



Pre-primary: Milo, Houchin eye wins

General Assembly races see McGuire pressing Rep. Jacob; HRCC backing Rep. Snow

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana primary voters go to the polls next Tuesday for the first time with new maps forged last October. At stake are two



Republican congressional seat nominations, with the 9th CD winner being tantamount to election in November given the GOP-tilted maps.

The GOP winner in the 1st CD race between former LaPorte mayor Blair Milo and newcomer Jennifer-Ruth Green could represent the lone takeover opportunity in a November race with freshman U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan. While we see Rep. Mrvan as leading in a fall matchup, the 1st CD has just a D+7% advantage. The next closest is CD5 where freshman Rep. Victoria Spartz runs for her first reelection in a R+22 district.

Also coming to a head will be three incumbent v.



incumbent General Assembly races, including two in the Indiana House where legislators were drawn (or moved) into the same districts while in SD47, State Sens. Kevin Boehnlein and Gary Byrne are slugging it out for a full term after both were appointed by caucus to seats in SD46

Continued on page 3

Securing '24 election

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When I was growing up, if the Peru Tigers lost to the Marion Giants or the Logansport Berries, we accepted the verdict on the court. Those who didn't were labeled "poor sports" or "bad losers."

These days we are witnessing Republican U.S. Senate debates in Georgia, Ohio and Pennsylvania where candidates are relitigating Donald Trump's empirically proven loss to Joe Biden in 2020.



Dr. Mehmet Oz was asked if it was time to move on from this "Stop the Steal" mode, and he responded, "I have discussed it with President Trump and we cannot move on. We have to be serious



"They must know that our response to counterstrikes will be lightning fast. Fast. We have all the weapons we need for this. No one can brag about these weapons and we won't brag about them. But we will use them."

- Russian President Putin, once again threatening to use nukes.



Howey Politics Indiana
WWHowey Media, LLC
c/o Business Office
PO Box 6553
Kokomo, IN, 46904
www.howeypolitics.com

Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Susan E. Howey, Editor
David McChesney, Marketing

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
 1926-2019



about what happened in 2020."

In Michigan last weekend, the Republicans at their state convention endorsed Kristina Karamo for attorney general and Matthew DePerno for secretary of state. Both are ardent 2020 election deniers, despite a Michigan Senate Oversight Committee report showing no fraud. "This investigation was lengthy, thorough, and revealing," said committee Chairman Ed McBroom, an Upper Peninsula Republican. "After innumerable hours over many months, watching, listening, and reading both in-person testimony and various other accounts, I am confident in asserting that the results of the November 2020 General Election in Michigan were accurately represented by the certified and audited results."

Reporting over the weekend points to a pernicious attempt by the Trump White House to thwart the will of the people by using so-called "alternate electors" to change Trump's 306-232 Electoral College loss.

According to the New York Times, Chief of Staff Mark Meadows aide Cassidy Hutchinson's testimony and other materials disclosed by the House Jan. 6 committee in a 248-page court filing on Friday added "new details and texture" to what is publicly known about the discussions in Mr. Trump's inner circle and among his allies in the weeks preceding the Jan. 6 assault. Hutchinson's testimony indicated that members of the Freedom Caucus were also involved in plans to pressure Vice President Mike Pence to throw out electoral votes from states won by Biden and accept false certificates claiming those states had voted for Trump.

"They felt that he had the authority to – pardon me if my phrasing isn't correct on this, but – send votes back to the states or the electors back to the states," Ms. Hutchinson testified, adding that they had appeared to embrace a plan promoted by the con-

servative lawyer John Eastman that members of both parties have likened to a blueprint for a coup d'etat. Attorney Cleta Mitchell played a role in promoting the alternate elector scheme. The email, which Ms. Mitchell sent to Mr. Meadows on Dec. 6, 2020, included a list of "key points" about the plan, noting, for example,



Senator Mike Braun
 @SenatorBraun



Speaking and listening to Hoosier @realDonaldTrump supporters who came to DC from Indiana about why I will object today and support an emergency audit into irregularities in the 2020 election.



12:20 PM · Jan 6, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

that the "U.S. Constitution gives the authority to state legislatures to appoint presidential electors."

