

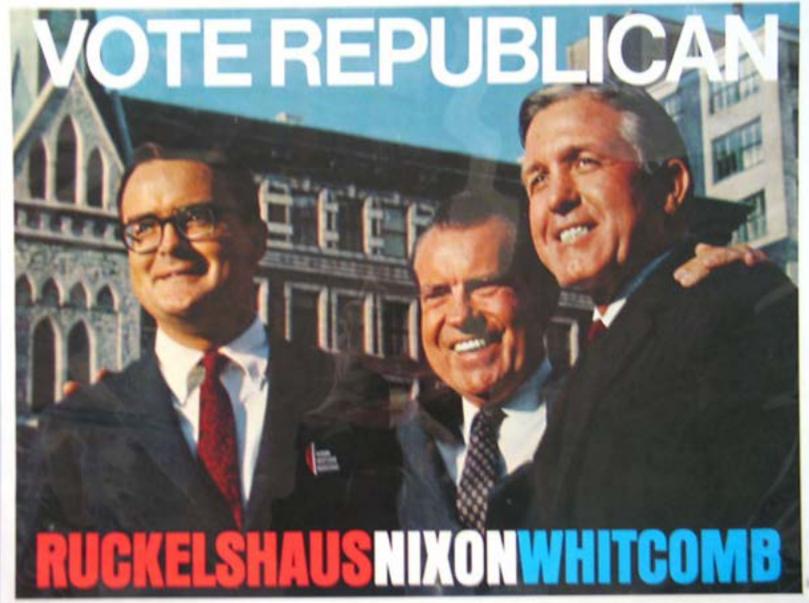
# Big county chairs ran the spoils system

How Keith Bulen, Orvas Beers & company created the modern political Indiana

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – In the spring of 1968, the political leaders of the Allen County Republican Party gathered at the home of Chairman Orvas Beers to select the GOP convention nominee for secretary of state. Fort Wayne had been slotted for attorney general, but State Sen. Allan Bloom had turned them down. Instead, Lake County chose Ted Sendak. Fort Wayne now drew the slot to complete the current ticket with Secretary of State Edgar Whitcomb of Seymour, who was slotted to be governor.

No immediate nominee jumped out to the local brain trust. One of the participants noticed local banker Bill Salin mowing his lawn. “How about Bill Salin?” one of



them suggested. Salin was not a local party activist and basically unknown outside northeast Indiana.

Salin did head the trust department at Indiana

**Continued on page 3**

## Post Roe Indiana

By **CURT SMITH**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Dec. 1 arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in a Mississippi abortion case, coupled with a ruling in a different abortion case from Texas, have seasoned court observers predicting that major changes in abortion policy are coming.

While the particulars of each case matter, two overarching observations suggest states will be able to substantially regulate – if not ban – abortions as early as next summer for the first time since 1973.

The first observation is that a majority of the same court that decreed abortion is a constitutional right back in 1973



**“I know many women are concerned about Roe v. Wade. I think we know what happens when Roe is overturned: Todd Young has got a lot of explaining to do. Some women are going to love him for that and others are going to be angry.”**

- Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.





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**Jack E. Howey**  
 editor emeritus  
 1926-2019



is comfortable with a Texas law that bans abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy. This new Sept. 1 law more than halved abortions in Texas, our nation's second most populous state. A court committed to continuing its 1973 standard would not allow such a significant variance.

**The second** observation is that the Dec. 1 arguments made clear that a majority of the court is uncomfortable with current vague standards (phrases like viability and undue burden are the core of current edicts), suggesting the whole issue may be upended and sent to the states for unique policy prescriptions reflecting the will of the people in those 50 separate jurisdictions.

While we may not know the specifics of the decision until summer, it is not too early to begin to consider what might be different in Indiana and beyond when this potentially landmark ruling is handed down.

First, if Roe v. Wade and its subsequent cases are struck down, abortion policy will drastically change. Fifty state legislatures will set abortion laws and limits, not nine Supreme Court justices in Washington, D.C. As a pro-life state (one advocacy group rates Indiana the fifth most pro-life state in America), Indiana will certainly immediately move to change abortion laws.

Assuming the ruling comes down in late June of 2022, a likely timeframe, there will be immediate calls for a special session of the Indiana General Assembly to restrict abortion. Those calls should be heeded.

**My belief is Indiana** would ban all abortions except when the life of the mother is at risk. This preserves the core principle that pro-life advocates and legislators espouse, namely that the unborn child's life is of equal worth and dignity with the mother. It is possible Indiana would allow greater exceptions (rape and incest) than the life of the mother. Legislators would think longer and harder about abortion policy, knowing that their collective actions will actually become law. This might reveal some surprises in a solid pro-life majority in both

chambers, but only at the margins.

The politics of abortion would change immediately as well, and for the better, although it will be harder for the GOP to maintain its coalition without opposition to abortion as its central organizing principle. The focus of abortion lawmaking would then be in the states, with California and New York certain to maintain pro-choice laws while Indiana and Texas legislate pro-life practices. No longer would U.S. Supreme Court nominees come under such intense scrutiny and slander. No longer would judicial appointments be such a strong issue in presidential politics. The energy for or against abortion would be diffused across 50 states and the nearly 7,400 state legislative races that fill those legislative seats.

**This, too, would** be a healthy development for national politics. As noted above, the GOP has relied on pro-life positions to maintain its wide vote margin with faith-based voters, who make up perhaps 28% of the population and more than half of the GOP base vote. With abortion no longer a national issue, the party will need to sharpen its policy focus to retain those voters. Look to leaders like Hoosier U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, R-Columbia City, for early signs of success in maintaining this coalition.

If the court only modifies abortion, say by affirming the Texas six-week standard or the Mississippi 15-week standard, rather than an outright overturning of Roe, the issue will retain a national focus, but of lesser intensity. Indiana and maybe 20 to 25 other states will adopt whatever new standard is allowed that lessens abortion. And then the next day, we pro-lifers will go back to work to eliminate all abortions.

Beyond the obvious policy and political changes as abortion is restricted, two other good things happen.

Most significantly, we end up with more children, which is a very good thing. If the Texas standard applies, perhaps 4,000 more Hoosier souls are born each year. If the

abhorrent practice is ended outright, nearly 8,000 more children will take their first breath of Indiana air each year. Multiply those figures by 50 to get a sense of the national numbers, although not all states will immediately limit abortion. Our population pyramid is tragically altered due to the 63 million abortions since 1973, making the Social Security system insolvent, our labor markets unnaturally tight, and our culture coarse.

**And that brings us to** the final benefit of lessening or eliminating abortion. This barbaric practice has coarsened our culture in scores of ways. From minimizing

the value of children and family, to giving men and women a pass on parenting children they conceive (just get an abortion!), to showing a callous disregard for life, abortion makes us a more selfish, me-centered society.

Should the court end abortion as a national decree, as I pray it does, time will tell if my observations of the coarsening effect of abortion are true. I believe we will see tangible, measurable changes in Hoosier public. ❖

**Smith is the former chairman of the Indiana Family Institute.**

## Chairs, from page 1

National Bank in Fort Wayne. Banks, as we shall later note, then played an important part in the spoils system as well. And it should be noted that, while Salin disappeared from politics after being defeated by Larry Conrad in 1970, he went on to found the successful Salin Bank & Trust Company.

**So how did it** come to be that a group of party officials could pick an Indiana secretary of state in such a haphazard manner? As the story was told to me, I was just a kid absorbing great stories from those involved, back in the days when the state was led by Democrats. In 1960, Democrat Matt Welsh had been elected and followed by Democrat Gov. Roger Branigin, who was serving in 1968. The Indiana U.S. senators when I was growing up were Vance Hartke and Birch Bayh.

A statewide deal among Republican county chairmen, organized by the largest county chairmen who controlled the most delegates, put together a geographical ticket, temporarily putting their hatchets in the ground instead of each other's backs. Keith Bulen of Marion County was the biggest power. He even made peace with Seth Denbo, John Snyder, Buena Chaney, and the brokers of southwest and southeast Indiana.

Whitcomb of southeast was first secretary of state, who then led the state ticket to victory as the gubernatorial candidate in 1968. Trudy Etherton of St. Joseph County was elected auditor. Richard Folz of Evansville became lieutenant governor. John Snyder from Washington in southwest Indiana was elected treasurer. We've already mentioned Sendak of Lake and Salin of Allen.

