/22 - 3/24	1170 RV	47	51	-4
The Hill	3/22 - 3/23	1002 RV	50	50	Tie
Rasmussen	3/22 - 3/24	1500 LV	46	53	-7
Politico	3/20 - 3/22	1996 RV	45	52	-7
Monmouth	3/18 - 3/22	754 RV	48	48	Tie
Gallup	3/13 - 3/22	1020 A	49	45	+4
Emerson	3/18 - 3/19	1100 RV	46	45	+1
Reuters	3/16 - 3/17	978 RV	43	54	-11
NPR/PBS	3/13 - 3/14	784 RV	43	50	-7
NBC/WSJ	3/11 - 3/13	900 RV	46	51	-5

All President Trump Job Approval Polling Data

at 6:30 p.m. (ET) tonight to discuss the Myers Map and answer questions from voters about how we can all work together to control the spread of COVID-19, commonly referred to as the coronavirus. Here is the link for Hoosiers to register for tomorrow's town hall: <https://secure.ngpvan.com/1K8zowqUx0et9SP5mPC3mQ2>

Dr. Woody Myers released the first phase of "Myers Map – A New Way" on Wednesday. The plan is meant to help supply health care workers with vital medical protective equipment during the coronavirus pandemic in the short-term. In the long-term, it would make Indiana a medical supply hub for the nation and the world.

"Indiana needs more medical supplies now, and a more dependable supply chain, so we never face a shortage ever again," said Myers. "This plan is a way to meet the need today and strengthen Indiana's economy for the future." Indiana lost 29,000 manufacturing jobs to other countries between 2006 and 2016 and left us dependent on a global supply chain unable to meet Indiana's medical needs and the medical needs of the nation during this historic health crisis, putting Hoosiers' lives at risk.

"Indiana should be shouting from the rooftops, 'Indiana is open for business,'" said Myers. "The state should be working with the federal government to sup-

port our manufacturing industry and answer calls for help expressed by governors across the nation. Let's build on what we already have. Indiana should be demanding its fair share of federal allocations of medical supplies, but this still won't be enough," Myers added.

Congress

5th CD: Dietzen unveils rural plan

Republican candidate Dr. Chuck Dietzen released his Rural Vitality Plan. This plan shows his experience, priorities and his support for Hoosier farmers. "I spent my first days on the campaign with farmers in the 5th District," said Dietzen. "I listened to their concerns and discussed what they need in a representative in Washington. Today, I'm pleased to share this plan to support and represent them in some of their biggest challenges." Included Dietzen's plan is improved healthcare for rural farming communities and working to create a stronger rural economy through legislation that helps cut burdensome regulations, improves infrastructure and provides tax relief. Dr. Dietzen believes in open markets for Indiana agriculture and wants to help Hoosier farmers by eliminating barriers to agricultural trade. ❖



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Sanders could win the election (for Trump)

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND — Bernie Sanders still could win the presidential election. For Donald Trump. He did it before. He could do it again.

Perhaps by the time you read this, Sanders will have suspended his campaign and endorsed Joe Biden. He should have if he is concerned about Democratic unity to defeat President Trump. Or is it all about Bernie?



With the pandemic, it's also an ethical imperative for Sanders to put ego aside and admit his race for the Democratic nomination has failed, thus allowing more people to stay away from the polls in remaining presidential primaries and reduce risk of coronavirus spread.

In the primary voting, Sanders lost every county in Florida as Biden won by 40 percentage points, lost every county but one in Illinois as Biden won by over 20 points, and lost by double digits in Arizona, the one state where Sanders held out hope for doing well. Sanders was saved by the coronavirus from suffering another humiliating defeat in Ohio. The governor there called off the election.

In the delegate count, Sanders would have to start winning by landslides rather than losing all the counties in state after state. He can't. His base, though still solid, is too small and not expanding. He failed to make inroads with African-American voters who now solidly back Biden.