NYT: "Ms. Mitchell had sent a version of the email one day earlier to Senator Mike Braun, Republican of Indiana, in advance of the senator appearing on television. When Ms. Mitchell forwarded the email to Mr. Meadows, she wrote, 'This is what I prepared and sent to Sen. Braun last night to help prepare him for ABC appearance this a.m. Can the WH press office get and start using?'"

After the U.S. Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021, Sen. Braun reversed course on challenging Biden's victory. In a statement to White House pool reporters, Braun said he "didn't feel comfortable with today's events," noting he believes election integrity is "still a valid issue."

"When today's events unfolded, I could not dignify it even

with upholding something I objected to," Braun said. "I'd say that was the reason behind most (of the members of Congress) that ended up changing their minds. Though I will continue to push for a thorough investigation into the election irregularities many Hoosiers are concerned with as my objection was intended, I have withdrawn that objection and will vote to get this ugly day behind us."

Since then, Ball State University audited five Indiana counties (LaPorte, Cass, Madison, Vigo and Marion) and found no irregularities. "In every race examined, the election outcome was confirmed with 100% confidence and high levels of statistical assurance," secretary of state spokesman Allen Carter told the Terre Haute Tribune-Star.

Ditto in Arizona. The Republican speaker of the Arizona House doomed legislation that would have permitted the state legislature to overturn election results, according to Capitol Media Services. In Wisconsin, the State Journal reported: "Election deniers are scheduled to head to the Capitol on Thursday and in May in an ongoing effort to cast doubt on the outcome of the 2020 presidential election by continuing to press baseless claims that the vote was stolen." The dogged efforts were despite numerous audits, reviews and court filings that found no more fraud in 2020 than is typical in any other election.

Forbes reported in October that one of the final pending lawsuits filed by supporters of former President Donald Trump in Georgia shortly after the 2020 presidential election was dismissed. State Superior Court Judge Brian Amero ruled that the plaintiffs "did not have grounds for the audit since they failed to provide any evidence to back up the need for one."

So there are baseless claims of election fraud, while a number of Republicans are doubling down on Trump's allegations. Which brings us to the antiquated 1887 Electoral Count Act, which Trump's inner circle and supporters tried to exploit. NBC News reported that a bipartisan group of senators is exploring how to prevent future elections from being stolen: Sens. Collins, Mitt Romney

(Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), Rob Portman (Ohio), Thom Tillis (N.C.), Todd Young (Ind.) and Ben Sasse (Neb.) took part in Monday's call. Democratic Sens. Joe Manchin (W.Va.), Jeanne Shaheen (N.H.), Kyrsten Sinema (Ariz.), Mark Warner (Va.), Chris Coons (Del.), Chris Murphy (Conn.) and Ben Cardin (Md.) also took part.



"We've reached consensus on some of the key issues, such as the role of the vice president, to have language making clear that it's ministerial; increasing the threshold in both the House and the Senate that is necessary to trigger a challenge; and some issues involving the transition period," Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said Monday afternoon.

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said "things look pretty good" for consensus on modernizing the Electoral Count Act and presidential transition provisions. "Still working on a few issues," he told NBC. "It's moving in the right direction, and people are coming to the meetings and negotiating in good faith." Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, added, "It's just far more complex than it would seem at the outset, in that everything you change has implications on other elements in the process. So we're working with attorneys and with a parliamentarian to get their input and suggestions."

What is the urgency? Just 20% of Americans say they're confident in the nation's election system, according to a January ABC/Ipsos poll. Even fewer Republicans (13%) are very confident, with a considerable majority (59%) having little faith in the system.

University of Chicago political science Prof. William Howell told ABC News, "Widespread distrust in our electoral system overlays deep divisions over our democracy. Republicans lack confidence, in no small part, because of lies propagated by their leaders. And Democrats lack confidence because of ongoing efforts of Republicans to politicize the administration of elections. This is a bad equilibrium."

Sens. Braun and Todd Young should embrace and support reforms to the Electoral Count Act. They should be part of the bipartisan solution.

Our democracy is at stake. ❖ ·

Horse Race, from page 1

and SD47.

In HD23, the House Republican Campaign Committee is actively backing State Rep. Craig Snow, who is trying to fend off State Rep. Curt Nisly, with \$80,000 in late money.