William Ruckelshaus of Indianapolis was nomi-

nated to run for the U.S. Senate. The Republicans were hoping to win the presidency with Richard Nixon in 1968, which meant that National Committeeman Keith Bulen would be the point person for federal patronage since Ruckelshaus would, if elected, be his guy also. If Ruckelshaus lost, Bulen would continue to be the key Hoosier contact person. This was, I was told, part of the negotiation for a southern Indiana-dominated statewide ticket of nominees from southeast and southwest Indiana.

The state treasurer's post at the time was also part of the spoils system. There was not yet a requirement that state revenue funds had to be placed at banks that offered the best rates. Instead, funds could be placed in party supporters' banks, which "helped encourage" contributions. Back then, major regional banks had a "Republican" contact and a "Democrat" contact. But banks were known, over time, to favor one side more than the other.

**In a humorous side story,** Treasurer John Snyder (who was also state GOP chairman from 1970-72), once told me that Orvas Beers was an ungrateful man. Snyder said that he (Snyder) was the first statewide elected official to endorse Nixon for president in 1968. He took Orvas Beers to some event and introduced

him to Nixon, which is how Orvas became the state Nixon chairman. It wasn't long afterward, when Orvas was blasting me for siding with "those people from south of 40," that Beers said Snyder was a betrayer of friendships. He, Orvas Beers, the first chairman of a major county to endorse Richard Nixon, introduced Snyder to Nixon!

The reason I was connected to the politicians south of U.S. 40 was not locational. I was a young conservative activist, and because of that, was invited to be part of an Indianapolis group centered around Indianapolis News editor M. Stanton Evans. Evans had been the primary author of the Sharon Statement, the statement of



**Marion County GOP Chairman L. Keith Bulen**

principles of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) created at the gathering at the Sharon, Conn., home of William F. Buckley Jr. Evans also wrote a number of books on conservatism, which were widely read among conservatives.

**A number of us were** "token youths" at the gathering. They included R. Emmett Tyrell, John Von Kannon, J. Danforth Quayle, Daniel Manion, and a few other activists. The group went by different names, with the semi-public name being the "Beer & Pizza Marching Society." It, along with the Denbo-Snyder-Chaney "south of 40" group, constituted the core of the non-Bulen fan club. The Indianapolis group, at this time, was particularly incensed by the massive downtown Indy power grab referred to as Unigov.

A number of the Beer & Pizza Marching Society members illustrated to me the best example of existing party sub-clusters inside the larger party organization. State Sen. Leslie Duvall, Councilman Bill Schneider, Rex Early, and others were Indianapolis counterpoints to Bulen. BPM Herm and Fred Andre, Don Lipsett (who among other things created the conservative essential dress apparel at the time, the Adam Smith tie), and others were also key conservative activists. Twenty to 30 people usually attended the meeting, including many key appointees in the Whitcomb Administration. In other words, I became involved in the statewide brawl for ideological reasons.

The 1970 fight for power was initiated largely over the fight for the U.S. Senate nomination to oppose Vance Hartke but spread into a county-by-county chairman brawl for the district chairmen posts to control the party. The most unusual part that I was involved in occurred when Gov. Whitcomb pulled the license bureau control from the Bulen-dominated faction.

**In Allen County, it meant** that Bulen ally Beers lost control to DeKalb County and 4th District Chairman Dean Kruse. I was a good friend of Dean's. Dean then picked the chairman of the Anthony Wayne YAF chapter to run the Allen County license branches. We quickly learned that Orvas Beers and allies owned the building the Fort Wayne License Bureau rented (supplemental income from rent as we also learned from the record books). We were ordered to vacate the building.

Young secured a large building on the Landing that until recently had been home to Calvary Temple's Adam's Apple Coffeehouse. We needed volunteers to help us move lots and lots of license plates, as well as get the license branch opened as soon as possible. At that point,

I was only involved in the moving, including getting some vehicles from our furniture store. It was absolute chaos.

By late that night we were mostly moved in, but not totally. I was completely spent. I drove home our store's pickup, with the back filled to the brim with license plates, and parked it in our family drive. My dad met me at the door and asked what was in the truck. I told him that they were license plates, so he went out to look. He came in somewhat agitated and asked if I realized those were all truck plates, worth thousands of dollars. No, I said, but I am exhausted and can't do anything more so I'm going to bed. The next morning, he was asleep in the recliner in front of our front picture window with a view of the pickup truck.

Among the things I learned beyond the cost of truck license plates was that the county GOP officials each paid themselves some salary from the main bureau as well as supplementary ones. Other officials, including ward leaders, had income coming from part-time jobs. The full-time positions were patronage positions which included giving a percentage back into the two-party deal to fund state parties.

**County chairmen** had considerable ability to have kids hired for summer jobs with the state highway department and many other patronage jobs. They gave adults the opportunity for full-time jobs. In other words, county chairmen had considerable influence beyond pleading with people to help as precinct workers. Lincoln Day dinners were flush with county and city employees "encouraged" to attend if they liked their jobs. County Chairman Orvas Beers' law firm, at one point, included the congressman, the county attorney and the city attorney. It helped with business as well as power.

One more very personal example from this period: I had been elected college Republican chairman by a nearly unanimous vote (my opponent voted against me). However, when the Snyder-Denbo faction lost to the Bulen-Beers faction, James Neal, whose family owned the Noblesville Daily-Ledger and who was secretary of the Republican State Committee, was chosen the new Indiana state Republican chairman in early 1972.

Neal told me that I was being removed as Indiana state college Republican chairman (it technically was his right but not respecting the votes of student clubs across the state). He said I could only regain the position with the support of my county chairman. We both understood that Orvas Beers was not going to clear me.

Nevertheless, I went to meet with Beers. He had



**Allen County Republican Chairman Orvas Beers.**

actually helped connect me to Congressman E. Ross Adair when we were forming a Young Americans for Freedom chapter at Leo High School. I had headed Youth for Adair in 1968, which became one of the largest youth efforts in the nation. Orvas and his wife had been furniture customers at our family's store in Grabill for years, and was a friend of my dad's. But Orvas was mad.

**Beers was particularly upset** because I was attacking President Nixon for wage and price controls and going to Red China. He not only wouldn't clear me for college Republican chairman, but back in 1970 he had removed me as president of Youth for Adair (the race that ended Adair's career). He ended the discussion by telling me that I needed to go away for a few years and let people forget my right-wing stuff. He said that my family had a great reputation, that someday I could probably win elections if I could just understand that most political decisions were gray, not black or white.

By the summer of 1972, he had taught me an even more valuable lesson. After booting me and other young conservatives from positions, he asked me – of all things – to head Nixon's local Young Voters for the President organization. I responded that it was headed by a young person who had stayed loyal to Orvas and Nixon. His words still echo in my ears: "Yeah, but no kids will follow him. You need to do it." In party politics, influence overcomes even intense personal fights. Or at least it used to. ❖

**My next section on how the job of county chairman has changed will begin with Dan Quayle's 1976 campaign. The spoils system had mostly ended. Quayle wanted to build his own organization based on the Kasten Plan, mostly skipping a weakened party structure. Party veterans viewed it as the potential death of political parties.**

## Hupfer says Hoosier GOP focused on 2022

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – From my "lamestream media" perch things sure do look dicey and dangerous. There's that 36-page coup d'etat Powerpoint titled "Election Fraud, Foreign Interference & Options for 6 Jan" that Mark Meadows gave to the House Jan. 6 Committee after it made the Willard-to-Oval Office rounds.

The Atlantic's Barton Gellman writes that "Trump's next coup has already begun." According to Gellman, "If the plot succeeds, the ballots cast by American voters will not decide the presidency in 2024. Thousands of votes will be thrown away, or millions, to produce the required effect. The winner will be declared the loser. The loser will be certified president-elect."

Veteran GOP operative Steve Schmidt describes "the obvious edge of the abyss into which we are staring. A great crisis isn't just at hand, it is underway. We are living through its early days."

**The New York Times** columnist David Leonhardt quotes credible experts describing a "five-alarm fire" and "a democratic emergency," and offers a summary about election personnel changes going on in five key states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin).

NBC's Meet The Press Daily observes:

"Today prominent GOP candidates are running campaigns based on waving the bloody shirt of a stolen election. Sixty percent of the party's voters believe the blood is real when it's actually fake. Republicans in several states are trying their best to make sure those local officials who protected the election from false fraud claims won't be there next time."

**And CNN's Chris Cillizza** was alarmed when commentator Hugh Hewitt told Trump, "You know, Mr. President, you and I disagree about the election, but we agree on so much."

