

Sen. Young's Endless Frontier Act poised

As chipless vehicles fill Indiana parking lots, a transformative industrial remake set to clear Senate

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In and around Indiana, brand new Ford and Chevrolet pickup trucks and Subaru crossovers have been filling up parking lots in Fort Wayne, Hegewisch, Louisville and Lafayette. A portable semiconductor chip is inserted, the truck is driven off the assembly line to a parking lot, where it joins thousands of others. The chip is then pulled out and used to restation the next truck.

The U.S. accounts for a mere 12% of microchip production, with the other 88% manufactured in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Rich LeTourneau, union bargaining chairman for Local 2209, told WANE-TV that the trucks are built but they cannot be sold just yet. "We've probably got 12,000 to 13,000 trucks waiting on those semiconductors. The



trucks are built, they're done, they're ready to roll, but we can't ship them until we get the semiconductor installed. It's that simple."

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The Book of Boehner

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Former U.S. House Speaker John Boehner has written a book titled "On the House: A Washington Memoir."

Here is a simple review of the book: He still doesn't like Donald Trump. Based upon my 16 years of interaction with him it accurately reflects Boehner's political career, and – whether written solely by him or with lots of help from a professional writer – it sounds like John Boehner did in personal, small group, or public discourse.

I stress those points because as someone who loves to read political history and memoirs, finding a book by someone



"There is no one more qualified to lead our economic development efforts than someone who's been a leader in the business for 35 years."

- Gov. Eric Holcomb, in naming Bradley Chambers the next Commerce secretary and head of the IEDC.



Howey Politics Indiana
WWWHowey Media, LLC
c/o Business Office
PO Box 6553
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Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Susan E. Howey, Editor

Subscriptions

HPI, HPI Daily Wire \$599
 HPI Weekly, \$350
Lisa Houchell, Account Manager
 (765) 452-3936 telephone
 (765) 452-3973 fax
 HPI.Business.Office@howeypolitics.com

Contact HPI

bhowey2@gmail.com
 Howey's cell: 317.506.0883
 Washington: 202.256.5822
 Business Office: 765.452.3936

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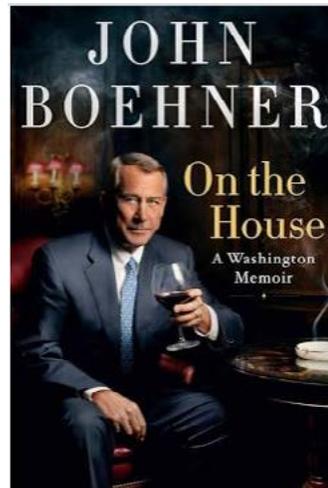
Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
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inside of politics that is both accurate and not full of fake posturing for history is rare. John Boehner has decided to be remembered as John Boehner.

Political best-sellers are usually of two types: 1) Books by famous people that sell well because of the author's name but are a slog to read. Few people even get to the mid-point. 2) Books by commentators who get people excited but have never been inside of a room where the decisions are made, and probably couldn't even get elected to a dogcatcher position by their neighbors. Even political history books these days are dominated by "wokeness," not history.

That doesn't mean these books aren't worth reading: Just read them skeptically. Read competing visions. Polemics about a "deep state" (the current trend of right and left conspiracy thinking) are actually the products of a different mythical state; they are like science fiction. They have some element of truth, promote interesting theories, and can be entertaining. They just shouldn't be confused with the more boring facts about how government works.



Because Boehner is fundamentally transparent about the process, it provides some good insight into how leadership works at all levels of government, not unlike private business, educational institutions, and all social organizations.

In denouncing the more extremely conservative members of the Republican Caucus, as well as a few on the left, Boehner repeatedly stresses that the country is roughly evenly divided and that government essentially tilts one way and then tilts the other. Elections are about tilt, not destroying your enemy.

He also points out that when one side tries to enforce more radical change, the blowback is severe unless it was publicly accepted. The

Democrats, for example, have done this twice on health care and social issues. The Republicans won the House in 1994 to a large degree against the backlash on HillaryCare and social issues, and then again in 2010 on ObamaCare and social issues.

Democrats win, and Republicans win control of Congress, when the middle turns against the other side in a few pivotal districts. Similarly, presidential elections turn on a few pivotal states, not the dark red or bright blue ones. It is even more complicated because even within the swing states, the red and blue areas are more intense colors these days which influence but seldom control the results. The middle, the swing vote, controls elections.

John Boehner is an institutionalist, at core a conservative in the core sense: More pro-business, more free market, focus on opportunity rather than equality of results, more socially conservative than liberal on issues like abortion and gun control, pro-police, doesn't like taxes, favors less public spending than the Democrats do, and is supportive of a strong national defense.

John Boehner was not an intellectual leader and didn't propose or even act as an advocate for creative ideas. He was pretty much the opposite of Newt Gingrich.

In the 1950s and 60s, when the John Birch Society was calling Eisenhower a communist, conservative writer Russell Kirk famously said that "no, Eisenhower wasn't a communist, he was a golfer."

Boehner was a golfer, not an idea leader. One of his "Boehnerisms" at the end of the book is a philosophical statement of sorts about politics: "It's just golf – hit the ball, find the ball, hit it again."

While that seems superficial, it actually isn't. It is philosophy

of governance that basically says that wasting time with innovation is not the goal of leadership. You deal with the challenge you have, hit it, see what happens and then try to move it your direction again.

To generalize, an executive in any branch of government is often more like this. Mitch Daniels was "exceptional" governor because Mitch was an exception to this rule. Eric Holcomb is more a traditional governor, within a basic conservative governing style. This was especially true during the pandemic, but it is also his basic approach: Listen, develop a workable strategy, govern, adjust.

The legislative branch, especially the more populist branch as conceived by the Founding Fathers of this nation, is less anchored in the governing part and more likely to push more radical change reflective of populist tendencies; once again, as designed in our amazingly resilient constitutional documents.

The House at the federal and state levels runs for office more frequently (thus is more likely wind-blown) and represents smaller districts (thus is more homogenous and less understanding of opposing views, or at least less conflicted about how to respond). Simply put, the less responsive the Executive Branch is to the concerns of the Legislative Branch, the more feisty and intrusive the legislators become. Welcome to the current political state of Indiana.

While John Boehner's book is ostensibly about the life of a blue-collar Catholic kid who likes to golf and drink wine but who made it to the third most powerful position in America, it is actually a book about how many, or most, people in power actually govern. John Boehner, like most House speakers, were not the dynamic idea leaders. Nor

are the best Senate leaders like Mitch McConnell or LBJ. They keep the trains on the track. They find the ball, hit the ball and find it again.

The challenge in America today is that the most politically active parts of the general public, especially agitated by the isolation and negative consequences of COVID, are looking for more than just trains running. They want more decisive action, unfortunately, in opposite directions.

Another thing about John Boehner's leadership is also in his memoir. When he saw the conference was determined to do something, even if he hated it, he followed his party. Led it. He repeats multiple times in the book that a leader without followers is just taking a walk.

Reading his memoir was like sitting in the room with him. He listened, his answers were pithy if not profound, his language was often uncomfortable for me, and his personal habits not mine (e.g. I don't smoke, prefer beer to wine and reading a book to golfing). But I came to respect how he governed, even when I disagreed.

There are different ways to govern. But as opposed to books intended to manipulate and deceive you, John Boehner's book is a straightforward, unvarnished, somewhat irritating, occasionally vacuous, honest, and accurate reflection of how he chose to lead in turbulent times.

For those interested in how actually governing generally works, it is a good primer. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

Young's Frontier, from page 1

In Kokomo and Tipton, where 1,800 Stellantis (formerly Chrysler/Fiat) workers have been furloughed, the Kokomo Tribune reports that the pandemic-fueled chip shortage started when consumer demand soared for more vehicles as people looked to avoid using public transportation. Demand also spiked for devices such as smartphones and gaming consoles that people use for entertainment while stuck at home. The chips, also called semiconductors, have become part of the backbone of the auto industry, controlling nearly all electronic features inside a vehicle.

It is within this pandemic-era curveball that U.S. Sen. Todd Young is poised for his greatest legislative victory since

joining Congress in 2011 and the Senate in 2017. The Endless Frontier Act, which he has co-sponsored with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, is poised to pass the U.S. Senate this week, possibly as early as today. It is expected to pass with wide, bipartisan support. In May, the act was approved by a strong bipartisan vote of 24-4 following a markup at the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

The New York Times calls it "the most expansive



industrial policy legislation in U.S. history, blowing past partisan divisions over government support for private industry to embrace a nearly quarter-trillion-dollar investment in building up America's manufacturing and technological edge."