There are 25 House Republicans facing a primary, with State Reps. John Jacob and Dan Leonard appearing to be the most vulnerable of losing in the primary. Jacob is facing a \$560,447 fundraising onslaught from

Julie McGuire, a self-employed mother of four, who touts an endorsement from Indiana Right to Life. Jacob was a surprise upset winner in the 2020 primary over appointed State Rep. Dollyne Sherman after earning a reputation as a pro-life extremist.

Here is our rundown of marquee races, with the Horse Race chart on pages 7-8 featuring our final predictions:

CD1 Republican: Blair Milo, Jennifer-Ruth Green, Mark Leyva, Nicholas Pappas, Ben Ruiz, Aaron Storer. Milo, the former two-term LaPorte mayor who re-

signed from a Holcomb administration cabinet post to seek a congressional nomination, is facing Jennifer-Ruth Green, who like Milo has been touting her military background. Both candidates have mounted cable TV ad campaigns in a district where broadcast Chicago media is prohibitively expensive. Green has the endorsements of Attorney General Todd Rokita and U.S. Reps. Jim Banks and Larry Bucshon. Milo has been endorsed by a number of Indiana mayors. She is an ally of Gov. Holcomb, who has not made an endorsement, which is telling. Holcomb has been under fire from social conservatives angered by his veto of a transgender athletics bill as well as his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Green posted \$276,575, while Milo reported \$208,239 in their first quarter FEC reports. Milo raised \$186,989 from individuals, \$21,250 from PACs, made \$97,349 in expenditures, and had an ending cash balance of \$110,890. Green raised \$233,636 from individuals, \$32,354 from PACs, made a \$10,000 loan to her campaign, had \$125,584 in disbursements, \$14,425 in refunds, and had an ending cash balance of \$150,991.

Donald Trump has become the top primary issue, with Green running cable TV ads and mailers describing Milo as a "never Trump Republican" after she resigned as a 2016 Republican National Convention delegate. "I was not convinced casting a vote for the presumptive nominee was something I could stand behind," Milo told the NWI Times. "I felt if I'm not going to be able to serve in the full capacity as a voting delegate because of my own reservations about the decisions that were going to have to be made, then I needed to forgo attending the event and provide the opportunity to another who would feel more comfortable with it." Green campaign manager Ashleigh Presnar said, "Republicans have a clear choice in the race for Congress. Our new ad highlights Blair Milo's real record as a Never Trump politician who is embarrassed by conservative values." While Trump has been very active making primary endorsements, he has yet to weigh in on this race.

Horse Race Status: Being a mayor gave Milo years of media exposure in The Region. We give Milo an advantage on the name ID front. **Leans Milo.**

CD9 Republican: Erin Houchin, Mike Sodrel, Stu Barnes-Israel, State Rep. J. Michael Davisson, Jim Baker, Dan Heiwig, D. Eric Schansberg, Bill J. Thomas, Brian Tibbs. This race is essentially a three-way bout between former one-term congressman Mike Sodrel,

former state senator Erin Houchin, and military veteran Stu Barnes-Israel. Recent media reports have focused on Sodrel and Barnes-Israel moving into the district to run. It mirrors the 2010 GOP primary that Todd Young won with 34% over Travis Hankins (32%) and Sodrel (30%).

Sodrel reported in his first quarter FEC \$409,617 in disbursements and had an ending cash balance \$57,752. In her FEC filing, Houchin reported expenditures of \$126,728 and had an ending cash balance of \$250,476. Barnes-Israel had made \$133,387 in expenditures and had a \$231,937

The demographic and partisan breakdown of Indiana's new map



cash balance.

In recent media buys Barnes-Israel (Flexpoint Media) placed a new cable flight from 4/27-5/1. AdWatch has seen \$2,986 placed on FXNC. Houchin (Strategic Media Services) placed a new broadcast flight from 4/27-5/3 in the contest for IN CD-09. AdWatch reports Houchin placed \$41,235 in the Indianapolis market in an ad where she touts herself as "pro-life, pro-gun and pro-Trump."

The Indiana Right to Life Political Action Committee announced a dual endorsement of Houchin and Sodrel. IRTL PAC chairman Mike Fichter issued this statement in making the endorsement: "Erin Houchin has been a champion for life in the Statehouse, compiling a 100% pro-life voting record while demonstrating true leadership in speaking for unborn children and their moms. She's a proven fighter in defending the right to life. Mike Sodrel's 100% pro-life voting record as a member of Congress is a testimony to his commitment to protecting life. He will be unafraid to push back against the abortion agenda of Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The IRTL-PAC urges voters in the 9th District to give Erin Houchin and Mike Sodrel their strongest consideration."