Cillizza went on: "Talk about an other-than-that-how-was-the-play-Mrs. Lincoln moment! That Hewitt



**Mike Pence with Indiana GOP Chairman Kyle Hupfer at the Indiana Right to Life Christmas Gala on Dec. 9.**

uttered that line without irony is a telling window into how conservatives have found ways to rationalize Trump and his fundamentally anti-democratic attempts to undermine the faith of the American public in the 2020 election results. Here's the reality: You can't just sort of yada yada the election rejection embraced by Trump. Because in refusing to accept the result of the 2020 election and repeatedly (and falsely) alleging voter fraud, Trump is actively working against everything that makes America, well, America."

So when I sat down with Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer at Biscuits in Broad Ripple Monday morning, I made sure the waitress supplied enough coffee and ice water in case my hair spontaneously became ablaze.

**I asked Hupfer about that 60%** of Republicans who believe in Donald Trump's "Big Lie" about the pilfered 2020 election.

"I don't see it persisting," Hupfer calmly said. "It may be persisting on the edges out there, but the vast majority of Republicans have moved past that concept. They are looking to 2022 and they know how critical it is. We have to win back the House and Senate. That's all I hear at RNC meetings and out across the country."

Hupfer said that "2020 is in the rearview mirror," adding, "The focus is on 2022. We've got to win back and House and Senate."

What about the House Jan. 6 committee, and Tucker Carlson's "Patriot Purge," and young Buckley Carlson running amok in the Capitol as bear spray wafted in the air and American flags speared cops, and now Chris Wallace has fled Fox News, defecting to CNN ....

"I'm not following it," Hupfer said of the Bennie Thompson Show starring Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger.

"I know they're having some meetings and hearings," Hupfer said. "I try to have as little of contact with what's going on in Washington, D.C., as possible. It's all being politicized at this point. It's all about the latest hot take, the latest hot tweet. For us it's how we're going to win that primary, how we are going to stay in office. What I've seen from our numbers, people are worried about real issues. They are worried about inflation, the cost of goods going up. They are seeing it. They've seen it in gas prices for awhile and now they're seeing it in consumer goods. They're starting to see it in groceries, automobiles, and so I think that's the No. 1 issue we're going to see over the next 12 months..."

**"Inflation was up 6.8%** in November," Hupfer said. "It's going to be the issue. You have an administration and Congress who are tone deaf about that. They're still talking about the Build Back Better plan which would be another couple of trillions of dollars infused in. The federal government cannot buy or spend their way out of whatever these perceived issues are right now. Our economy seems to be booming and unemployment is

back down to a real low number. I don't know how injecting more money into the economy will help."

As for Mike Pence running for president in 2024, Hupfer explained, "I don't know whether the premise is whether Trump runs or doesn't run impacts his decision. I'll let the vice president answer those questions."

"As you look around the country and the work he's doing, Republicans like himself are not focused on 2024, they are focused on 2022," Hupfer said. "He's out raising money for candidates in 2022 so we can hopefully win back the House and the Senate as well. We've got to get one of these three branches of government back in Republican hands."

Hupfer noted recent internal GOP polling in Indiana that had Gov. Eric Holcomb's job approval at 65%, and on the COVID pandemic, 66%. That polling showed President Biden's Indiana approval at an anemic 41%.

As for 2024, Hupfer says it's still too early for him and Gov. Holcomb to reveal their political plans. Speculation is rampant that the chairman is eying a gubernatorial run; Holcomb rekindling his U.S. Senate ambitions.

**"There's the right time** to make a decision on that," Hupfer told me. "It will probably come in the not-too-distant future. The governor gets these same questions a lot and the answer we both tend to give is we're not taking anything off the table. The governor certainly is not. Just in the short history, sometimes planning on these things is a fool's errand, right? There was a lot of planning going on in 2016 only to be thrown into the wind when Mike Pence was chosen to be the vice presidential candidate with Donald Trump. There's a lot of changing moods and politics, and when it's the right time, I'll make that decision."

Our conversation ended. There was no smoke wafting in the air; just the steam rising off our cups of Folgers. That was the best part of waking up on Monday.



### **McDermott enjoying first statewide run**

Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., figured his first U.S. Senate run statewide would be a grind. But after spending much of the fall crisscrossing the prairies, he's infatuated with his beautiful state.

"I'm traveling a lot, two days a week," McDermott told HPI Wednesday. He and three staffers, along with

campaign manager Kevin Smith are concentrating on the 500 signatures from each congressional district needed for ballot qualification.

"I'm having a blast, people are great," McDermott said. "I get to stay in Fort Wayne and New Albany. I really thought it was going to be a grind but it's been wonderful. Obviously everyone wants you to be everywhere. We're really focused on getting 500 signatures in each district. Obviously it's a challenge in some districts."

McDermott expects to post around \$100,000 in his fourth quarter FEC report, but says he has already scheduled 20 fundraisers for January, when he expects that portion of the campaign will pick up steam.

As for issues, McDermott says that the potential for the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* next summer could be a huge break for his campaign.

"I know many women are concerned about *Roe v. Wade*," he said. "I think we know what happens when *Roe* is overturned, Todd Young has got a lot of explaining to do. Some women are going to love him for that and others are going to be angry."

He said that if the Supreme Court announces a repeal of *Roe* next June, "that could energize my campaign."

As for the recently passed infrastructure deal, McDermott said that Young will have to explain to Hoosiers why he turned down some \$9 billion Congress has passed with the American Rescue Plan, the CARES Act and the infrastructure deal. "I talk about how Todd Young voted against \$9 billion," McDermott said. "If Indiana doesn't take that money, Ohio and Kentucky will."

"People are sick of Washington," McDermott added. "You don't hear people being sick of Hammond. We've given him 12 years to fix these problems."

## General Assembly

### SD4: Former Michigan City mayor to run

Former two-term Mayor Ron Meer is making a political comeback after narrowly losing his 2019 reelection bid amid an onslaught of legal issues (Carden, NWI Times). Meer announced Thursday on Facebook he's running next year in the May 3 Democratic primary election for Indiana Senate District 4, which includes the northern third of Porter County and the northwestern corner of LaPorte County. To advance to the Nov. 8 general election, Meer will have to defeat, perhaps among others, state Sen. Rodney Pol Jr., D-Chesterton, who was selected Oct. 21 by the district's Democratic precinct committee leaders to complete the year remaining in the term of retired state Sen. Karen Talian, D-Ogden Dunes. Meer is focusing his nascent Senate campaign on his experience in local government, particularly the eight years he led LaPorte County's most populous city.

### HD87: Davis to run

Jordan A. Davis, a long-time resident of Indianapo-

lis and graduate of Lawrence North High School, today announced his candidacy for HD 87, which covers the northeast side of Indianapolis. "No matter where life has taken me, I have always maintained my close connections to my Castleton neighborhood, even when studying abroad and at the Vincennes University Aviation Technology Center," said Davis. "My ongoing ties to this community give me insight into the issues facing my fellow citizens. My plan is to listen to their needs, be their voice in the legislature, and help create innovative, long-term opportunities that improve their ways of life." Davis has made it his life's goal to assist those in need, whether they be the underprivileged and underserved youth of Chicago or families right here in the neighborhoods of Indianapolis. "As a moderate, right-leaning conservative, my beliefs align with the voters of District 87. I believe parents have the right to be involved in education. I believe gun rights need to be protected. I believe in funding and modernizing law enforcement. And I believe that everyone should be treated equally and with respect," Davis said.

### GOP eyes school board races

In the wake of contentious school board meetings throughout Indiana over critical race theory, leading Republican lawmakers said they will propose allowing parents to have more of a say in what their children are taught in schools (Terbush, [Chalkbeat](#)). Critical race theory has migrated from a little-known academic framework, which examines how policies and the law perpetuate systemic racism, into a political touchstone for Republicans nationwide. It has animated debate about how schools teach about the role of race in this country. Indiana Republicans are drafting multiple education bills for the 2022 legislative session in response to these controversies, without mentioning critical race theory by name. Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb and several lawmakers from both sides of the aisle said at a legislative conference Wednesday that they do not believe critical race theory, or CRT, is being taught in Indiana's K-12 schools. "CRT is not part of our state standards," Holcomb said. "If critical race theory is being taught in the classroom in our K-12 system, it's counter to the standards, and the local school and parents need to hold those folks who are responsible accountable." Still, House education leader Bob Behning said the next legislative session will include a bill inspired by the critical race theory controversy that focuses on "transparency."