Again, I cite advice in the Kenny Rogers song about card playing. It's applicable in politics: "You got to know when to hold 'em. Know when to fold 'em. Know when to walk away. Know when to run."

Pete Buttigieg knew when to fold 'em and walk away, not continuing to run after South Carolina showed he also couldn't capture much of the African-American vote and had no realistic path to the nomination. He endorsed Biden as the candidate with the best chance to

defeat Trump.

Amy Klobuchar did the same. Both left with heads high and prestige enhanced for impressive efforts and dedication to a central task of defeating President Trump. Remember 2016? Hillary Clinton had the Democratic nomination wrapped up early in June. Really, even before. But Sanders didn't endorse her until July 12. He insisted on continuing his campaign through additional primaries to the bitter end. And it was bitter. He continued to raise questions about her character and to anger his base with claims that he was getting beat at the polls only because the Democratic "establishment" had rigged everything.

His support after the endorsement was lukewarm. He didn't rally his base to get to the polls to defeat Trump. Some of his delegates at the Democratic National Convention even sought to disrupt Clinton's acceptance speech. There was not unity. And there is the Trump presidency.

Many factors doomed Clinton, some her fault, some beyond her control. As close as the vote was in the key states that Trump won, failure of so many Sanders supporters to vote for her in the fall was one of the decisive factors in election of Trump. Many stayed home or voted for third-party candidates who had no chance. A lot even voted for Trump.

NBC News White House Correspondent Shannon Pettypiece recently cited an analysis of 2016 exit polling in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin that showed 216,000 voters for Sanders in the spring switched to Trump in the fall. That was well over twice the president's winning margin in those decisive states. If Sanders had stopped before the bitter end and given spirited rather than half-hearted support for Clinton, would Trump be

president today?

This time, even if Sanders more quickly halts campaigning against Biden, will he go all out to prevent reelection of Trump or will he again be grumbling Bernie, sowing unhappiness because he didn't prevail? He could be a key factor in deciding the election. Either way. ❖



Colwell has covered Indiana politics

over five decades for the South Bend Tribune)

Commuters, money cross county lines

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — The virus pandemic has disrupted our lives and, in many cases, done serious harm to our livelihoods. Working from home helps some, but not all workers can benefit. Without such serious disruption, we take commuting for granted. Most Hoosiers work and live in the same county, but there are many who cross county and state lines for work. In doing so, they move a lot of money.



According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2018, workers in Indiana earned \$220.6 billion. But not all of that appeared in their paychecks. They, and their employers, contributed \$24.7 billion (11.2%) to federal government insurance programs (Social Security, Disability Insurance, Medicare, etc.) that provide our economic safety net.

Thus, working for Hoosier businesses and governments netted \$195.9 billion. Yet, as we know, “foreigners” from Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Kentucky come into our state and take home money earned here. Fortunately, Hoosiers also cross state lines and bring back money they earn in those “alien” lands.

The money brought back to the Hoosier Holyland exceeded the money taken out by \$6.8 billion in 2018. On balance, Indiana benefits from interstate commuting. Plus, this “commuting surplus” grew over the past decade by 45.4%, faster than earnings generated in our state, which grew by 35.3%.

Those figures are the decoration atop the cake. Commuting moved \$73.6 billion across Indiana county lines in 2018. Some counties are labor importers and money exporters, while others are residential exporters and money importers.

Brown County was most dependent on commuting, with 64.5% of its residents’ employment earnings coming from other counties. In all, 72 of Indiana’s 92 were beneficiaries of net commuting inflows. Ten counties, including Morgan, Warrick and Harrison, were net importers of 50% or more of their earnings from work.

At the other end of the spectrum, the leading exporter of earnings as a result of commuting was Martin County, where two-thirds of earnings left the county. Others in the top five earnings exporters were Marion (33.4%), Gibson (29.8%), Elkhart (26.9%), and Bartholomew (24.2%).