Barnes-Israel has been endorsed by U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton and former secretary of state Mike Pompeo. Houchin has paraded a string of early endorsements from legislators, sheriffs, local officials, U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik and Attorney General Todd Rokita.

Sodrel, stumped in Bloomington on Wednesday as part of an 18-county tour ahead of next week's primary (Indiana Public Media). Sodrel attempted to distinguish himself from the number of other conservatives in the reliably red district by highlighting his business and prior military experience.

Horse Race Status: Sodrel last won this district in 2004 and was last nominated in 2008. As IndyStar columnist James Briggs noted, Houchin lost to self-funder U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth in 2016, but there appears to be a building consensus that it's her turn. "Even in a crowded field ... Houchin stands out," Briggs notes. "She is an Indiana Republican Party favorite, she has legislative experience and she seems to be in the right place at the right time, which is not something that could be said of her last run for Congress." **Likely Houchin.**

Other contested CD races

There are three other active congressional district nomination fights that won't be competitive in November:

3rd CD Democrats: Gary Snyder, Phillip Beachy, and Aaron (A.J.) Calkins are running for the right to challenge U.S. Rep. Jim Banks. Snyder is the only candidate who has run a conspicuous campaign and he is "Likely" to win.

5th CD Democrats: Matt Hall is running against Jeannine Lee Lake, who has run twice in the old 6th CD. Hall has raised \$42,446 and spent \$28,006, while Lake has reported contributions of \$3,965, including a \$1,000 donation to her own campaign, and has spent \$795. We see this as a "Tossup."

7th CD Republican: Bill Allen, Angela Grabovsky, Russell (Rusty) Scott Johnson, Jennifer Pace, Gerald Walters. Grabovsky has raised \$240,000 and has mounted a social media and yard sign campaign. We have it "Likely" Grabovsky.

8th CD Democrats: Adnan H. Dhahir, Ray McCormick, Peter F.H. Priest II are running and we see this as "Leans" McCormick.

General Assembly

Here are top contested primary races for the Indiana Senate and House:

SD14 Republican: Tyler Johnson, Ron Turpin and Denny Worman. Turpin has an emphatic money lead in this open seat race as well as the endorsement of former vice president Mike Pence. Turpin entered the year with \$133,777 and reported \$391,423 raised this year in his pre-primary filing, \$241,215 in expenses and had a cash balance of \$276,985. Johnson reported \$140,251 in receipts, \$95,614 in expenses and had a pre-primary cash balance of \$52,657. Turpin has been endorsed by Indiana Right to Life, NE Indiana Right to Life, Indiana Manufacturers Association, and Hoosiers for Quality Education. **Horse Race Status:** LIKELY TURPIN.

SD23 Republican: Christian Beaver, Spencer Deery, Fountain County Clerk Paula K. Copenhaver, and Parke County Republican Chairman Bill Webster. Deery, an aide to Purdue President Mitch Daniels, has raised more than the rest of the field combined with a beginning balance of \$9,520, receipts of \$71,820 so far this year, expenses of \$50,663 and an ending balance of \$30,677. He received late donations of \$10,000 from the Indiana Business for Responsive Government and \$5,000 from Sen. Ron Alting's committee. Copenhaver reported \$9,599 in receipts, \$7,536 in expenses and an ending balance of \$3,412. Chairman Webster's pre-primary report had \$32,481 in receipts, \$20,304 in expenses and \$13,504 ending balance. Beaver reported \$15,755 in receipts this year, \$11,922 in expenses and an ending balance of \$25,990. **Horse Race Status:** LIKELY DEERY.