"We can't be wedded to old doctrines and shibboleths," Young told the NYT. "The world has changed. Our economy has changed. The needs of our country have changed."

"I'm proud of the hard work and bipartisan efforts that have gone into the Endless Frontier Act for more than a year, but particularly over the last few months," Young said in a video released in late May. "Contributions from many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have been incorporated during what everyone agrees has been the one of the most open processes the Senate has seen in quite some time."

"We Americans have always been drawn to the frontier," Young said. "As World War II came to a close and we saw the Cold War on the horizon, we made a strategic decision as Americans to invest in science, the endless frontier. This helped pave the way for the creation of NASA, which took us to the moon. It helped us map the human genome and create the internet. In short, those investments helped America win the 20th Century. While the challenges we face today are of a different nature, we are again at a pivotal moment. A new great power competition is under way, and America's predominant challenger is China."

"The Chinese Communist Party wants to surpass the United States economically, and spread their authoritarian values across the globe," Young continued. "They are doing this in part by investing heavily in the endless frontier. It's time to go on offense. That's why I authored the Endless Frontier Act. My Endless Frontier Act is going to help Hoosiers supercharge our economy in the 21st Century."

Inside Indiana Business reported that Conexus said that one-third of the state's gross domestic product and 500,000 jobs are directly linked to advanced manufacturing, including automotive, medical devices, and aerospace and defense, all of which rely on semiconductors.

The Endless Frontier Act proposes an expansion of the National Science Foundation (NSF) with the establishment of a new Technology and Innovation Directorate

within NSF to advance research and development in 10 key technology focus areas, including artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum computing, advanced communications, biotechnology, and advanced energy.

According to Schumer and Young, the newly established Technology and Innovation Directorate would receive \$100 billion over five years to invest in basic and advanced research, commercialization, and education and training programs in technology areas critical to national leadership.

An additional \$10 billion would be authorized at the Department of Commerce to support regional technology strategies and to designate at least 10 re-



gional technology hubs, awarding funds for comprehensive investment initiatives that position regions across the country as global centers for the research, development, entrepreneurship, and manufacturing of new key technologies.

The Endless Frontier Act also establishes a new Supply Chain Resiliency and Crisis Response Program with the national security mission of strengthening critical technology supply chains in the U.S. and with global allies and partners. Additionally, the bill invests in U.S. manufacturing innovation and competitiveness with more than \$2.4 billion in funding to enhance and expand the Manufacturing USA network to ensure global leadership in the manufacturing of key technologies. To support the country's national security capabilities, the bill mandates a strategy on national competitiveness and ingenuity in science, research, and manufacturing to support the national security strategy.

"We have attracted bipartisan support for this piece of legislation," Young said. "The Endless Frontier Act makes a much-needed investment in emerging technologies like advanced manufacturing. Things like artificial

intelligence and quantum computing and robotics we know will not only help our workers grow our economy so we can out innovate and out compete the Chinese, but will also help our warfighters win the wars of the future.

"These investments will create jobs for our workers, and strengthen our national defense so our military never has to fight a fair fight," Young continued. "It will also create regional tech hubs to ensure that jobs are created not just on the coast, but right here in the heartland. My Endless Frontier Act is designed to prepare more people to fill these jobs and to design new technologies so that Hoosiers can earn more and live more fulfilling lives. Now is the time to strengthen U.S. leadership in science and tech innovation, to ensure that this generation of doers and dreamers and our children once again press us toward the endless frontier and we win the 21st Century."

Schumer told NYT, "This means we're going to invest in quantum computing or A.I. or biomedical research, or storage, and then let the private sector take that knowledge and create jobs. These are the areas of dominance that we need research in, and these are the areas of potential industrial growth; great job growth."

According to the NYT, what is most striking about the legislation is the degree to which the projects that the bill funds closely parallel those in China's "Made in China 2025" program, which funnels huge government spending into technologies where the country is seeking to be independent of outside suppliers.

The Chinese government announced its initiative six years ago. ❖

Congress shrinks from its Jan. 6 post-mortem

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the past year, the United States has been hit by two viruses: The COVID-19 pandemic, and a political insurrection that reintroduced violence into the broad American body politic.

Capitol Hill Republicans are calling for the Biden Administration to probe the origins of COVID-19 and speculation that it was man-made and escaped a Wuhan, China, laboratory. But they slammed the door shut on a Sept. 11-style bipartisan commission to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection that resulted in the deaths of five people, the injuries of 140 Capitol and DC Metro cops, the subsequent suicides of two others, and the need for a \$1.8 billion hardening of its security. More than 550 insurrectionists are being investigated by the FBI or have been charged with sedition-related crimes.

The backdrop to the Jan. 6 commission is that former president Donald Trump continues to push the notion that the 2020 election was "stolen." He is agitating for more swing state vote "audits" like the controversial one underway in Arizona despite the fact that recounts in a number of cases and courts with Trump-appointed judges had found there was no evidence of widespread fraud.

For instance, in a May 24 statement, Trump said, "New Hampshire's Election Audit has revealed that large-

scale voting machines appear to count NON-EXISTING VOTES. State and local communities are seeking confirmation. It's probably true, but we'll soon know. Why aren't Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Republicans doing anything about what went on in the 2020 Election? How can the Democrats be allowed to get away with this? It will go down as the Crime of the Century! Other States like Arizona, Georgia (where a Judge just granted a motion to unseal and inspect ballots from the 2020 Election), Michigan, Pennsylvania, and more to follow."

On Saturday night in an appearance in North Carolina during which the condition of his pants created a stir, Trump said, "The 2020 presidential election was by far the most corrupt election in the history of our country." He called it the "crime of the century" and added that "our country is being destroyed, perhaps by people who have no right to destroy it."

This has morphed into multiple media reports that a delusional Trump has been telling friends and associates that he expects to "reinstated" to the presidency by August, though no constitutional route exists.

The danger is that a plethora of polling shows the GOP base believes Trump. Quinnipiac put the number of Republicans who believe the election was stolen at 77%. "Was the election on the level? 'No way' say the vast majority of Republicans," said Tim Malloy, polling analyst for Quinnipiac. "The dearth of Republicans in the House and Senate willing to acknowledge the Biden win is in step with their base."

U.S. Sens. Todd Young and Mike Braun were against creating a commission that would have been based on the Sept. 11 Commission that was co-headed by



then-U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton, thus killing the effort in the Senate.

Braun didn't vote on the matter, but said in a statement, "Those who breached the Capitol and committed horrific acts of violence on January 6 must be prosecuted, and all steps must be taken to prevent future security breaches and protect the men and women who protect the Capitol. To those ends, America's most respected investigation entity, the FBI, is leading a world-class probe resulting in over 450 arrests so far and bringing a great deal of information about those who broke the law that day to light, and my Appropriations Subcommittee is digging deep into what the Capitol Police need to do their jobs safely and the architect of the Capitol needs to prevent future attacks. I do not support the creation of a partisan commission that seeks to exploit this tragedy for political gain."

On Sunday, he said on CBS4, "The vote of the ones that were there was not going to affect the outcome, and I had a statement that was clear, I was against it in general and other situations had required me to do otherwise and it wasn't going to make a difference."

Sen. Young & truth

On Jan. 6, Young supported the Electoral College certification, and later said that public officials have an obligation to tell the truth. "I think we need to name and shame members of the media who were out there perpetuating mistruths and deceiving individuals," Young said on Fox59 on Feb. 1. "I think the same applies to politicians who are out there perpetuating things that are completely false and deceiving constituents. I'd be remiss if I didn't listen to the evidence but I think the views of most Hoosiers, and a view I share, and even some Democrats (is that) we have a new president. President Trump is now a private citizen."

But on March 21, Politico reported: "Trump's revulsion to even minor instances of disloyalty only intensified. As an example, they noted that Trump is currently withholding an endorsement of Indiana Sen. Todd Young after Young called Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene 'an embarrassment' to the Republican party last month. Young's comments came shortly after Greene claimed she received Trump's 'full support' during a phone call with the former president."

Senate report poses more questions

A [Senate investigation](#) of the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol has uncovered broad government, military and law enforcement missteps before the violent attack, including a breakdown within multiple intelligence agencies and a lack of training and preparation for Capitol Police officers who were quickly overwhelmed by the rioters (AP). The Senate report released today is the first — and could be the last — bipartisan review of how

hundreds of former President Donald Trump's supporters were able to violently push past security lines and break into the Capitol that day, interrupting the certification of President Joe Biden's victory. It includes new details about the police officers on the front lines who suffered chemical burns, brain injuries and broken bones and who told senators that they were left with no direction when command systems broke down. It recommends immediate changes to give the Capitol Police chief more authority, to provide better planning and equipment for law enforcement and to streamline intelligence gathering among federal agencies.