There is a bi-polar aspect to all this. Many chambers of commerce and local governments insist commuting leaves us with winners and losers. They argue money earned in their city or county belongs there. People should live where they work. Some end up arguing housing should be built where there is work to be had.

Simultaneously, these players may hold the location decisions of firms and households as sacrosanct. They line up for individual or corporate choice, free of community or government interference. They extoll unencumbered choice as the (Milton) Friedmanic foundation of our society.

Another faction tells us to focus on congestion and environmental damage associated with commuting. They endorse enforceable codes and detailed planning. However, no one truly has the power nor the will to face up to these issues. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com.



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Looking at the turnout of primary Democrats

By J. MILES COLEMAN

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – With the Democratic primary essentially in limbo while the coronavirus dominates the news and prompts states to postpone their primaries, we'll be looking back at one of the most important factors of the 2020 primaries -- turnout. Given the nature of the current public health crisis, it seems that the primary race could be pushed to the back of many voters' minds. For the sake of historical comparison, the states holding their primaries over the next few months may well have asterisks next to them in terms of turnout.

Still, prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus, some clear turnout patterns were apparent in the primary season. Nationally, based on data from 19 states, voters were generally turning out at higher rates than in 2016 (Map 1). States that used different systems between the years (Minnesota and Utah, for example, which held caucuses in 2016 but primaries this year) were excluded. While our primary picture is still incomplete, 55% of the votes in the 2016 general election came from the 19 states in Map 1, giving us an adequate sampling of the electorate.

Turnout change in the Dem primary season

Overall, 17 of these 19 states saw higher turnout in 2020 than in 2016; the two exceptions were Illinois and Oklahoma, and we explore some possible explanations for why that was below.

Before we dive into some of the specific state-level trends that stood out to us, we want to note that primary turnout is not necessarily predictive of general election outcomes. Four years ago, Crystal Ball Senior Columnist Rhodes Cook looked at past primary turnout and didn't really see historical patterns that one could consistently carry forward to the fall. Years like 2020 – where only one side has a contested primary – may have even less value as a November predictor, because the contested side naturally will generate more participation than the uncontested side. Still, as Republican pollster and analyst John

Couvillon has chronicled, turnout on the GOP side has been unusually robust -- this is something we may explore further in a future Crystal Ball article.

That said, there have been some interesting trends in the Democratic primary season – trends that seem to reflect broader changes in the composition of the Democratic Party's electorate. It may be that some of these trends offer positive portents for Democrats in the fall although, again, we warn against using primary turnout as a definitive indicator about the general election.

Let's start in the first primary state, New Hampshire.

Despite criticism that the state's heavily white electorate isn't reflective of the national party, New Hampshire set a precedent in its leadoff primary that some other states followed: Turnout was significantly higher than 2016 but only slightly higher than 2008. Geographically, turnout

was up in the southern part of the state – home to a disproportionate number of voters with college degrees – while rural, working-class regions tended to

show less enthusiasm this year. In Map 2, the colors of each town correspond with the highest turnout year.