### GOP polling on partisan school elections

One of the questions on State Rep. Bob Heaton's constituent survey asks: "Would you support legislation that would restrict educators from advancing their political beliefs in the classroom and ensure ideological neutrality in Hoosier schools?" Another question on Heaton's survey asks if constituents would support "greater election transparency by requiring candidates for these [school

board] positions to declare their party affiliation?" School board elections in Indiana are non-partisan, or nonpolitical. A survey by State Rep. Alan Morrison, R-Brazil, asks the same question, and a survey by State Sen. Jon Ford, R-Terre Haute, has a similar one. Meanwhile, Todd Huston, Republican speaker of the Indiana House, recently stated that Republicans will be introducing a bill "ensuring that parents have more insight and input into the curricular materials and surveys being used in their schools." Also, it's anticipated the Indiana General Assembly will "seriously consider legislation to make local school board elections partisan in its 2022 session," according to a late October edition of School Matters by Steve Hinnefeld.

### Senators seek Indy crime solutions

Elected officials are set to release their plan to help lower violent crime in Marion County. Republican state senators plan to meet at the Indiana Statehouse at 2 p.m. Thursday to discuss their plan. In 2019, Indianapolis saw 172 homicides. In 2020, that number jumped to 245. At last check, IMPD reports that Indianapolis sits at 253 homicides for 2021. The five state Senators outlining their details in a bill for the 2022 legislative session are Michael Crider (R-Greenfield), Aaron Freeman (R-Indianapolis), Jack E. Sandlin (R-Indianapolis), Kyle Walker (R-Lawrence), and R. Michael Young (R-Indianapolis).

### Statewides

#### Lucas elected GOP vice chair

Former Congressional staffer and longtime Republican supporter & volunteer Erin Lucas was elected Vice Chair of the Indiana Republican Party Wednesday during a meeting of the Indiana Republican State Committee. "Erin is perfectly suited to serve as Vice Chair. I'm thrilled she stepped up to lead and am grateful the state committee unanimously elected her," said State Party Chairman Kyle Hupfer. Erin is a mother of one, with her second on the way. She and her husband Tyler live in South Bend. Lucas served for nearly 10 years in various capacities on the staff of Congressman Larry Bucshon. She will fill the remainder of Secretary of State Holli Sullivan's term.



### Nation

#### Trump says Pence wounded by Jan. 6

Former President Trump said this weekend that former Vice President Mike Pence has been "mortally wounded" by allowing the congressional certification of the 2020 election results. "I was disappointed in one thing, but it was a big thing," Trump said during a ticketed event in Sunrise, Fla., on Saturday, according to CNN. "Mike should have sent those crooked votes back to the legislatures and

you would have had a different result in the election, in my opinion," the former president told the audience at the stop on Bill O'Reilly's "History Tour." "I think Mike has been very badly hurt by what took place in respect to January 6. I think he's been mortally wounded, frankly, because I see the reaction he's getting from people," Trump added, per CNN.

#### Many empty seats at Trump/O'Reilly rally

There were so many empty seats at Billy O'Reilly and Donald Trump's Florida event on Saturday that organizers had to shut down the upper level of the arena in Sunrise, Florida, the Sun Sentinel reported. Trump fans sitting in the nosebleed section of the FLA Live Arena were told that they were being "upgraded" to the lower levels, according to the newspaper.

#### 70% of Republicans want Trump to run

Three years out from the next presidential election, voters of each party are largely sticking by their 2020 men, at least for now, our latest POLITICO/Morning Consult poll shows. On the Republican side, seven in 10 voters think Trump should probably or definitely run again. That's compared to a less-than-commanding 63% of Democrats who think the 79-year-old Biden should seek reelection. Bad news for both men: A majority of independent voters are hoping neither runs, with 59% saying no to Trump and 67% saying Biden shouldn't seek a second term. If Biden steps aside, his second-in-command would have a plurality of Democratic support, according to the poll. Thirty-one percent of Democratic voters said they would back VP Kamala Harris, while 11% would support Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. Sen. Warren and Rep. Ocasio-Cortez (N.Y.) both pick up 8% of support.

#### 68% disapprove of Biden on inflation

President Joe Biden is facing significant skepticism from the American public, with his job approval rating lagging across a range of major issues, including new lows for his handling of crime, gun violence and the economic recovery, a new ABC/Ipsos poll finds. More than two-thirds of Americans (69%) disapprove of how Biden is handling inflation (only 28% approve) while more than half (57%) disapprove of his handling of the economic recovery.

#### AP finds just 475 vote fraud cases

An AP review of every potential case of voter fraud in the six battleground states disputed by former President Donald Trump has found fewer than 475, a number that would have made no difference in the 2020 presidential election (AP). Democrat Joe Biden won Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and their 79 Electoral College votes by a combined 311,257 votes out of 25.5 million ballots cast for president. The disputed ballots represent just 0.15% of his victory margin. ❖

# Weigh in on the 2022 Power 50 List

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When we were putting the finishing touches on the 2021 Howey Politics Indiana Power 50 List, it came in surreal times. We literally were watching the U.S. Capitol engulfed by insurrectionists on Jan. 6. It came as the COVID-19 pandemic hadn't yet reached a year in duration, while reverberations from the November 2020 election were still playing out.

The 2022 list, which will be published on Jan. 7 next year, will reflect some of the residual impacts of the pandemic as well as the Jan. 6 insurrection. It will also forecast who will be playing key roles in the short session of the Indiana General Assembly.

The year 2022 will be the first mid-term cycle with the newly drawn congressional and General Assembly maps. It will be the first mid-term under President Biden. It will reflect how the 2024 Indiana gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races are taking shape. And it will also provide an early indication on how the 2024 presidential race is developing, with current U.S. Transportation Sec. Pete Buttigieg and former vice president Mike Pence potentially running.

Since 1999, Howey Politics Indiana has published the Power 50 List as a method of forecasting who will potentially wield power in the coming year. We rely on our leaders to nominate specific individuals or, as some do, create their own lists.

You can email your nominations or lists to me at [bhowey2@gmail.com](mailto:bhowey2@gmail.com).

## Here is our 2021 HPI Power 50 List:

1. Gov. Eric Holcomb
2. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch
3. White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain
4. Speaker Todd Huston
5. Senate President Pro Tempore Rod Bray
6. Health Commissioner Kristina Box
7. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg

8. Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer
9. U.S. Sen. Todd Young
10. Former Vice President Mike Pence
11. Commerce Sec. Jim Schelling
12. INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness
13. FSSA Commissioner Jennifer Sullivan
14. OMB Director Cris Johnston
15. Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown
16. Senate Appropriations Chairman Ryan Mishler
17. Rep. Timothy Wesco and Sen. Greg Walker
18. U.S. Rep. André Carson
19. Attorney General Todd Rokita
20. Republican National Committee members John Hammond III and Anne Hathaway
21. Purdue President Mitch Daniels
22. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett
23. Education Sec. Katie Jenner
24. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke
25. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry
26. Indiana Gaming Commission Executive Director Sara Gonso Tait
27. Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness
28. Sen. Jeff Raatz and Rep. Robert Behning
29. U.S. Sen. Mike Braun
30. U.S. Rep. Jim Banks
31. Secretary of State Connie Lawson
32. U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth
33. U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski
34. Earl Goode
35. Patrick Tamm
36. South Bend Mayor James Mueller
37. Joe Donnelly
38. U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon
39. Seema Verma
40. HHS Secretary Alex Azar
41. Mike Schmuhl
42. U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan
43. State Sens. Mark Messmer and Ed Charbonneau
44. Zionsville Mayor Emily Styron
45. Cam Savage
46. Jodi Golden and Erin Sheridan
47. Lacy Johnson
48. Lawren Mills
49. LaPorte Mayor Tom Dermody
50. Brian Tabor ❖

**This Power 50 comes in time of crisis**  
Power struggle in DC, decline of Indiana delegation, pandemic and a powerful governor shape 2021 Power 50 list

**Banana States of America**  
By BRIAN A. HOWEY  
INDIANAPOLIS – When newly-elected Mike Pence showed up at the U.S. Capitol for his first joint session of Congress on Jan. 6, 2021, he watched Vice President Al Gore declare George W. Bush and Dick Cheney as the winning Electoral College ticket. He heard Gore, who lost a bitter election that was ultimately decided in the Bush v. Gore U.S. Supreme Court case, tell the assembly at its conclusion, "May God bless our new president and new vice president, and may God bless the United States of America."  
Nine months and five days later – on Sept. 11 – Rep. Pence stood in that Capitol as the doomed Flight 93 approached, only to be forced in the ground hundred miles

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**  
"I call on this mob to pull back and restore order. Words of a president matter. I call on President Trump to go on national television now to demand and end to this scene. The world is watching. I am genuinely shocked and saddened."  
- President-elect Joe Biden

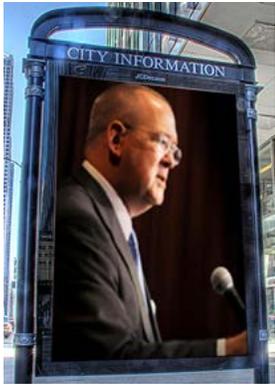
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Access to HPI Columnists  
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# The 2022 forecast

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – It is economic forecasting season, so universities and consulting groups are offering their projections for 2022. I did so this week, continuing work from Ball State University that started a half century ago. Over the last 50 years, a dozen or so Ball State economists have authored economic forecasts for east central Indiana, the state and the nation. This has long been part of the university's mission to state taxpayers, as well it should be.