As a bipartisan effort, the report does not delve into the root causes of the attack, including Trump's role as he called for his supporters to "fight like hell" to overturn his election defeat that day. It does not call the attack an insurrection, even though it was. And it comes two weeks after Republicans blocked a bipartisan, independent commission that would investigate the insurrection more broadly. "This report is important in the fact that it allows us to make some immediate improvements to the security situation here in the Capitol," said Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, the chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which conducted the probe along with the Senate Rules Committee. "But it does not answer some of the bigger questions that we need to face, quite frankly, as a country and as a democracy."



Roemer, Hamilton weigh in

In an op-ed article in The Hill last month, former 9/11 Commission member Tim Roemer, Democrat of Indiana, and Republican Zach Wamp write: "The 9/11 Commission's unity of purpose was the key to its effectiveness. The commissioners examined, without bias, the events before, during and after the attacks. Their job wasn't to play the 'blame game' for either a Republican or Democratic administration, but to understand our vulnerabilities in order to prevent future acts of terrorism. The American people understood that the commission was operating on their behalf. The commission report has become the authoritative source on what happened on Sept. 11, and its many recommendations have been adopted into law, making this country profoundly safer."

Remember, the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks occurred less than a year after one of the most divisive, hyper-partisan chapters in U.S. history. Republican George W. Bush lost the popular vote, but won the Electoral College following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Bush V. Gore.

After that ruling, Vice President Al Gore conceded on Dec. 13, 2000, saying, "Almost a century and a half ago, Senator Stephen Douglas told Abraham Lincoln, who had just defeated him for the presidency, 'Partisan feeling must yield to patriotism. I'm with you, Mr. President, and God bless you.' Well, in that same spirit, I say to President-elect Bush that what remains of partisan rancor must now be put aside, and may God bless his stewardship of this country. I accept the finality of the outcome, which will be ratified next Monday in the Electoral College. And tonight, for the sake of our unity as a people and the strength of our democracy, I offer my concession."

Roemer and Wamp continued, "An independent and bipartisan Jan. 6 commission – insulated from the everyday political pressures of Congress – is best situated to establish a shared truth about the events of the day, so that partisan actors cannot rewrite the facts over time. It would give us a better understanding of the forces that led to the insurrection and, most importantly, a better roadmap of how to address them going forward."

In an op-ed, former U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton and Sec. Michael Chertoff write, "The Jan. 6 commission is directly modeled on the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, which also studied and created recommendations to prevent future attacks on our nation. The members of the 9/11 Commission knew that Americans' confidence in our system required a full, independent and objective review of the events. Its report helped heal a deeply wounded nation and protect our national security and shaped sweeping, government-wide national security reforms.

"That's why in advance of the House vote, one of us, Lee Hamilton, joined his colleague on the 9/11 Commission, former Republican Gov. Thomas Kean, in issuing a joint statement urging Democrats and Republicans to once again put the good of our nation first," Hamilton and Chertoff write.

GOP fears of a Jan 6 commission

Why do Young and Braun consign a Jan. 6 commission to that of a partisan exercise? For fear that it will result in embarrassing revelations on President Trump's conduct and rhetoric leading up to the November 2020 election that resulted in what many Republicans now believe was a "stolen election" that morphed into what is now commonly known as "the big lie"?

There has also been congressional and media speculation that some members of Congress aided and abetted the insurrectionists in the days and hours leading up to Jan. 6, when Trump ordered his followers to go to the Capitol, then watched on TV the mayhem that ensued, resulting in the deaths of five people that day, the injuries

to at least 130 Capitol and D.C. police officers, the suicides of two others. Since then, the U.S. Capitol has been barricaded and wrapped in razor wire.

At 2:14 p.m., Secret Service agents escorted Vice President Pence off the Senate floor and into a secure location. At 2:24 p.m., Trump tweeted: "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!"

By that time, the mob was chanting "Hang Mike Pence" and had invaded the Senate floor and the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Americans watched in horror after scores of senators were seen running through Capitol hallways, seeking shelter from the mob.

During Trump's second impeachment trial in February, Democrat House impeachment manager Stacey Plaskett said: "The mob was looking for Vice President Pence because of his patriotism, because the vice president refused to do what the president demanded and overturn the election results. They were talking about assassinating the vice president of the United States." Another impeachment manager, Rep. Ted Lieu, told senators that Trump was "desperate to cling to power" and that "when he ran out of non-violent measures, he turned to the violent mob."

Pence talks of Jan. 6

Last week, Pence told New Hampshire Republicans, "As I said that day, Jan. 6 was a dark day in history of the United States Capitol. But thanks to the swift action of the Capitol Police and federal law enforcement, violence was quelled. The Capitol was secured."



What Pence didn't mention was it took almost four hours to secure the Capitol. We don't know why.

Jim VandeHei, a founding editor of Axios and Politico, said on MSNBC's Morning Joe last Friday, "The Republican Party has spoken.

They want to be like Trump. They work to please Trump. The people who do pay attention to him are anybody who wants to be elected. A lot of them will be just like Donald Trump. A lot of them will be elected, and then it will be institutionalized.

"Mitt Romney or Paul Ryan? That's gone in terms of people who run and are elected," VandeHei continued. "So what Pence is doing and what every other Republican is doing is not surprising. The Republican Party of old, it's gone. It's not returning. There is no evidence of that. The party does not fundamentally care about deficits. I don't

think the vast majority of the base of the Republican Party cares much about ideology. It's much more of an identity statement, a cultural statement that I would say is more solidified post-election. No one saw that coming.

"Jan. 6 should have been this watershed moment," VandeHei said. "The Trump norm has become institutionalized."

According to Roemer and Wamp, "If the Senate fails to act in a bipartisan manner to create an independent 9/11-style commission, there are two other options, both falling below the ideal of legislative action. 1.) President Biden could assemble an executive branch commission and generally appoint his selections. 2.) Speaker Pelosi has indicated she could create a select committee

comprising members of Congress, thereby embedding this back into a highly charged political environment with the 2022 midterms approaching.

"Historically, on important matters of safety and national security, our tradition has been to set aside partisan fighting and meet at the water's edge," Roemer and Wamp continue. "We do so because violence is not an acceptable form of political expression in our representative democracy. Americans face a fundamental choice – not between left and right, but between right and wrong. In the face of attacks both foreign and domestic, America has endured for over two centuries because we have stood united in the moments that mattered most. This is one of those moments, and it's time for us to rise to meet it." ❖

Rokita aggressively setting up 2024 race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – There is only one Republican officially looking at the 2024 Indiana gubernatorial race (former IEDC president Eric Doden). There are two from Holcomb World (Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and GOP Chairman Kyle Hupfer) on most short lists. There's a doughnut mayor touring the plains of Northern Indiana (Fishers's Scott Fadness). There are members of Congress (Sen. Mike Braun and Rep. Trey Hollingsworth) who

can buy the seat. There's U.S. Rep. Jim Banks who appears to be on a congressional leadership track. There's a Statehouse power player (Senate President Pro Tem Rod Bray).

And then there's Attorney General Todd Rokita, who was off and running just minutes after taking his oath of office in front of Gov. Eric Holcomb and Lt. Gov. Crouch.

Rokita has been hyper active on the Lincoln dinner circuit. He is picking a fight with the Biden administration over the concept of "critical race theory." And he's been locking legal horns with the governor over the right to Statehouse counsel on two pandemic-related laws Holcomb had vetoed.

On that count, it was former Senate Pro Tem President David Long who shed further light on Rokita's ambitions. In an interview with WPTA-TV's Political Radar last week, Long was asked about the showdown between Holcomb and Rokita. "The governor, like all governors faced an unprecedented situation," Long insisted on WPTA-TV's latest episode of Political Radar. "Now they're lawyered up and headed to court, but

I still feel like there might be a path to work things out. I sure hope they can."

Rokita, Long said, "represents both sides and that's a problem. Frankly, I wish the AG would step aside and allow each side to have its own attorneys."

Long went on to say that he believes political ambitions are also factoring into Rokita's involvement. "This is political," Long said. "The AG is probably running for governor in 2024 when Holcomb's term is finished. There's politics involved in this."

So far the early stages of this showdown have been friendly. Rokita tweeted out a photo of him and Crouch after the two lunched together in Rokita's Statehouse office. "Great to catch up with my friend and colleague @LGSuzanneCrouch over lunch in the Attorney General's Office," Rokita tweeted on June. 3.