Yearly comparison of NH turnout

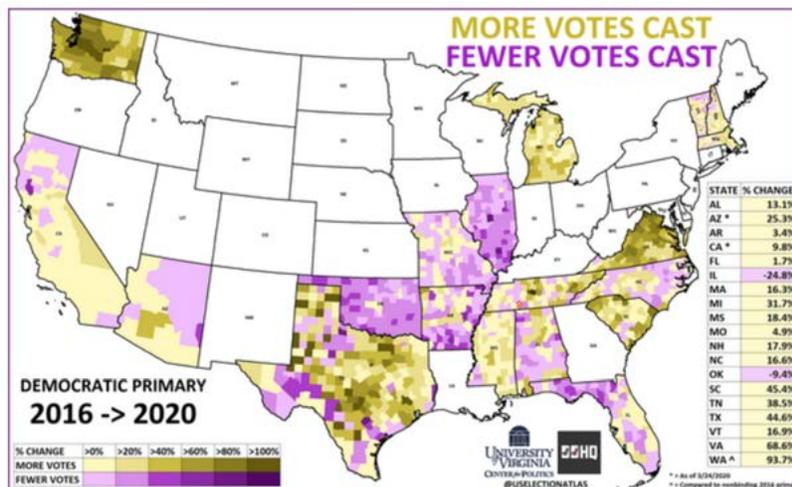
Super Tuesday saw a turnout increase across the board. While Super Tuesday, by design, features several southern states – some of which are safely Republican in general elections – it offered voters in some swingier states their first chance to cast ballots this cycle. Virginia, one of the first states to report returns that night, served as a bellwether in two ways. First, it was clear that, in addition to his strength with black voters, the suburbs were clearly a key part of Biden's coalition. Second, turnout in the Old Dominion was up considerably: the state cast over

1.3 million ballots, which represented a nearly 70% increase from the 785,190 votes in the 2016 Democratic primary.

One factor that may have boosted turnout was Virginia's lack of party registration. On primary day, any voter can request to cast a ballot on either the Democratic or Republican side; as there was no GOP primary, the Democratic primary was the only op-

tion for voters that day.

It's easy to see how soft Republicans in the wealthy suburbs of Washington D.C. or Richmond could have voted against Trump in the 2016 Republican primary



tion for voters that day.

It's easy to see how soft Republicans in the wealthy suburbs of Washington D.C. or Richmond could have voted against Trump in the 2016 Republican primary

and then, four years later, participated in the Democratic primary to back a candidate like Biden.

The 10th District, a fast-growing seat in Northern Virginia held by first-term Democrat Jennifer Wexton, seems to suggest this type of pattern. For the last several decades, VA-10 favored Republicans in the mold of the Bush family or former Sen. John Warner (R-VA), but its voters have been reluctant to embrace Donald Trump.

In the 2016 Republican primary, Trump carried the Old Dominion by three percentage points over then-candidate Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), but his weakness in the suburbs was notable. Rubio carried VA-10 by a 37%-29% margin. Additionally, VA-10 gave then-Gov. John Kasich (R-OH), who played to the center-right, more raw votes than any other district in the state.

In the Democratic primary this month, more than 150,000 votes were cast in VA-10, double the 77,000 total from the 2016 primary. That turnout spike was higher than the statewide change from 2016. Significantly, Biden was a beneficiary of that increase. While Sanders added about 5,000 more voters in his second time around, Biden added almost 31,000 votes to Clinton's showing -- though he took a lower percentage share, Biden's 51%-24% margin over Sanders was also an improvement from Clinton's 60%-40%.

Though the trends in some other demographically-similar places were not quite as extreme as VA-10, they did replicate its general trajectory in this primary season.

Virginia's neighbor to the south, North Carolina, voted on Super Tuesday as well. The Tar Heel State, which uses a semi-closed primary -- registered partisans vote in the primary that matches their party registration, but the state parties allow unaffiliated voters to choose a primary to participate in -- saw a more modest uptick in turnout, about a 17% increase from 2016. Given their comparable demographics and geographic proximity, perhaps if Virginia had a less open primary system, its turnout spike would not have been as pronounced, either. The geographical distribution of the turnout increase, though, was not consistent statewide.

In central North Carolina, a string of a dozen counties, stretching from Mecklenburg (Charlotte) to Wake (Raleigh), saw turnout increases of over 20%. Orange County, which was possibly the biggest surprise of the night, is located here: a liberal bastion housing UNC-Chapel Hill, this was the only county in the region to support Sanders in 2016 -- this time, Biden carried it by less than a point, though Elizabeth Warren, then still an active candidate, placed a strong third.