The process of an economic forecast involves a lot of mathematics and a lot of common sense. The economy next year always looks a lot like last year, and the year before, and the year before that. But, it also depends upon short-term changes, such as recovery from

COVID, the cost of borrowing, the availability of workers and expectations about future spending by governments, businesses and households.

Differences in forecasts almost always hinge on assumptions about upcoming changes to these. If you assume interest rates will remain low, COVID will be modest and consumers ready to spend, then the outlook will be optimistic. If you assume the Fed will raise rates, that the pandemic will continue to hurt spending and fewer workers will reenter the labor force, your projections will be far worse.

To perform these forecasts, we construct a series of mathematical equations. That isn't meant to be sophisticated, just transparent. Anyone framing a new home uses hundreds of equations, they just do most of it in their head. The transparency lies in looking at the joists and beams. If you screw it up, it is obvious. Not so with economists; we must write it down so our skeptics can see it, and more commonly, so that we can get better next time.

**In some ways, 2022** is harder to forecast for two reasons. First, we remain in the grips of COVID, with new variants coursing through workplaces and schools. Second, we are winding down a large fiscal and monetary response to COVID that has reduced interest rates to near-zero and sent more than \$4 trillion of federal spending into the economy. Together, the forced savings caused by COVID surges and the stimulus put nearly \$2 trillion of savings into American households. How they spend those savings, and how COVID affects their decisions to spend, will determine the path of the economy in 2022.

Today we are in the midst of a COVID surge that will kill and sicken tens of thousands of Hoosiers and hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans in the coming months. That is a huge uncertainty that affects both the

demand for goods and services and the supply of both. If the disease continues well into the spring, we should expect slowing demand for restaurants and accommodations, retail and other in-person activities. Given our experience in 2020 and early 2021, this could be significant. At the same time, the excess morbidity of COVID restrains labor supply in many ways.

COVID has killed 250,000 working age adults, and sickened far more.

In terms of net loss of labor supply, we've seen nothing this bad since the Civil War. Then, there are the ripples of sorrow that accompany nearly 1 million unexpected deaths. Finally, there are many families who remain uncertain about the path of the disease. They may need someone at home to care for children who are quarantined from school or to provide support for a family member who continues to suffer from the lingering effects of the disease.

We are a nation of some 330 million people, so it is easy to see how 4 million to 6 million people who wanted to work in 2022 cannot because of COVID. This constraint on labor supply, which is so understandable, is enough to mute economic growth in 2022. And that is the preamble to my forecast.

**The recovery from COVID** has been reasonably robust. Americans returned to work in droves throughout 2020 and 2021. Even with continued risk, we saw amazing flexibility from our private sector businesses. From retail and restaurants to logistics and manufacturing firms, the U.S. economy has been astonishingly resilient. I remain in awe of how energetic and responsive American businesses have been regarding this disease.

The early complaints of labor shortages have been met by significant wage increases in some occupations. In the leisure and tourism sectors, which were hardest hit by COVID, wages for production jobs, such as wait staff, cleaning services and customer service, have risen by more than 10 percent this year. Still, many businesses find it hard to fully staff their operations and are going to need to adjust hours and services.

At the same time, federal spending on stimulus will taper off in the coming months. Families with big savings seem to have made large purchases, but savings rates are back down to historical levels. While strengthening, hints of inflation will cause the Federal Reserve to tighten money supply. Together, this means less demand for goods as consumers have fewer dollars to spend and borrowing becomes more costly.

This combination of conditions offers the essence of my forecast. In 2022, I project that economic growth in the U.S. will slow from 2021 levels. This will look like a rapid deceleration of growth as our economy descends from quarterly GDP growth of 6.5% in the first half of 2021 down to growth rates in the 2.0-to-2.5% range in 2022. This will make the U.S. economy look more like the slower-but-sustained growth of 2018 and 2019 rather than the fevered recovery from the pandemic.

Here in Indiana, the economy has recovered about on par with the nation as a whole, though more of our recovery occurred in late 2020 than in 2021. This recovery has been broad, affecting every sector and generally offering employment opportunities to most Hoosiers. The recovery has left the Indiana General Assembly with \$0.5 billion in excess tax revenues. The coming year will see a return to more normal tax revenues, especially considering the effects of inflation on such things as pensions and health care of government workers.

All in all, 2022 will be a decent year for economic

growth. It will also be a year in which the U.S. and Indiana economy return to the pre-pandemic levels of GDP, but with modestly smaller employment than in 2019. Goods and services will be more expensive due to inflation, but we are unlikely to see accelerating price increases. ❖

**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 at Ball State University.**

## Are we cutting the pie differently?

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – In 2007, 143.2 million wage and salaried employees in the U.S. were paid \$6.4 trillion. That averaged out to \$44,652. Time passes. Prices rise. By 2019, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) had increased by 23.3%.



To keep pace with inflation, workers would get \$55,056 a year, a 23.3% increase. The total of wages paid to those 143.2 million employees would then be \$7.9 trillion.

That did not happen. In 2019, 156.5 million wage and salaried employees in the U.S. were paid \$9.3 trillion, an average of \$59,474. The money bucket used to pay workers had an additional \$1.4 trillion in it to be paid out to the previous 143.2

million workers plus to 13.4 million new workers.

How should those added fund be paid out? One way was to place all workers on the same pay scale and used established criteria – productivity, years of schooling, years at the same company, favorite sports teams, and zodiac signs. This would be balanced so that the average employee was paid \$59,474.

**Existing** employees might be happy to have 8% more than the cost-of-living increase. And new employees would be satisfied to work for a company that paid workers more than just the CPI increase.

Let's now consider an alternative: The bosses are willing to give existing workers the CPI increase. However, corporate consultants convince the boards

that existing workers can't keep companies competitive. This warning leads to hiring young, highly educated, skilled people, the kind the State of Indiana says we need to attract.

Paying existing workers their \$55,056 (keeping their buying power constant), the wage bucket still has \$1.4 trillion dollars to pay out. This means the 13.4 million more recently hired workers could be paid an average of \$106,806.

**Such a system sets up** a two-scale working environment. Existing workers would be displeased, but we have already devalued them. In addition, young, highly educated, skilled human resource folks can smooth the waters. This is done by offering sparkling buy-outs, fully paid additional education, and extensive training.

[Note: this high average wage of \$106,806 justifies paying executives more since they now will have a Cracker-Jack work force and progressive companies to manage.]

Hoosiers should know, in 2007, Indiana's wage and salaried employees earned an average of \$38,017, which rose to \$49,577 in 2019. Thus in '07, we rested 14.9% below the national average, destined to fall by '19 to 16.6% under that average.

In terms of buying power, the average Hoosier worker saw his/her buying power decrease by \$3,262 over this span. Inflation accounted for 47% of that decline with 53% due to our failure to keep pace with the nation.

Are we seeing existing workers squeezed out of our nation's firms with a new attitude toward labor? Are we satisfied with our Hoosier Holyland sinking relative to the nation? ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at [mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com](mailto:mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com). Follow him and John Guy on "Who Gets What?" wherever podcasts are available or at [morton-john.libsyn.com](http://morton-john.libsyn.com).**

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

# Can we find our way to the common good?

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – I still remember a question I got years ago. It was at a public meeting in southern Indiana, in one of those squat, featureless cinder-block buildings you find all across the country. This young woman stood up and commented that I'd traveled throughout the U.S. and had met all kinds of people. So she wanted to know: What was my impression of Americans? I didn't even hesitate: The American people are fundamentally decent, I told her.