Crouch has been active since the General Assembly sine die. She told Anderson Herald Bulletin on June 5 that the pandemic created some friction between the executive and legislative branches. "I'm sure that that there will be some kind of resolution one way or the other," Crouch said. "As a former legislator, I certainly understand



Sen. Joe Donnelly kicked off the Indiana Democrat American Relief Act statewide tour in Fort Wayne last week with Mayor Tom Henry and House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta.

both sides of the position and believe that during a pandemic, there has to be someone in charge and they have to be able to take the necessary steps to be able to keep Hoosiers safe. That is what the governor did. We'll see what the courts have to say."

On Gov. Holcomb's decision to terminate federal jobless benefits that came with the first Trump era relief package, she told the Herald Bulletin, "While we were in the midst of the pandemic, people needed that kind of assistance, but now we're at that point where more and more people are getting vaccinated, and we need to be sure that people are able to work that want to work, and that we can help them get back to work. Oftentimes they would cite the fact that people would even tell them, 'I'm actually making more money' — or maybe 'I'm not making as much money, but I'm able to stay at home and not work.'"

Crouch also said the administration is keeping a close eye on \$1.9 billion the General Assembly passed for teacher pay. "They would like to see 45% of that (\$1.9 billion) go to teachers' compensation and would also like to see starting salaries be guaranteed at \$40,000," Crouch said. "While that hasn't been mandated, they've made it perfectly clear that that is the intent, and they will be monitoring how locals deal with that money and how they disburse it." Crouch added that, if needed, legislators would take additional steps to ensure the money is used specifically for compensation.

On June 5, Mayor Fadness tweeted: "If you haven't taken a trip into rural Indiana lately, you need to. Crops are growing & the countryside looks great. Thanks for the hospitality Wabash & Marion!"

INDems continue road show

Indiana Democratic Party will continue its American Rescue Plan Tour, a statewide campaign to help deliver the good news about President Joe Biden's COVID-19 relief package and how it's helping all of Indiana's 92 counties and its communities put the pandemic firmly in the rearview mirror. Included on the tour will be former senator Joe Donnelly, former House speaker John Gregg, former congressman Baron Hill, State Sen. Shelli Yoder,

and former Republican superintendent of public instruction Jennifer McCormick.

"The Indiana Democratic Party is delivering for Indiana and for Hoosiers in every one of the state's 92 counties, regardless of voting history or current political persuasion. We're showing up and getting to work on behalf of every family and community because solutions matter so much more than tired partisan games," said Chairman Mike Schmuhl. "President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan is helping Indiana and its families rebuild from COVID-19, and Democrats are ready to push back against Republican misinformation and detail why the right partnerships between our federal and state governments can deliver major successes for Indiana's future. This is what the American Rescue Plan is doing for the Hoosier State."

Donnelly, Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry and House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta kicked off the first leg of the tour in the Summit City last Thursday, drawing a modest crowd of about 50 people, though it was widely covered in the Fort Wayne media. Fort Wayne received \$50 million and Allen County \$73 million. "They sent us part of the money, and now they're telling us how they would like to have it invested," said Mayor Henry. "But we'll be putting together a committee to even get more specific. Broadband application is one thing. Well, 'how are you going to do that?' So we're gonna try to identify certain steps within that broadband application to determine where that money should be spent."

This week, the tour will include: John Gregg on Monday in Dubois, Perry, Crawford, and Spencer counties; Donnelly and McCormick today in Kokomo; Hill and Sen. Yoder Wednesday in Johnson, Jackson and Clark counties; Gregg, State Rep. Tonya Pfaff, Vice Chair Myla Eldridge and Donnelly in Terre Haute on June 11.

U.S. Senate

Young inspires 'wave' at GOP dinner

U.S. Sen. Todd Young was so excited at the Kosciusko County Lincoln Dinner last Thursday, he started a wave among the crowd (Slone, Warsaw Times-Union). Young is up for reelection in 2022, has no primary op-

ponent and no credible Democrat has lined up, though Indiana Democratic Chairman Schmuhl told HPI in late May that he is in talks with several credible potential candidates.

"I'm in front of, what I perceive to be, the most motivated, the most energized, the most fired-up group of Republicans I've visited with since this COVID pandemic descended upon our country. Folks, we are fired up!" Young said to a burst of applause before beginning the wave. He said it is under threat because so many institutions are posing a threat to it. "You see, we're conservatives. We believe in institutions. We believe in many institutions – we believe in the institution of family and community and our civil society, our nonprofit groups, our philanthropies, of course our businesses, our free enterprise system. We also believe in government, properly stoked. But, when we have a party of government, with too much government that doesn't know how to properly stoke our government, then the institution of government can eclipse and can suffocate the other institutions that are important to us. And that's the threat we are facing right now."

Congress

Banks to seek reelection

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks made his future campaign intentions known on WANE 15's First at Five. "I haven't talked about it a whole lot but I will run for reelection in 2022 and that's what I'm focused on right now," Banks said when asked if he would ever be interested in a run for Indiana governor. "Maybe? I mean, Indiana is home and I loved serving at the Statehouse but right now I'm focused on being the most effective representative that I can be."



Banks claimed he didn't know what former Vice President Mike Pence meant when he said he would never see "eye to eye"

with former President Donald Trump on the events of Jan. 6 at the U.S. Capitol. Trump wanted Pence to throw out the electoral college votes of certain states but Pence did not think he had the constitutional authority. "I know there might be disagreements between the two of them about January 6th, but there's no disagreement or daylight between the two of them about how important and effective that record was for the Trump/Pence team for four years."

Statewides

Seat to run for treasurer

Appearing at the Kosciusko County Republican Party Lincoln Day Dinner in North Webster, Pete Seat announced Thursday his campaign for the Republican nomination for Indiana State treasurer. "Being the chief in-

vestment officer of the State of Indiana, there is a perception that the treasurer spends all day on the phone with a broker buying and selling stocks," Seat said in launching his campaign before an audience of more than 200 fellow Hoosier Republicans including federal and statewide elected officials. "But at its core this is a role that promotes freedom, prosperity, safety and capitalism through a broad and diversified portfolio of responsibilities that touch millions of Hoosier lives every day." He added, "This role is not for a dispassionate money manager. The job of state treasurer is for someone with a passion for the office and a heart for service. It's a role for someone with a vision for how we best invest in Indiana's future and empower Hoosiers to plan for the best and prepare for the worst." Seat is currently a vice president at Bose Public Affairs Group.

Huckabee Sanders at Friday's GOP dinner

Former White House press secretary and Arkansas gubernatorial candidate Sarah Huckabee Sanders will keynote the Indiana Republican Spring Dinner at the JW Marriott beginning at 5:30 p.m. Friday June 11. RSVP to Hanna Bond at hbond@indiana.gop. Sponsorships range from \$25,000 for a platinum table to \$200 for individuals.

General Assembly

SD46: Grooms retires; endorses Boehnlein

State Sen. Ron Grooms announced he will not run for reelection in 2022 and has endorsed Kevin Boehnlein for the Republican nomination. "During my tenure in the state Senate I have worked on a variety of legislation of which I am proud," Grooms said. "In particular legislation creating the Clark Regional Airport Authority, cracking down on so-called 'pill mills' that were distributing large quantities of opioids, and was a key supporter of the construction of the Lewis and Clark and Lincoln bridges and the rebuilding of the Kennedy Bridge." He is endorsing Greenville Republican Kevin Boehnlein to succeed him. Boehnlein, a financial advisor for Edward Jones and long-time Republican party activist, recently announced his candidacy for the District 46 seat. "I endorse him without reservation. He has my full support," Grooms said.

Presidential 2024

Pence describes Jan. 6 in NH

Mike Pence was in New Hampshire last Thursday night and talked about Jan. 6, the day President Trump goaded his horde of MAGA supporters to "hang Mike Pence" during an insurrection. The former veep said: "As I said that day, Jan. 6 was a dark day in history of the United States Capitol. But thanks to the swift action of the Capitol Police and federal law enforcement, violence was quelled. The Capitol was secured. And that same day, we reconvened the Congress and did our duty under the Constitution and the laws of the United States. You know, President Trump and I have spoken many times since we

left office. And I don't know if we'll ever see eye to eye on that day, but I will always be proud of what we accomplished for the American people over the last four years."