Two metro areas that bookend the state, Asheville in the mountains and Wilmington on the coast, saw generally robust turnout increases, but many rural counties in between cast fewer votes. Indeed, just a few miles west of Wilmington is Columbus County, a rural county that cast 28% fewer votes than it did in the 2016 primary. The main culprit may be declining Democratic Party registration. White-majority and poor, Columbus was a reliably blue

county, by state standards, until the advent of Trump. In March 2016, 61% of the electorate were registered Democrats; four years later, the party can claim just 49% of the voters there. Perhaps just as telling, those that are still registered with the party were more likely to cast protest votes. Nearly 6% of the electorate in Columbus County voted "No Preference," a number not uncommon for rural North Carolina.. In Florida, the panhandle is known for a similar phenomenon -- in last week's primary, it stayed true to form. This may be an indicator of registered Democrats who won't support the Democratic nominee in the fall.

No Preference vote in North Carolina

Remember, party registration is not necessarily a proxy for actual voting, particularly at the state and federal level. North Carolina Democrats retain a registration advantage of about 2.5 million to 2.1 million for Republicans, with about 2.3 million unaffiliated voters. Yet Republicans have carried the state in nine of the last 10 presidential elections.

Oklahoma was one of just two states included in this analysis where turnout was down from 2016. In 2016, Bernie Sanders' victory in the Sooner State was, at the time, taken as early evidence that he could win in primaries outside of New England. Oklahoma uses a closed primary system, giving only registered Democrats a voice in the primary; since 2016, the Democratic share of the electorate, by registration, has dropped from 42% to 35%. Much of that drop was driven by conservative, ancestrally Democratic rural counties. As the **only** candidate other than Hillary Clinton -- a known figure who many registered Democrats in the state had no intention of supporting in the general election -- Sanders was essentially the only option for rural conservatives who were locked out of the GOP primary. By 2020, these voters, instead of making up Sanders' base, were shaking off their Democratic pedigrees. Oklahoma turnout was down slightly, from 336,000 to 304,000, but rural areas saw the steepest drops -- and Sanders' performance suffered commensurately. (Map 4)

Turnout change in Oklahoma

While the Sanders' coalition bore the brunt of realignment, national Democrats will certainly like the trends in the Oklahoma City-based 5th District, held by first-term Rep. Kendra Horn (D, OK-5). Horn's OK-5 saw a seven percentage point uptick in turnout, and the Tulsa-area OK-1 saw a slight increase. Though it's easy to write Oklahoma off as a boring state -- Al Gore was the most recent Democratic nominee to carry counties there -- it's clearly seeing the type of partisan divergence we've seen in virtually all other states. To be clear, the Crystal Ball rates OK-5 as a Toss-up and OK-1 as Safe Republican. Still, this map shows that metros are increasingly becoming the base of the Democratic coalition, while the party's presence is sliding further elsewhere in the state, even in areas that already vote Republican in general elections. ❖

Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star: Maybe that day will come in fall. Back-to-school sales. Friends gathered at a pub to draft players for their NFL fantasy leagues. Handshakes and hugs at churches on Sundays. Retirees debating the news over coffee in diners. College football games. Office workers sharing doughnuts on Friday mornings. Teachers helping a struggling student solve a math problem at the kid's desk. It sounds blissful right now, because it sounds normal. March 2020 hardly seems normal. A "novel" coronavirus, COVID-19, has prompted states to shut down businesses and entities where people congregate for jobs, leisure and most "nonessential" activities. Events that have occurred uninterrupted for decades — from sports championships to elections — have been canceled or postponed. Schools and colleges are closed. Employees cope with unexpected layoffs. Toilet paper is hoarded. "Sheltering in place" and "social distancing" keep us mostly home. This circumstance is rare. Major pandemics — diseases that spread worldwide — through the 20th and 21st centuries involved influenza in 1918, 1957-58, 1968 and 2009, as well as a different coronavirus (SARS) in 2002. COVID-19's "novel" status means it's a coronavirus not previously identified, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Thus, no vaccine exists, yet. Shutdowns and isolation tactics are ways to mitigate spread of the coronavirus that had infected more than 240,000 people worldwide as of Friday. More than 10,000 have died. Once the pandemic ends, is it realistic to think that Hauteans, Hoosiers, Americans and earthlings will pick up right where we left off? Ideally, lessons learned from the experience will change lifestyles for the better. Everyone hopes the precautions imposed will have limited the spread and impact of the virus, and health care will improve as a result. Idled workers and businesses, and shell-shocked investors may return to a staggered but wiser U.S. economy. Schools and colleges may become more technologically flexible because of the disruption forcing kids to continue their studies with e-learning digital devices. Again, ideally. ❖