I still believe this. And when I say it, I'm not talking about a bare majority. Most Americans are good people.

Why even mention this? Because at the moment, we live in a country where a lot of Americans don't believe it. They think fellow citizens who belong to a different political party are at best misguided and at worst, evil. We have public officials who want nothing more than to do a good job and stick by the laws resigning because they're tired of the threats to themselves and their families. Civic-minded Americans who believe in the institutions of democracy are steering clear of volunteering because they're afraid of the anger and physical danger they may face.

I don't think this happened by accident. There are major, powerful forces working to divide us. Some are pernicious, others are just looking to make themselves more powerful. Media companies and political commentators find that they can make money – a lot of money – by putting out divisive information. Politicians have discovered that they can benefit politically by appealing to their base and treating the other side as the enemy. Countries such as Russia and China spend enormous time and money sowing seeds of division in our country so they can make our system of democracy look bad and weaken us as a country.

**There's an antidote for this,** but it's not going to be easy: All of us, ordinary citizens and politicians alike, have to restore in our lives a belief in the importance of the common good; to ask ourselves not what's good for any one of us, or for our party or business or people who look like us, but what's good for the country as a whole, in all its complexity and diversity.

I know what you're going to say: Especially today, there isn't any single definition of "the common good," so how can we possibly agree on one? And here's my response: We live in a country that was designed to allow us to debate the question and to find common ground so we could move forward. In a sense, the common good in

America is the opportunity to define the common good. Together.

That's why the threats of violence and extreme behavior we're seeing these days are so un-American. Our institutions evolved over centuries to allow us to settle political questions, overcome divisions, and compromise in the interest of progress. When elections officials can't do their jobs, or when ordinary citizens are afraid to step forward, then our mechanisms for agreeing on the common good break.

**Yet there is plenty of** agreement to be found. Let's go back to that question at the beginning. Americans, no matter our political stripe, take a good deal of inspiration from the best ideals of the Founding Fathers. Most support the enduring values of the country, like striving for a more perfect union and pushing to correct things they think are wrong. They want to be good citizens, useful to their communities. They work hard and though they make mistakes, they're also very serious about improving on the status quo and correcting those mistakes. And when they set their minds to doing something good in the way of change, they'll keep working at it until they get there.

These are, of course, more qualities than beliefs. But they're the qualities that have stood Americans in good stead through trying times in our past. And, I believe, they're the qualities that, in the long run, will help us get past this period of extreme divisiveness. ❖

**Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies. He was a member of the U.S. House for 34 years.**

# Biden makes the case for democracy

By **KELLY HAWES**  
**CNHI State Bureau**

ANDERSON – In remarks to more than 100 world leaders gathered for his virtual Summit for Democracy, President Joe Biden spoke of the ongoing struggle to preserve freedom around the world.



Not everyone was impressed by the event. Fox News gave it seven paragraphs below the headline, "Biden adds 'women' to Declaration of Independence during democracy summit remarks."

Just for the record, the of-

ficial White House transcript shows Biden was paraphrasing the historic document, but what if he had taken an editor's pen to the language?

Is it headline news for the president to suggest both men and women were created equal? For some of us, perhaps it is.

"Democracy doesn't happen by accident," the president said. "We have to renew it with each generation. And this is an urgent matter on all our parts, in my view. Because the data we're seeing is largely pointing in the wrong direction."

**The president mentioned** a Freedom House report from last year that showed individual rights in decline around the world for a 15th consecutive year. Those gathered for the two-day event spoke of the need to confront corruption, inequality and limitations on press freedom. They spoke of the perils of disinformation and the growing strength of autocracies.

It's noteworthy, I think, that while this nation's president stands as an evangelist for democratic institutions, supporters of his predecessor have lost faith in those institutions here in the United States. According to a poll from the Public Religion Research Institute, 68% of Republicans believe the 2020 election was stolen. The poll was taken last month, a year after the election results had been certified in every state.

In the meantime, Donald J. Trump seeks revenge against members of his own party who refuse to support his big lie. In Georgia, for instance, the former president is backing former U.S. Sen. David Perdue in a Republican primary campaign against the current governor, Brian Kemp.

On the day before Biden delivered his speech, Perdue told Axios he wouldn't have signed the certification of his state's election results if he had been the governor a year ago. Though the ballots have already been counted three times, Perdue seems to think they should be examined just a little bit closer. This is a state Trump lost by 11,779 votes, a state where the former president was caught on tape asking the Republican secretary of state to find him just 11,780 more votes.

In his remarks to world leaders, Biden called the fight for democracy "the defining challenge of our time. Democracy – government of the people, by the people, for the people – can at times be fragile," he said, "but it also is inherently resilient. It's capable of self-correction and it's capable of self-improvement."

**He acknowledged that** self-government isn't easy. "We all know that," he said. "It works best with consensus and cooperation. When people and parties that might have opposing views sit down and find ways to work together, things begin to work."

Biden conceded that democracies are not all the same, but he called on those gathered for the summit "to stand up for the values that unite us. We have to stand for justice and the rule of law, for free speech, free assembly, a free press, freedom of religion, and for all the inherent human rights of every individual," he said.

He offered his audience a challenge. "Will we allow the backward slide of rights and democracy to continue unchecked?" he asked. "Or will we together – together – have a vision... and courage to once more lead the march of human progress and human freedom forward?"

Americans once shared a vision of the United States as a champion for democracy at home and around the world. Do we still? ❖

**Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana.**

## COVID miracle dirt

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – It's not dirt cheap.

It really is dirt. But it's not cheap. The cost is \$110 plus shipping for a baggie containing four and a half ounces of this dirt, hailed as miracle stuff in fighting the effects of COVID-19, promoting a healthy heart and improving brain function. Those who buy it really need improved brain function.



The miracle dirt from a Canadian bog has been selling through online ads attracting attention of anti-vaccine and COVID-denier folks. Then U.S. and Canadian health authorities restricted our freedom and trampled on our rights, imposing

recalls and holds at the border. So, the pioneering provider of real medicine rather than fake vaccines closed down under pressure of the health Gestapo.

Is all of this as clear as mud? Actually, mud is important. In quest of cures, it's useful to muddy the waters. This very special dirt, sold as Black Oxygen Organics, popularly known as BOO, is billed as effective when mixed with water for a muddy drink. A toast: "Here's mud in your eye." Some of the enlightened users found cures by bathing in the muddy water.

How do I know so much about it? Well, I hate to admit that information comes from the lamestream media, in particular a lengthy NBC News special about the history, sales and effects of BOO. BOO who? Don't cry about it. The NBC report was designed, as expected of a fake-news special, to muddy up the dirt and discourage its use.

**Well, I'm not gonna let** another potential cure for COVID be ridiculed as ineffective the way the news media trashed the horse de-wormer taken by Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers and the hydroxychloroquine promoted by Donald Trump.

Do you want to buy some real dirt? I'll sell it

to you, guaranteed to be just as effective as BOO. I've personally dug up this dirt from the shore of one of the lakes at the University of Notre Dame, close to the famed Grotto. Got to be special. Better than anything from a Canadian bog.

**Please don't let anybody** connected with Notre Dame know about the source of my product. The university would either sue me to stop it or seek a percentage of the profits. My price will be cheaper than the bucks for BOO. Only half the cost. Just \$55 plus shipping for four and a half ounces of Grotto Oxygen Organics, GOO, to counter COVID, gout, acne, backache, hair loss, memory loss and loss of bedroom enthusiasm.

Order today and I'll send you an additional baggie of dirt for free with separate delivery charges. But wait! There's more! You can sign up for delivery of GOO, genuine dirt, every month for a year for an annual fee of only \$999. Don't even try to add up the savings. They are

unbelievable.

I'm reaching out especially with this offer to those of you who are anti-vaccine, who say COVID is no more serious than the flu and who believe the evil Dr. Fauci makes millions with a scam to put something unnecessary, unproven and unclean in our bodies.

That's because I think those of you with those convictions are the most likely to understand that I've got the dirt on the vaccine conspiracy and the dirt to cure what ails you. Put dirt in your body. Drink it in muddy form. Scientifically proven, guaranteed dirt. The guarantee is as genuine as Brian Kelly's southern accent.