Pence then said: "I will not allow Democrats or their allies in the media to use one tragic day to discredit the aspirations of millions of Americans. Or allow Democrats or their allies in the media to distract our attention from a new administration intent on dividing our country to advance their radical agenda. My fellow Republicans, for our country, for our future, for our children



and our grandchildren, we must move forward, united." He then turned his attention to President Biden, citing "a COVID bill to fund massive expansion of the welfare state" and the "so-called infrastructure bill" that was really a "thinly disguised climate change bill." Pence added: "I just say enough is enough. We're going to stand strong for freedom."

HPI Takeaways: This is the second early presidential primary state Pence has spoken. He is clearly laying the groundwork for a 2024 run. He is running a distant second to Trump in a number of polls. "We did our duty" is his mild retort to Trump, who had pressured Pence to scuttle the 2020 election before turning the MAGA mob on his veep. Pence is attempting to thread the GOP needle. Despite the Jan. 6 insurrection, the Republican Party remains enthralled with . . . Donald Trump at this point. Pence may not have the party juice to "not allow" anything.

Pence on critical race theory

Mike Pence also pushed back against "critical race theory," which seeks to reframe the narrative of American history (AP). Its proponents argue that federal law has preserved the unequal treatment of people on the basis of race and that the country was founded on the theft of land and labor. But Republicans have said concepts suggesting that people are inherently racist or that America was founded on racial oppression are divisive and have no place in the classroom. "America is not a racist country," he said, prompting one of several standing ovations and cheers during his speech. "It is past time for America to discard the left-wing myth of systemic racism," Pence said. "I commend state legislators and governors across the country for banning critical race theory from our schools."

Trump MAGA rallies to resume

Donald Trump on Saturday pushed Republicans to support candidates who are loyal to him in next year's midterm elections as the former president launched a new more active phase of his post presidency (AP). Trump, 74, teased the prospect of another presidential bid of his own in 2024, but vowed first to be an active presence on the campaign trail for those who share his values in next year's fight for control of Congress. "The survival of America depends on our ability to elect Republicans at every level starting with the midterms next year," Trump charged early in a rambling speech that spanned nearly an hour and a half. His advisers are already eyeing subsequent appearances in Ohio, Florida, Alabama and Georgia to help bolster midterm candidates and energize voters. Trump will speak at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) event in Dallas in July, Fox News has learned.

Trump won't commit to Pence

Trump tells Fox News he is not ready to re-up with former Vice President Mike Pence on a potential campaign in 2024. Trump, who was speaking Saturday night at Republican donor dinner in North Carolina, was asked by FOX News if he has any interest in running with Pence again: "Mike and I have a good relationship, we continue to have a good but it's too early to be discussing running mates certainly," said the former president in an exclusive televised pre-speech interview. "I'll make a decision in the not too distant future, maybe sooner than people think. And I think they're going to be very happy," said Trump on Saturday evening.

Facebook bans Trump for 2 years

Facebook announced Friday that former President Donald Trump's account will remain suspended for at least two years, setting a timetable for his potential return after its oversight board criticized the company's indefinite ban over his posts during the deadly Capitol riot (Politico). "Given the gravity of the circumstances that led to Mr. Trump's suspension, we believe his actions constituted a severe violation of our rules which merit the highest penalty available under the new enforcement protocols," Facebook's vice president of global affairs Nick Clegg said.

Further sanctions are possible if it still believes Trump poses a danger, or if he breaks its rules again. Both Trump and his critics slammed Facebook's new timetable, which could allow the former president to return to the platform ahead of a potential 2024 White House run. "Facebook's ruling is an insult to the record-setting 75M people, plus many others, who voted for us in the 2020 Rigged Presidential Election," Trump said in a statement. ❖

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

The politicized COVID vaccine

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – For the first time in history, the president of the United States promised Americans “free beer.”

This isn’t one of those “Free beer ... tomorrow” signs that adorn a few Hoosier restaurants and taverns.



It was President Biden seeking to lure hesitant Americans to get the COVID-19 vaccine after Anheuser Busch offered free brew to gin up vaccine rates. “Get a shot and have a beer,” Biden said on Wednesday as he sought to convince enough Americans to achieve what epidemiologists have termed “herd immunity” in an effort to put this pandemic behind us.

“Free beer for everyone 21 years or over to celebrate the independence from the virus,” Biden said, seeking that elusive 70% penetration needed for herd immunity. In Ohio, Republican Gov. Mike DeWine opted for a “Vax a Million” lottery, spurring vaccination rates up 77%, or more than 68,000 per week.

Many of us thought that the Nobel Prize-level scientific achievement of producing a vaccine in less than a year that is up to 95% efficacy would be the way to get this pandemic out of our lives, our schools, our businesses, out of our stadiums.

But at this writing, Indiana has just 45.5% of its residents who have received at least one vaccine dose. On Thursday, the state reported 418 new infections (down from 6,703 cases on Dec. 4, 2020), and 20 deaths, bringing the number of Hoosiers who have had COVID to 744,474. There have been at least 13,329 verified deaths, making this the most lethal health sequence in state history. The steep decrease in infections reveals that the vaccine works.

Dr. Paul Calkins, associate chief medical executive at IU Health, told WRTV, “If you define it by what President Biden said is the goal of 70% first doses by the Fourth of July, we are not going to get there. In fact, we are going to miss it by a wide margin.”

According to reporter Steve Garbacz of KPC Media,

most of Northeastern Indiana counties have yet to reach the 40% threshold. In Indianapolis, just over 35% have been fully vaccinated.

“Among regions that are currently boasting 50% or higher vaccination rates – with some parts upward of 70% of the total population – include the Indianapolis suburbs; northwest Indiana regions outside of the older, more heavily industrial urban Lake Michigan shore communities; suburban Fort Wayne; college communities including those around Purdue University in West Lafayette and Indiana University in Bloomington; and southwest Indiana around the Evansville metro,” Garbacz reported. “The areas that are behind are basically everywhere else in Indiana, rural counties, most of which are sitting in the 30% range for vaccinations.”

Politico reported something I’ve touched on before, the politicization of this pandemic. On the day President Biden made his “free beer” offer, 12 states had reached the 70% threshold, most in New England, “and every one of them had voted for Biden.” The bottom five states voted for Donald Trump. That’s why Biden insisted that getting vaccinated “is not a partisan act,” noting that the first vaccines were authorized under President Trump, with Vice President Mike Pence and Surgeon General Jerome Adams among the first to be vaccinated.

Politico quoted Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security, who noted that while Mississippi ranked 50th in the COVID vaccine at 34%, it has one of the highest MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination rates in the U.S. Donald Trump defeated Biden 57-43% in Mississippi.

Part of the dynamic in play is something that U.S.

Rep. Victoria Spartz told me last month, that the Food & Drug Administration had given “emergency approval” for this vaccine. Moderna just sought full approval from the FDA this week.

Terre Haute attorney James Bopp, Jr., representing The IU Family for Choice, not Mandates, Inc., filed a public records request with Indiana University regarding the school’s COVID-19 mandate for the upcoming fall semester.

That records request came

after 19 Indiana House Republicans and more than 20 Senate Republicans asked Gov. Eric Holcomb to intervene in IU’s mandate, which has since been modified.

“Requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for IU students, faculty and staff with appropriate exemptions continues the university’s comprehensive science and public health-driven approach to managing and mitigating the pandemic on our campuses,” IU President Michael McRobbie said in a statement. “Throughout the pandemic our paramount concern has been ensuring the health and safety of the IU com-



munity. This requirement will make a 'return to normal' a reality for the fall semester."

But Bopp observed in his public records request, "Our Constitution has made it clear that our government cannot limit a person's freedoms without sufficient justification. IU's mandate limits a student's freedom to choose, demanding administration of an experimental drug or being barred from admission. And, even if a student gets an exemption, IU imposes severe restrictions on that student, including a mask mandate, frequent testing, and

limits on leaving their home and on attending activities." During this unprecedented pandemic, the notion that wearing a face mask and taking a vaccine – both designed to protect the broader public – are now perceived by some as a limit on "personal freedom." ❖

The columnist is publisher of Howey Politics Indiana at www.howeypolitics.com. Find Howey on Facebook and Twitter @hwypol.



Gerrymandered maps

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Due to delay in completion of the Census, gerrymandering for congressional and state legislative districts will be rather late this year. The Indiana General Assembly moved its final adjournment deadline to Nov. 5 to have time to receive official data and play the gerrymander game.



Better late than never? Good government groups in Indiana and other states would prefer never. They of course want redistricting, the once-a-decade drawing of new districts to reflect population shifts. But they never want to see another gerrymander.