Curt Smith, IBJ: Five years ago this month, Indiana suffered a cataclysmic public-policy ambush known by the shorthand RFRA, for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The ire of the left toward all things faith-oriented descended on Indiana as legislators, the governor and others of good faith enacted a common and common-sense religious liberty protection. Bedlam ensued in one of the early demonstrations of the new power of social media, especially Twitter. We later learned its impact was outsized as bots and other techniques magnified a few malignant voices. But, alas, the deed was done. The Crossroads of America found itself in the crosshairs. So what was the outcome of this tumultuous time? I am hardly objective, as I was neck-deep in passing this necessary law. But I



believe conservatives won the RFRA war, even though we lost that particular battle and lost it badly. I know. I'm still nursing the scars. First, to refresh memories and orient the unacquainted, the allegation was that RFRA was a license for religious Hoosiers to discriminate against fellow LGBTQ citizens. This charge has been proven false. There was not a single instance anywhere of a credible allegation of religiously motivated discrimination before or after RFRA passed 60 months ago. Conversely, the faithful are routinely maligned and marginalized by the left and the liberal media. Just read former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg's speeches and the fawning media coverage on this topic. Despite the howling, the Indiana legal landscape gives no credence to this carping. Because the Indiana Family Institute, where I serve as chairman, brought a still-active lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the "fix" — an amendment to the original RFRA forced on Indiana by outsiders — we monitor legal actions to inform the court of any relevant developments. There are no such developments. None. Zero. Zip. Nada. This is vindication of the sterling Hoosier character. RFRA is a shield to protect the faithful from government, not a sword to harm others. We were right and the left was wrong, again. This is victory No. 1. ❖

Walter Russell Mead, Wall Street Journal: This is not what his critics expected. At 49% overall job approval in the latest Gallup poll, and with 60% approval of the way he is handling the coronavirus epidemic, President Trump's standing with voters has improved even as the country closed down and the stock market underwent a historic meltdown. That may change as this unpredictable crisis develops, but bitter and often justified criticism of Mr. Trump's decision making in the early months of the pandemic has so far failed to break the bond between the 45th president and his political base. One reason Mr. Trump's opponents have had such a hard time damaging his connection with voters is that they still don't understand why so many Americans want a wrecking-ball presidency. Beyond attributing Mr. Trump's support to a mix of racism, religious fundamentalism and profound ignorance, the president's establishment opponents in both parties have yet to grasp the depth and intensity of the populist energy that animates his base and the Bernie Sanders movement. The sheer number of voters in open political rebellion against centrist politics is remarkable. Adding the Sanders base (36% of the Democratic vote in the latest Real Clear Politics poll average, or roughly 13% of the national vote considering that about 45% of voters lean Democratic) to the core Trump base of roughly 42%, and around 55% of U.S. voters now support politicians who openly despise the central assumptions of the political establishment. That a majority of the electorate is this deeply alienated from the establishment can't be dismissed as bigotry and ignorance. ❖