**Also, for consideration** by you folks, I will sell the Colfax Avenue bridge. Just make a bid and provide a good-faith down payment of \$10,000. I'm selling the bridge dirt cheap. ❖

**Colwell is a columnist for the South Bend Tribune.**

## Looking at 2022 gubernatorial races

**By KYLE KONDIK & J. MILES COLEMAN**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Next year's packed gubernatorial slate will be defined in large part by the push and pull between a couple of vital factors: the power of incumbency versus the power of the political environment.

The dangers posed by the political environment are different for both parties.

For Democratic incumbents, the usual midterm drag for the party that holds the White House, compounded by Joe Biden's weak approval rating, represents the main "environmental" threat to their reelections. Democratic incumbents are running for second terms in many states where they could or will be vulnerable if this gnarly environment persists into next fall. Just to put this into perspective, Gov. Phil Murphy (D-NJ) won reelection last month by a surprisingly close 3-point margin in a state that Biden won by 16 points. Democratic incumbents are defending 7 states next year where Biden won by a smaller margin than New Jersey: Colorado, New Mexico, Maine, Minnesota, Michigan, Nevada, and Wisconsin (in descending order of Biden margin), as well as an 8th, Kansas, where Biden lost by nearly 15 points. A big and roughly uniform swing against the Democrats next year could wipe out many of their governorships.

Meanwhile, a potentially turbulent primary environment may be a bigger threat to this cycle's Republican incumbents, as former President Donald Trump has already endorsed a few challengers to sitting gubernatorial incumbents. Most notably, Trump enticed former Sen. David Perdue (R-GA) into a challenge to Gov. Brian Kemp

(R-GA), which we'll explore a little more deeply below.

Trump also backed hard-right former state Rep. Geoff Diehl (R) against Gov. Charlie Baker (R) in Massachusetts; Baker, who had some real weakness among Massachusetts Republicans despite his overall popularity, opted against seeking a third term last week. Additionally, the former president endorsed against another sitting governor, backing Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin (R) against Gov. Brad Little (R) in Idaho. Overall, a majority of the 15 GOP governors who are eligible or announced candidates for reelection next year face primary challenges, with additional prominent primary challengers emerging in Ohio, Texas, and elsewhere.

Which environment – the primary one on the Republican side, and the general election one on the Democratic side – poses a greater threat to incumbents? While every year is different, history does show that incumbent governors are likelier to lose general elections than primaries, although the overall reelection rate for gubernatorial incumbents is still strong, particularly lately.

Incumbent governors very rarely lose renomination: 94% who have sought to once again represent their party in the general election have succeeded. That number may actually understate the power of governors in primaries: over the last 40 years, only once (1994) has there been more than a single governor to lose renomination in any even-numbered gubernatorial election year. And for all of the focus on Republican primaries, it may be that if an incumbent governor loses a primary, it may be a Democrat who does. There are two incumbent Democratic governors, Kathy Hochul of New York and Dan McKee of Rhode Island, who were not elected in their own right: They took over after their predecessors left office, and both face credible primary challengers. The only sitting governor who lost a primary in 2018, Jeff Colyer (R-KS), was also an



unelected incumbent.

Meanwhile, incumbent governors who are renominated have won their elections at close to an 80% clip in the postwar era. Incumbents are going to be on the ballot in the lion's share of the gubernatorial elections next year. Of 36 races being contested, as many as 28 could feature incumbents. If that many incumbents do ultimately run, that would be the second-highest number of incumbents running in more than a half-century, surpassed only by the 29 running in 2014. The high number of incumbents running could limit the number of seats that change hands, although the dueling political environments on both sides could contribute to more turnover than one might otherwise expect.

**Rating changes**

Once Gov.-elect Glenn Youngkin (R-VA) takes office in January, Republicans will control 28 of the 50 state governorships. History suggests they are well-positioned to have more come 2023: the president's party often loses governorships in midterms. In 19 midterm elections since the end of World War II, the president's party has lost, on average, roughly four net governorships per election.

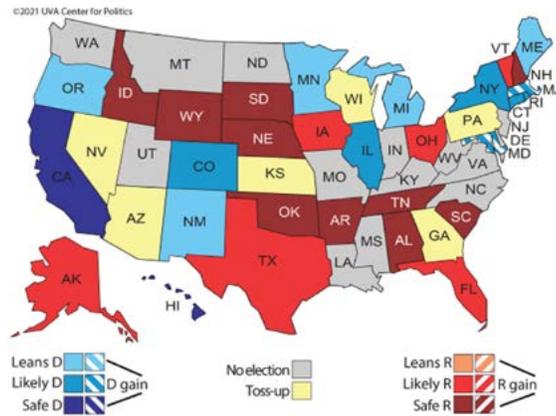
In some recent cycles, gubernatorial turnover rates have not matched up to the congressional picture very well: Republicans lost 11 governorships in Richard Nixon's 1970 midterm, a year in which they otherwise suffered only mild losses in the House and actually netted a Senate seat. In 1986, Republicans netted eight governorships in Ronald Reagan's second midterm even as they lost eight Senate seats, and their Senate majority, that same year. So the circumstances of the election matter quite a bit, and the amount of change (or lack of change) has hardly been consistent over time.

Interestingly, and even though they could very well be victimized by the usual midterm curse, the Democrats currently have the two best offensive opportunities on the gubernatorial board so far.

Following Baker's retirement in Massachusetts, we moved that race from Likely Republican all the way to Likely Democratic. We explained that change last week -- to make a long story short, we don't expect the GOP nominee to have much crossover appeal, and we expect the Democratic nominee to be relatively strong, whoever it ends up being.

Maryland, an open seat, is the other state governorship that we see as likeliest to switch parties, and the circumstances there are similar to Massachusetts, another deep blue state. This will be an open-seat race because popular incumbent Gov. Larry Hogan (R) is term-limited, and -- just like in Massachusetts -- former President Trump

**Map 1: Crystal Ball gubernatorial ratings**



has endorsed a very conservative candidate, state Del. Dan Cox (R), for the GOP nomination over Kelly Schulz (R), a more Hogan-like candidate who serves in his administration as the state's secretary of commerce. The Democratic field, meanwhile, is crowded but seems likely to produce a decent nominee. But while Democrats have the two best pickup opportunities, they are defending a lot of vulnerable turf. Our other three rating changes this week all push Democratic-held seats into more

competitive categories.

We'll start in Nevada, a battleground state where Democrats enjoyed clear but small edges recently, winning statewide for president in 2016 and 2020 by a little under 2.5 points and winning the gubernatorial race by 4% in 2018. Given the small margins in recent years, it wouldn't take much for Republicans to flip the state. We switched Nevada's Senate race from Leans Democratic to Toss-up in early November, and we're going to make the same change for the gubernatorial race as Gov. Steve Sisolak (D-NV) seeks a second term.

We also are moving two other first-term governors in Biden-won states from Likely Democratic to Leans Democratic: Govs. Tim Walz (D-MN) and Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM). The former move, involving Walz, has more to do with the environment than anything else.

Perhaps the contest that has heated up the most over the past week is Georgia's. As last month was winding down, it seemed that Gov. Brian Kemp (R-GA) was slated to have only weak primary opposition, and it was unclear if his 2018 general election opponent, former state House Minority Leader Stacey Abrams (D), would even take the plunge despite being widely expected to run. While many Peach State political observers thought Abrams would eventually try for the governorship again, a more surprising development was the entrance of former Sen. David Perdue into the Republican primary on Monday. After being held below 50% in the 2020 general election, Perdue was forced into a runoff and lost to now-Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA). Though Kemp initially won in 2018 with the support of then-President Trump, the two Republicans have had a cooler relationship since. After 2020, Trump was angered as Kemp accepted then-candidate Biden's victory in Georgia. The former president is thus backing Perdue.