In gerrymandering, the party controlling the state legislature draws districts for Congress and the legislature that are designed to elect as many members of that party as possible. Districts sometimes have strange shapes as the prevailing party links together areas that vote for the opposition, surrendering those districts, but making more districts "sure bets" for their side.

Gerrymandering usually works. In Indiana, where Republicans drew the districts after the 2010 Census, the GOP has built up super majorities in the state legislative chambers. Statewide totals for legislative races show that Democrats still would lose control of the chambers in a fair, nonpartisan redistricting. But Republicans wouldn't always have super majorities, where Democrats have little voice and couldn't even break a quorum if they all left the floor.

Even in 2012, when Democrats did better than usual statewide in the Republican-tending state – winning a U.S. Senate seat and coming close for governor – Democratic candidates won in only two of the nine congressional districts.

Not fair? Right. Also, not unusual. Not as blatant as found in some other states. And not something new.

Gerrymandering is named after one of the founding fathers, Elbridge Gerry, signer of the Declaration of

Independence and vice president under James Madison. While governor of Massachusetts, he supported a redistricting plan in which one district slithered around the map in the shape of a salamander. The term "gerrymander" was born.

Even Abraham Lincoln was a victim. In "Team of Rivals," historian Doris Kearns Goodwin notes that Lincoln's fellow Republican candidates for the legislative seats then controlling appointment of a U.S. senator got the most popular votes. They didn't, however, win the most districts. A Lincoln supporter complained then that "by the gerrymandering of the state, seven hundred Democratic votes were equal to one thousand Republican votes." Lincoln didn't get to the Senate. He did better later.

One reason it's so difficult to get rid of gerrymandering is that a party controlling redistricting can use the "what-about?" argument, pointing to a past gerrymander by the other party as even worse.

Indiana Republicans cite when Democrats did the redistricting and drew a South Bend district extending way south to take in part of Kokomo.

It's hard to get a party with the power to redistrict to forget the past and let a nonpartisan commission draw the districts.

Another use of the "what-about?" argument is point to other states. Neither party wants to lose its gerrymandering clout if the opposition in a neighboring state is drawing salamanders. Something should be done, however, and not just for fairness for candidates.

Gerrymandering is a key factor in how contentious Congress has become, with stalemate in, bipartisan compromise out.

With so many congressional districts drawn to be safe Republican and safe Democratic, there are fewer and fewer competitive fall races. The real contests are in the primary elections, where candidates win by appealing to the partisan primary voters with extremely strong rhetoric and stands. They go to Congress, unwilling to move back from those rigid partisan stands or to soften language.

Good government groups aren't going to stop Republican gerrymandering in Indiana or Democratic gerrymandering in neighboring Illinois. They do bring pressure to keep some salamanders away. They also arouse public support for a remedy in more states in the future. ❖

What economists got right on the pandemic

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – As this pandemic hopefully winds down, it's useful to think through the forecasts and analysis that economists got right, and what we got wrong. This is important because the U.S. has not ever been through such a deep, rapid, nearly simultaneous economic downturn. Never has our fiscal response been as rapid or comprehensive. Thus, economists have played an important and lingering role in this pandemic. I begin with what we got right.



The pandemic's effect on the economy was fast and furious. Nearly all the jobs lost during the downturn occurred before any government action to close restaurants and bars, enforce mask standards or limit gatherings. State governments responded with wildly different limitations, making it relatively easy to isolate the effect of disease and government action on the economy. Over the past several months a number of high quality studies have made clear that it was disease, not government, that delivered and sustained this recession.

From the very beginning, the economics profession made it clear that fixing the economy meant ending the pandemic. That proved right. Whether or not the government interventions ultimately reduced the disease incidence is an epidemiological question, not an economic one. But, any analysis of the cost and benefits, particularly of low-cost measures like mask wearing, would justify much of what happened last spring.

Economists were also correct about the general magnitude and industries most affected by the pandemic. For example, in March 2020 the center where I work published a study of those occupations most at risk nationally, and reported about 28 million workers at risk, with the average wage of about \$15 per hour. As it turns out, job losses in the first quarter exceeded 22 million, and were heavily clustered on workers making less than \$15 an hour. Given the uncertainty of the moment, that turned out to be a highly prescient analysis.

Last spring there was a loud chorus of economists warning of the effect of deep tax losses to state and local governments. Because Congress and two administrations heeded this warning in their fiscal response, that danger passed. There were a number of smaller matters economists got right, but we also missed some important economic changes.

Few economists foretold the major changes to consumption and savings that COVID and the broad fis-

cal relief brought. Consumer spending on entertainment and recreation remains almost 15% below pre-pandemic levels, while grocery spending is 17% higher. Overall consumer spending is up 13%, and among taxable retail, spending is a whopping 25% higher than pre-pandemic levels.

The spending shift boosted tax revenues as households shifted consumption to more taxable items. A big portion of this was in the home construction sector. Perhaps too many economists were busy with home improvement projects last summer to recognize the implications of this consumption shift. These changes are likely transitory, or if not, do not present a compelling challenge to public policy.

Nearly every economist worried about the pace of labor market recovery following the pandemic. Many of us felt that the combination of low interest rates and longer-term pandemic risks would motivate firms to adopt labor-saving technology. In particular, bars, restaurants, accommodations and other face-to-face industries would likely see lower demand for workers in the post-pandemic era. Some of this has happened, but right now the greatest angst is over a labor shortage, not labor surplus.

It is too early to know any of this for sure, but over the past three months, job growth has largely stalled. Businesses claim this is due to workers unwilling to take a job, but for every new job created nationally, more than five workers lost benefits. Something else is happening.

Few economists, myself included, made public predictions of a permanent decline in labor supply. It seems increasingly likely that workers, especially low-income workers, have shifted their desire to work. Some of this may be transitory, due to childcare issues, but some of it is permanent. Today it is increasingly clear that the only thing that will change this behavior is higher wages. I would not have anticipated this a year ago, and only a few other economists did so. In our defense, this is not really a public policy problem. Businesses are not owed workers any more than people are owed jobs. To argue otherwise is quite literally a mark of at least borderline socialism, but then intellectual consistency in these matters is no longer in vogue.

The biggest change from COVID is one few economists predicted back in April or May of 2020. Today it seems likely that 20% of jobs can be performed remotely, or at least quasi-remotely. This is a radical change that will upend housing and labor markets. Workers who can labor entirely at home no longer need to commute and are free to live nearly anywhere. Workers who work mostly at home can dramatically expand their household location choices. Businesses who can offer this flexibility can pay less for the same quality of work.

Taken together, this means flatter, less densely populated cities. It means less commuting congestion and more demand for broadband and technology education and training. Homes will change to include quiet office spaces, and the demand for single family housing in

suburban and smaller-town America will grow. This necessarily means that families will choose neighborhoods with a greater emphasis on amenities such as schools, parks, public safety and walkability.

These changes were coming, but we probably just went through a multi-decade period of change in just a year or two. Few economists saw this coming early last year, but we are now in the midst of a great reckoning. However, I'm not sure seeing this change early would've made a huge policy difference. Economists have argued for almost three decades that household location decisions are primarily connected to local amenities. Some communities heeded this overwhelming evidence; others ignored it. Those who listened and acted successfully on quality of place will likely experience a boom decade. Those places

that did not, will experience quite the opposite.

The lesson here is not that economists are especially knowledgeable about the future. We are not. But, this profession has very good tools for understanding long-term changes in behavior and for thinking through the implications of those changes. We also understand a bit about what causes local economies to grow or shrink. Those places that heeded these lessons have reason to view the recovery with some optimism. ❖

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.

Just the facts, please

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Here are the facts about Hoosier earnings, with comparisons to the nation, in the years of 1999 and 2019. These years were chosen to bracket two decades dominated by the internet and telecommunications revolution, while avoiding the Covid year of 2020.



The data are from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. No adjustment for price changes were made because those changes themselves incorporate information about changes in demand and conditions of supply.

Interpretations are left to the readers who object regularly to those supplied by the author. Some observations are in order, however.

First, of 87 industries with complete data for both years, the U.S. had 81 (93%) with higher total earnings in 2019 than in 1999; Indiana had 75 (86%). Growing earnings will be observed if more workers are employed, and/or workers are employed at higher wages, and/or workers are putting in more hours than previously.

Second, an industry may have increased total earnings, but not necessarily be paying a higher share of the total earning in the nation or the state. An industry with growing earnings may not be growing as fast as the economy as a whole and thereby not contributing as much to the overall economy's growth.

In the U.S., shares of total earnings rose for 32 of 87 industries (37%); for Indiana, the figure was 38 (44%).