Senate passes \$2.2T rescue package

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. deaths from the coronavirus pandemic topped 1,000 in another grim milestone for a global outbreak that is taking lives and wreaking havoc on economies and the established routines of ordinary life (AP). In a recognition of the scale of the threat, the U.S. Senate late Wednesday passed an unparalleled \$2.2 trillion economic rescue package steering aid to businesses, workers and health care systems. The unanimous vote came despite misgivings on both sides about whether it goes too far or not far enough and capped days of difficult negotiations as Washington confronted a national challenge unlike it has ever faced. The 880-page measure is the largest economic relief bill in U.S. history. Worldwide, the death toll climbed past 21,000, according to a running count kept by Johns Hopkins University, and the U.S. had 1,050 deaths and nearly 70,000 infections. Majority Leader Steny Hoyer announced that the House will consider this bill Friday morning at 9 a.m.



Holcomb vetoes landlord/tenant bill

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb has vetoed a controversial bill that would have prevented all local governments from regulating any aspect of landlord-tenant relationships (Erdody, [IBJ](#)). Holcomb's decision to block the legislation from becoming law allows tenant protections that the city of Indianapolis recently put in place to remain in force. "While I understand the bill was intended to create uniformity between state and local law governing the relationship between landlords and tenants, I believe this is not the right time for such language to become law," Holcomb wrote in a letter explaining the veto. Holcomb

also said he thought the language was "overly broad." It's the only bill Holcomb vetoed this year and just the second since he was elected in 2016. The Legislature can overturn the governor's veto with a simple majority vote in the House and Senate, although lawmakers have adjourned for the year. That means the first time they could consider an override is November, unless they are called into special session before then.

Trump ignored NSC pandemic protocol

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration, state officials and even individual hospital workers are now racing against each other to get the necessary masks, gloves and other safety equipment to fight coronavirus — a scramble that hospitals and doctors say has come too late and left them at risk. But according to a previously unrevealed White House playbook, the government should've begun a federal-wide effort to procure that personal protective equipment at least two months ago. The strategies are among hundreds of tactics and key policy decisions laid out in a 69-page National Security Council playbook on fighting pandemics, which POLITICO is detailing for the first time. Other recommendations include that the government move swiftly to fully detect potential outbreaks, secure supplemental funding and consider invoking the Defense Production Act — all steps in which the Trump administration lagged behind the timeline laid out in the playbook.

IU Health sets up virus screen test

BLOOMINGTON — Indiana University Health Bloomington Hospital is setting up an outdoor screening and testing site in preparation for accepting more COVID-19 patients, an official said Wednesday ([Indiana Public Media](#)). A yellow tent surrounded by yellow caution tape now stands

just outside the hospital doors. "In an effort to provide and protect our patients and team members, we have established a temporary structure as part of our COVID-19 screening area," Katy Howe, the hospital's director of emergency services, said in a statement.

Parke Co. health officer runs ad

ROCKVILLE — The Parke County health officer, acting in his private capacity or as an individual, took out a full-page ad in the Daily Clintonian, a newspaper headquartered in Clinton, to express his personal opinion that politicians should end social isolation due to COVID-19 and let people go back to work immediately ([Terre Haute Tribune-Star](#)). "I hope our politicians will reconsider their mandate for social isolation and throwing working taxpayers out of work and destroying their businesses," Dr. Frank Swaim wrote in the full-page ad, which appeared in Tuesday's edition. He said he was not acting in his capacity as Parke County's health officer.

Dr. Box declines to give ICU capacity

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana health officials declined Wednesday to provide details on hospital capacity around the state as its number of confirmed coronavirus-related illnesses continued to grow quickly and two more deaths were reported ([AP](#)). Dr. Kristina Box, the state health commissioner, cited confidentiality arrangements with hospitals for not releasing details about intensive care unit capacity and equipment availability around the state. She said she's seeing "positive movements" in availability of ICU beds and ventilators. "Because everybody is stepping up to the plate and trying to pretty much double their ICU capacity, I'm seeing those numbers increase as we go along," Box said.