Absent the Trump-Kemp feud, the Georgia contest may look more like a Leans Republican race than a Toss-up. However, with the recent developments, we feel there is enough justification to keep the rating as it is, as Kemp has a very challenging race on his hands. A Fox 5 Atlanta/Insider Advantage poll from earlier this week gives Kemp a 41%-22% lead over Perdue. ❖

**Seth Slabaugh, Substack:** The East Central Indiana Regional Partnership was awarded a grant of only \$15 million on Tuesday to help accelerate economic growth in the aging, shrinking region. Made up of Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, Randolph, Rush and Wayne counties, East Central Indiana was one of 17 regions that applied for a share of \$500 million in Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) funding — a program financed by the federal government’s American Rescue Plan, also called the COVID-19 Stimulus Package. East Central Indiana didn’t seem to fare well in the competitive process. However, READI review committee member Jason Dudich, a former state budget director and now treasurer at the University of Indianapolis, said, “While some more rural regions are receiving smaller awards, the value of these awards on a per capita basis is significantly higher than in more urban regions.” And Gov. Eric Holcomb also said “all of these investments will have greater per capita impact in rural Indiana” regions like East Central Indian. “Again, a rising tide lifts all boats.” Population trends were cited by Dudich as a major factor in the awards, and ECI’s population is getting smaller and older while also struggling to achieve prosperity and diversity (nearly 90% white, with little change expected). The region is also admittedly “bleeding talent and highly skilled workers.” Roughly 60% of the \$500 million is going to six regions of the state where 71% of the population is found, Dudich said. In fact, the regions receiving the majority of the funding are expected to account for all of the state’s projected population growth over the next 15 years, Dudich went on, emphasizing the word “all.” ❖



**Nate Feltman, IBJ:** At a time when people are making decisions about where they live based not on the location of their job, but on the quality of life they will have where they live, Indy needs a plan, a vision and an identity. How will Indy compete in the race for talent? Downtown’s challenges are not short-term in nature. Many downtown CEOs are beginning to make plans for a smaller office footprint as they come to terms with a workforce that demands remote or semi-remote options. Our city needs an aggressive plan to retain and attract talent, given that employers will continue to offer flexibility to their employees as to where they live. Part of that plan needs to contemplate how we will fill the office space that will continue to flood the market. While I do not believe it is Mayor Joe Hogsett’s job alone to set the vision and implement the plan, I do believe mayors are uniquely positioned to lead and set the tone. One does not need to look far to see what mayoral leadership looks like when it comes to placemaking and making investments that attract talent. Mayor Jim Brainard in Carmel has proved what is possible when a mayor has a vision and a plan and works every day to implement that plan. When the arches on Carmel’s Main Street went up some

15 years ago proclaiming Carmel’s Arts & Design District, some snickered since the reality didn’t match the proclamation. However, that vision has become a reality with public art, a performing arts center, art studios, home design boutiques and restaurants. Some might rightfully argue that Indy’s challenges are more complex than Carmel’s and, therefore, comparing Indy to Carmel is unfair. But having a vision and a plan for the future of our city does not need to be overly complicated. City leaders years ago decided to make sports and conventions a focus, and that plan continues to pay dividends as we prepare to host the Big Ten Football Championship and the College Football Playoff National Championship in January. What vision can we develop that is consistent with new economic trends and synergistic with our existing strategies? ❖

**John Krull, Statehouse File:** When U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts issues a warning, the other conservative members of the nation’s high bench would be wise to pay attention. Roberts, after all, has shown himself to be a canny and determined defender of both the court’s stature and the Republican Party’s interests. One of his decisions that most rankled rabid conservative partisans — his 2012 affirmation of the Affordable Care Act — likely saved the GOP from disaster in that election year. Stripping millions of voters of their health care not long before they cast their ballots is not a plan for political success, regardless of what firebreathers on the right might believe. But, more important, with his deciding vote, Roberts also reaffirmed the Supreme Court’s role as the ultimate arbiter of constitutional principle. He made clear that he did not see himself as a kind of John Marshall in reverse, a figure who waived rather than established the court’s position of final authority on fundamental matters. That’s why Roberts is sounding alarms now. It comes amid the wrangling over a new Texas abortion law that turns the task of curtailing rights that are constitutionally guaranteed — at least for now — over to bounty hunters and vigilantes. Much of the attention on these court battles thus far has focused on the pointed but pertinent dissents from the court’s liberal members — particularly that of Justice Sonia Sotomayor. “Will this institution survive the stench that this creates in the public perception that the constitution and its reading are just political acts?” Sotomayor asked during oral arguments over another state law, this one from Mississippi, aimed at attacking reproductive rights. She contends, persuasively, that a public that once saw the Supreme Court as a dispassionate interpreter of the constitution and enduring notions of liberty and self-governance soon will see the high bench as just a collection of political hacks seeking partisan gains, however fleeting those gains may be. Roberts’ concern is more measured but even more sweeping. He fears that the nation’s justices are on the verge of discarding the court’s status as the final authority on questions of constitutional principle. ❖

## Holcomb announces \$545M tax refunds

INDIANAPOLIS — Governor Eric J. Holcomb announced Wednesday an estimated 4.3 million taxpayers will receive a \$125 refund after they file their 2021 taxes. "Despite a pandemic, Indiana exceeded all expectations and closed the state fiscal year with an unprecedented amount in reserves," said Gov. Holcomb. "We have an obligation to put this money back in the hands of taxpayers instead of leaving it in the hands of government." An estimated \$545 million will be returned to Hoosiers after taxpayers file their 2021 state taxes. The Governor is working with leaders of the general assembly on legislation that will streamline the process and make an additional 910,000 taxpayers eligible for the credit. The typical taxpayer liability is approximately \$1000. This payment represents a 12-13% one-time tax cut. Once legislation passes, the Department of Revenue (DOR) will begin processing payments for taxpayers. The form of taxpayer payments will be based on how the 2021 return was filed. Taxpayers who apply for an extension will receive the payment after filing their return. House Speaker Todd Huston said, "This taxpayer refund is just more proof that Indiana's strong, fiscal conservative leadership, which pays its bills and plans for the future, is rewarding Hoosiers. Our economy continues to outpace expectations and I'm excited to find additional ways to put dollars back into taxpayers' pockets through tax cuts this session."



## Oswald met with KGB, records show

WASHINGTON — Lee Harvey Oswald met with a KGB agent just two months before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, according to newly unsealed confidential docu-

ments stemming from JFK's murder ([New York Post](#)). The CIA memos, part of a trove of nearly 1,500 documents released Wednesday by the National Archives and Records Administration, also disclose that an anonymous tipster warned US embassy officials in Australia a year earlier that Kennedy would be assassinated by the Soviet Union for a \$100,000 bounty. But the tip was never passed on to the CIA.

## Hospitalizations up 150% in surge

INDIANAPOLIS — The number of Hoosiers being treated for COVID-19 continues to climb. Hospitalizations have increased 150 percent in just over five weeks ([WTHR-TV](#)). "The numbers I am seeing for ICU bed availability across Indiana are scary," said Dr. Graham Carlos, executive medical director at Eskenazi Health. This is causing many hospitals, like Eskenazi, to turn away incoming patients. "Every day or every other day, hospitals are on and off diversion. As they are able to get patients discharged, quickly new patients fill right back in," Carlos said. "We were watching the numbers go down and to have them turn back around and start going up again is just about the most disheartening thing," said Dr. Paul Calkin with IU Health.

## National Guard at 13 IU Health units

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana University Health on Wednesday provided an update on its efforts in treating COVID patients ([WIBC](#)). IU Health says it is currently caring for 496 COVID patients throughout its hospital system. As of Wednesday, six-person National Guard teams were supporting 13 of the network's 16 hospitals statewide: IU Health Arnett, Ball Memorial, Blackford, Bloomington, Jay, Methodist, Morgan, North, Paoli, Saxony, University, and West.

## Indiana Cann to seek pot reform

INDIANAPOLIS — Some Indiana business owners officially formed a group Wednesday to push for the legalization of marijuana in the state. The group, called Indiana Cann, said studies show the state could make \$171 million a year in taxes from marijuana sales if lawmakers adopt Colorado's tax model. They said that would be enough to fund 12 state agencies and still have money left over. "All the money's going to Illinois, Michigan, Ohio's got medical (marijuana) and if you look around the rest of the world, it's everywhere - even in Utah," said Half Moon Hemp owner Adam Gillatte.

## Teising awaits verdict from judge

WEST LAFAYETTE— There were a handful of things both sides agreed about on the third and final day of Wabash Township Trustee Jennifer Teising's trial on 21 counts of felony theft: Teising sold her house on Princess Drive in West Lafayette in June 2020. She bought a camper and a new pickup truck in the same week (Bangert, [Based in Lafayette](#)). And the trustee started traveling extensively over the next nine months, staying in Anderson, Florida and other spots, away from Wabash Township. The question remained: Was the place at 132 Knox Drive, where she registered to vote and used for her driver's license and vehicle registration, really her legal residence from June 2020 to March 2021? Prosecutors said a pile of evidence – including phone records, bank statements and a backdated lease signed after media reported that she was staying in a Florida RV campground in December 2020 – show Teising created a paper trail around the Knox Drive residence, hoping to conceal that she'd abandoned her post and legal residency in Wabash Township, even as she continued to collect some \$21,000 in her trustee