A growing share of total earnings paid in the economy is one measure of an industry's market success. By examining the change in the share of earnings paid by a given industry in one state to the changing share of the same industry nationwide, we obtain a measure of com-

petitive success.

In 1999, the share of total earnings paid to hospital workers was 2.7% in both the nation and Indiana. By 2019, hospital earnings grew to 3.4% of the nation's total earnings, but Indiana's hospitals had moved up to 4.2% of state earnings.

Why this difference? Indiana hospital earnings advanced by 189% in an economy growing by 87%. Nationally, hospital earnings grew by 168% compared to a 115% increase in total earnings. Hence, the difference was the relative growth ratio of Indiana hospitals (2.2) exceeded the ratio for U.S. hospitals (1.5).

In the private sector, motor vehicles, bodies and trailers, and parts manufacturing was Indiana's most important industry in 1999 with 6.5% of earnings. By 2019, that share of Hoosier earnings declined to 4.4%. Ambulatory health care moved up to number one from 4.1 to 6.2%.

Nationally, the motor vehicle industry fell from 1.2 to 0.6% of earnings while managing only a 10% growth in earnings against a 115% general increase.

Those are some of the facts about earnings. How would you evaluate Indiana economic performance given the data above? ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com. Follow his views and those of John Guy on "Who Gets What?" wherever podcasts are available or at mortonjohn.libsyn.com. Reach him at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

The war on Dr. Fauci

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News

ANDERSON – House Minority Whip Steve Scalise seems convinced Dr. Anthony Fauci is part of some huge conspiracy. “The truth is out,” he tweeted. “Fauci’s emails show he suspected early on that COVID-19 possibly leaked from the Wuhan lab – yet he stayed silent. This is a major cover-up. We need a full congressional investigation into the origins of COVID-19.”



Actually, the emails show no such thing. What they really show is the nation’s foremost infectious disease expert working ridiculously long hours in an effort to get out the truth about the coronavirus.

Buzzfeed reported an email exchange in the early days of the pandemic with someone

wanting to know whether pneumonia vaccines could provide protection against severe COVID-19. Fauci responded in detail about an hour later. “Oh my god,” the person wrote back. “I honestly never expected you to reply, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being so generous.”

That’s the Fauci many Americans came to love and respect during this public health crisis. Guys like Scalise, though, see something else in all those emails. They see the message Fauci received more than a year ago from an executive at EcoHealth Alliance, the global organization that helped to fund research at China’s Wuhan Institute of Virology. In that message, the executive thanked Fauci for saying publicly that scientific evidence seemed to support a natural origin for the virus rather than a release from a lab.

CNN’s John Berman asked Fauci about that discussion during an interview on CNN’s New Day.

“There are some of your critics who say this shows you have too cozy a relationship with the people behind the Wuhan lab research,” Berman said. “What do you say to that?”

Fauci didn’t hold back. “That’s nonsense,” he said. “I don’t even see how they get that from that email.” He pointed out that the origins of the coronavirus remain uncertain. “I have always said, and will say today to you, John, that I still believe the most likely origin is from an

animal species to a human, but I keep an absolutely open mind that if there may be other origins of that, there may be another reason. It could have been a lab leak.”

Fauci keeps an open mind. He looks for scientific evidence. That’s what scientists do. “You can misconstrue it however you want,” Fauci said. “That email was from a person to me saying ‘thank you’ for whatever it is he thought I said, and I said that I think the most likely origin is a jumping of species. I still do think it is. At the same time as I’m keeping an open mind that it might be a lab leak.”

It’s at least worth noting that two researchers going to the hospital with respiratory issues in the middle of cold and flu season might not be the smoking gun some folks think it is.

Fauci didn’t hide his frustration when Berman asked about another email exchange, this one with Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health. Berman noted that much of the message had been redacted, and he asked whether Fauci remembered the substance.

“They only took about 10,000 emails from me,” Fauci said. “Of course, I remember. I remember all 10,000 of them. Give me a break.”

Again, though, the doctor said what he thought. “I don’t remember what’s in that redacted,” he said, “but the idea, I think, is quite farfetched that the Chinese deliberately engineered something so that they could kill them-



selves as well as other people. I think that’s a bit far out, John.”

Conspiracy theorists like Scalise won’t pay attention, of course. They already have all the evidence they need. ❖

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.

Differential privacy and redistricting

By **TERESA A. SULLIVAN** and **QIAN CAI**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – The U.S. Census Bureau is charged under Title 13 of the U.S. Code to protect the confidentiality of census respondents and to ensure that their data remain private for 72 years. Since 1850, the Census Bureau has implemented privacy measures in every decade, but the 2020 census provides new challenges in ensuring privacy. In particular, new efforts to secure individual privacy in the released census data create a tradeoff between privacy and accuracy that is problematic for redistricting.

Because of the large number of commercial databases, social media sites, and other sources of digital information, analysts have access to many sources of individual data besides the census. Even some government records that are subject to Freedom of Information Act requests may contain such information (such as driver license records and voting records). This greater availability of data, along with high-power computing, pose the possibility of reverse identification: that is, a person armed with publicly available data may be able to identify a unique individual respondent in the census data. The Census Bureau considers this possibility an unacceptable risk given its responsibilities under Title 13.

The solution the bureau intends to use is called differential privacy, a technique developed by data scientists and described in the literature.[1] The bureau is using differential privacy in such a way that only state population totals remain intact, but any populations below the state level (say, for a town, city, or county) and the characteristics of the individuals within the jurisdiction are changed with “noise” injection to fuzz up the actual data. A variable called ϵ measures the level of noise that is injected into the data. A higher value of ϵ indicates less loss of accuracy; a lower value indicates more loss of accuracy.[2] The noise injection, even with the highest ϵ value the bureau has applied, results in many cases not only in less accurate data, but in inconsistent or even illogical data.

The state populations for the apportionment of Congress, which have already been released, are not subjected to the differential privacy process. Differential privacy is not needed for these data, whose use is to document “the whole number of persons in each state” as required by the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Neither voting-age population nor race/ethnicity information is required for reapportionment.

The data for redistricting are a different story. The Census Bureau plans to use differential privacy when these data, called Public Law 94-171 redistricting data,

are released. The release date is currently Aug. 16; the statutory deadline of March 31 was missed because of the effects the pandemic had on completing the original count and quality checks of the data. Interested parties to redistricting are typically concerned with total population, voting-age population (18+), and race and ethnicity of these populations in small geographic areas, such as census block or census block group. Race and Hispanic origin are known to be associated with party affiliation and voting behavior. All these variables will be injected with statistical noise under conditions of differential privacy.

Just how much accuracy will be lost in redistricting? On April 26, 2021, the Census Bureau issued a test dataset for analysts. This test dataset consisted of the 2010 census redistricting data

as originally issued, and then, for comparison, the same data, only using differential privacy. Because the census block, which is roughly the size of a city block, is the basic geographic unit for redistricting, the comparisons typically focus on the census block level.

The Demographics Research Group of UVA’s Weldon Cooper Center analyzed the test data for Virginia and found significant inaccuracy at the census block level. Some findings are listed below:

- Nearly a quarter of the census blocks had a population change of more than 10%.
- Nearly 2,500 census blocks had only children (ages 0-17) but no adults (ages 18+).
- Populations in 1,255 census blocks were completely erased to 0.

Is differential privacy a fatal flaw for redistricting? Some analysts are not too concerned because the very commercial databases that prompted the use of differential privacy are also available to redistricting commissions and committees. Voting records, for example, may provide the type of information that redistricters need. But redistricting still relies on the census counts to ensure equal size of the districts and fair racial representation.

Others have sounded the alarm, most notably Alabama, which has filed suit in federal court to prevent the use of differential privacy in the data released for redistricting.[3] Sixteen state attorneys general of both red and blue persuasions filed an amicus brief in support of Alabama. The fundamental argument Alabama makes is that the Census Bureau will “provide the States purposefully flawed population tabulations.... [the Bureau] will force Alabama to redistrict using results that purposefully count people in the wrong place.” The filing alleges that the decision to use differential privacy was arbitrary and capricious, and a violation of the Administrative Procedure Act as well as a violation of the Census Act and the due process and equal protection rights of the plaintiffs.

Whatever decision is made in the Alabama case, however, social scientists who analyze census data, especially for small geographic areas, will find the issue of differential privacy a recurring concern in their analysis. ❖



John Krull, Statehouse File: The truth, it seems, is the enemy. The truth is the thing from which Republicans must flee. That was the message sent by the Republican U.S. senators when 35 of them—including Indiana’s Todd Young—voted to prevent the creation of a bipartisan commission to investigate the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol. Another nine—including Indiana’s Mike Braun—didn’t bother to vote. Only six members of the GOP U.S. Senate caucus summoned the moral courage and the devotion to country to defy Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, and the deposed mad king, pouting former president Donald Trump and say: Yes, when a mob attacks the cradle of our republic, kills people — including officers of the law — and attempts to destroy our system of self-government, we ought to try to find out why and make sure it doesn’t happen again. The staunch six weren’t enough to put a stop to a filibuster. This was a sad, sad, sad day for the Senate, for the country ... and, most of all, for the Republican Party. Republicans have attempted to argue that the commission would have been a partisan smear campaign. Their contention is unadulterated nonsense — bull in its purest form.



Every concession Republicans asked for from Democrats was granted. The commission would have been made up of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. Both Republicans and Democrats would have had subpoena power. The staffing for the commission would have been equally divided between Democrats and Republicans. The commission’s work would have been wrapped up by the end of 2021 so its findings wouldn’t be released in an election year. And both Democrats and Republicans would have to agree upon those findings before they could be released. The cliché following the GOP’s abdication of responsibility in the Senate was that Republicans couldn’t take “yes” for an answer. In fact, they were desperate to say “yes” to the man who has led them, again and again and again, to ruin. Trump. There is something about that man that robs otherwise sober and tough-minded Republicans of both their sense and their nerve. He is the bad habit they cannot break, the corrupting influence with whom they cannot part company. In this election, his petulance — his complete lack of the emotional discipline one expects of a functioning adult — cost them not just the White House, but the Senate. Both GOP candidates in Georgia were on their way to victory until Trump fired up his perpetual grievance apparatus, encouraged his followers not to vote and thus made Chuck Schumer majority leader. I have written before that the American institution upon which Donald Trump was going to wreak the greatest damage was his own party. That prediction, sadly, is being borne out by events. The truth terrifies Donald Trump. Tragically, though, he terrifies most Republicans. ❖

Damon Linker, The Week: In the nearly six-months since Donald Trump left office, we’ve heard two competing answers to the question of his place in the

Republican Party and its ongoing efforts to undermine American democracy. According to the view favored by Never Trump Republicans, including Liz Cheney and her admirers, not to mention lots of liberal pundits, Trump is politically toxic to the GOP. This was true in 2020, but it’s become even more so since the horrifying events of Jan. 6, which appalled millions of Americans, including some of his own voters. For that reason, a future in which Trump maintains strong influence over the party, let alone one in which he wins its presidential nomination in 2024, is one in which Republicans are bound to lose the presidency. Which helps to explain why the party seems so fixated on installing anti-democratic means of gaining and holding power. Then there’s the view favored by many elected Republicans, donors, and consultants who have remained wedded to the party without becoming full-on Trump apologists, and even some centrist pundits like myself. In this view, Trump brought lots of new people into the GOP, increasing his vote share between 2016 and 2020, and improving his margins with Black and Hispanic voters. This shows that a candidate who followed Trump’s lead in appealing to these new voters without repelling more traditional Republican supporters (especially in the suburbs) could put the party on the path to outright victory, winning popular vote pluralities and maybe even majorities. Right now, the second answer is somewhat restraining Republicans from even more strongly supporting vote suppression and strategies for rejecting the outcome of elections. That’s because the argument is democratically optimistic, suggesting the GOP can win the presidency by trying to win over voters and encouraging them to show up on Election Day. But what if the second answer proves to be wrong? Because it just might be. And that could portend an even stronger shift in an anti-democratic direction for the GOP. ❖

Jonathan Last, The Bulwark: Since 1900, the most no-hitters thrown in a single season has been seven. Throwing a no-hitter is hard. Really hard. We are currently a third of the way through the 2021 season and we’ve already had six no-hitters. Big Data has transformed baseball and disrupted the game’s equilibrium. Baseball has always been a data-driven sport, but for the first 100 years, the data was outcome oriented: batting average; slugging average; ERA. About 25 years ago, people started getting more sophisticated in their use of outcome data and started paying attention to OPS and WAR and other statistical constructs. That was the Moneyball era, and while it was interesting, it wasn’t fundamentally disruptive to how the game was played. But in the last decade or so, baseball has unleashed technology and software on the game to create an entire universe of process data. And this shift has been the biggest disruption since the end of the dead ball era. For example: Cameras and software combine to track the launch angle and outgoing velocity of batted balls. This has changed how hitters swing the bat. ❖

Media websites down worldwide

NEW YORK — Countless websites and apps around the world went down Tuesday after Fastly, a major content delivery network, reported a widespread failure. Fastly supports news sites and apps like [CNN](#), the Guardian, the New York Times, IndyStar and many others. It also provides content delivery for Twitch, Pinterest, HBO Max, Hulu, Reddit, Spotify and other services. Other major internet platforms and sites including Amazon, Target, and the UK government website — Gov.uk — are not working.



Chambers to head IEDC, Commerce

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric J. Holcomb named Bradley B. Chambers, the president, CEO, and founder of Buckingham Companies, as the state's Secretary of Commerce beginning July 6. "There is no one more qualified to lead our economic development efforts than someone who's been a leader in the business for 35 years. Not only has Brad created, grown and expanded his business from the ground up, he's been focused on how his work contributes to making Indiana the best place to invest, work, and live for his entire career," said Holcomb. "Brad will be the next great leader of our economic development efforts, and he joins us just as we are getting our \$500 million READI program off the ground. We will have a transformational leader at the helm of this transformational project." Building Indianapolis-based Buckingham Companies with a focus on midwestern values, creativity, community involvement and an entrepreneurial spirit, "I'm very excited for the opportunity to strengthen statewide entrepreneurship and help drive Indiana's overall business climate to the next level. said

Chambers. Chambers will enter into a two-year contract with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation board to lead the IEDC. He will reduce his day-to-day involvement with Buckingham while he serves as Secretary of Commerce. Buckingham Companies will not be eligible for state of Indiana incentives during Chambers' tenure with the state.

Erin Murphy named Holcomb press sec

INDIANAPOLIS — Erin Murphy will serve as Gov. Holcomb's press secretary. Previously, Erin was the communications director for the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). Prior to joining DCS, Erin served as the communications director for the city of Westfield, where she was the media relations advisor and spokeswoman. Between 2002 and 2013, Erin worked as a reporter and anchor for several television stations, including WTHI in Terre Haute, Indiana and WISH-TV in Indianapolis. All media inquiries to the governor's office should be directed to Erin, who can be reached by phone at 317-618-7635 or email at emurphy2@gov.in.gov.

Indy to lift mask mandate today

INDIANAPOLIS — Indianapolis' mask mandate will end Tuesday for fully vaccinated residents as part of the City-County Council's ratification of a new public health order Monday evening ([IBJ](#)). The Democratic-majority council passed the measure 19-5, along party lines, with Republicans opposed because the order didn't fully lift all pandemic restrictions. In addition to lifting the mask mandate, Monday's order also loosens capacity restrictions in Marion County as follows: Religious services and funerals, as well as community pools, can open to 100% capacity. Cultural, entertainment and tourism sites, fitness centers, libraries, and indoor service at bars and restaurants can open to

75% capacity. Bars and restaurants must continue 6-foot distancing between parties. Indoor sporting events can open to 50% capacity, to match outdoor events. Large gatherings will be able to accommodate 500 people, up from 50 people. Organizers for larger events will have to submit a risk-mitigation plan a week in advance and receive approval before the event.

Indy Council passes \$25M street plan

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indianapolis City-County Council voted Monday to approved funding for new roads in residential areas in the city ([WRTV](#)). The council approved more than \$48 million in transfers and appropriations to the Indianapolis Department of Public Works budget for design, construction and inspection of capital infrastructure. Of the \$48 million, \$25 million will be used to improve the roads in residential areas in all 25 City-County Council districts. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett announced the plan in May and said it will bring more crews to the less-traveled roadways. "This is not filling chuckholes; it is actual real reconstruction of these streets," Dan Parker, the director of Indy's DPW.

New Albany councilman dies

NEW ALBANY — Pat McLaughlin, one of the most seasoned members of the New Albany City Council who is credited with being an integral part of the city's recent growth and success, died Sunday after a brief illness. He was 64 (Suddeath, [News & Tribune](#)). McLaughlin was a four-term councilman first elected to serve District 4 in 2007. "Pat loved his wife and sons more than I can describe. He was a family man to his core," New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan said. "He is my good Irish friend. I am lucky to have known him and am forever thankful that he chose to step up to lead and to serve the city of New Albany."