SD47 Republican: State Sen. Kevin Boehnlein and State Sen. Gary Byrne. This is the lone incumbent v. incumbent race in the Senate Majority Caucus and it's been a wild ride to get here. Boehnlein had originally intended to run in SD46 and took the seat after Sen. Ron



Grooms retired. Reapportionment put Boehnlein in SD47 with State Sen. Erin Houchin and those two appeared to be headed for a primary showdown. When U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth retired, Houchin shifted to the 9th CD, school trustee Gary Byrne won the SD47 caucus, setting up this showdown between two

senators who weren't elected. Sen. Boehnlein entered 2022 with \$163,782, added another \$78,141 in receipts in his pre-primary report, had \$152,371 in disbursements and has an ending balance of \$89,553. He's received large late donations of \$10,000 from the Indiana Business for Responsive Government PAC, \$1,500 from the Beverage Alliance and \$1,000 from Taft Law. He has been endorsed by Indiana Right to Life, Indiana Chamber, Farm Bureau and Hoosiers for Quality Education. Boehnlein has been running TV ads for six weeks. Sen. Bryne has raised \$29,425, spent \$11,471 and had an ending pre-primary balance of \$17,963. He has received about \$12,000 in late donations from family members and \$1,000 from the Nick Smith for Sheriff campaign. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Boehnlein.

SD46 Democrat: Andrea Hunley, Karla Lopez Owens, Indianapolis Councilwoman Kristin Jones, Ashley Eason, Bobby Kern. Councilor Jones entered the year with \$75,104, added \$40,457 in receipts in her pre-primary report, had \$48,320 in expenses and an ending balance of \$67,266. She received a \$1,500 late donation from the Taylor for Senate Committee. Hunley raised \$42,584, spent

\$29,153 and had an ending cash balance of \$38,923. Owen reported a beginning balance of \$10,707, another \$8,624 in pre-primary receipts, \$6,943 in expenses and an ending balance of \$12,388. Eason reported \$41,656 in receipts, \$19,471 in expenditures, with COH of \$22,184. In April 13 she received late contributions of \$1,000 from Alan Kay, and \$1,500 from Taylor for Senate Committee. On April 21 she received a late contribution of \$1,500 from Indiana Builders PAC. This started as a wide-open race for this new open seat, with Councilor Jones appearing to have an advantage. While Eason's energetic campaign might sneak through, this looks like it's Jones' race to lose. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Jones.

HD7 Republican: State Rep. Jake Teshka, Sarina Williams, and Timothy Jaycox. Rep. Teshka is receiving a number of late contributions, suggesting he may be facing a serious challenge. He received \$10,000 from the Insurance PAC, \$2,500 from the Indiana Merit Construction PAC and \$7,500 from Hoosiers for Great Public Schools. Teshka had a beginning balance of \$36,382, total contributions of \$60,529, expenditures of \$39,028 and an ending balance of \$57,883. His opponents have reported raising less than \$6,000 combined. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Teshka.

HD22 Republican: State Reps. Craig Snow and Curt Nisly. HRCC is clearly backing Rep. Snow, pumping \$80,000 in late money, as well as a \$1,356 in-kind contribution. Snow has raised \$201,350, spent \$181,322 and had a cash balance of \$44,106. Snow has received \$5,000 from the Mishler for Senate Committee, \$5,000 from the Indiana Merit Construction PAC and \$25,000 from the Insurance PAC. Nisly had a beginning balance of \$62,886, receipts in 2022 of \$19,044, expenses of \$13,465 and an ending balance of \$68,470. He has received just \$2,500 in late contributions from individuals as of Wednesday morning. HRCC and the GOP establishment clearly has the ultra-conservative Nisly in their sights. Nisly will attempt to key up his grassroots support. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Snow.



HD25 Republican: Kent Abernathy, Becky Cash, Douglas Rapp, and Matthew D. Whetstone. Whetstone has a \$148,551-to-\$42,661 total contribution edge on Abernathy, the former BMV commissioner. Whetstone was also the subject of a lengthy IndyStar article by Tony Cook connecting him to Spectacle Entertainment: "Few people have taken as many trips through the revolving door at the Indiana Statehouse as Matthew Whetstone. The former state representative resigned in 2007 to become a lobbyist, then returned to the Statehouse as parliamentarian for then-House Speaker Brian Bosma in 2013, only to leave in

2015 to create his own lobbying firm. Now, Whetstone wants to return to the Indiana General Assembly – again." Whetstone had a \$70,671-to-\$16,784 cash balance lead. Whetstone has received late contributions of \$15,000 from Hoosiers for Quality Education, \$5,000 from Big Red Liquors, \$5,000 from Andy Mohr, \$5,000 from the Indiana Multi-Family Housing PAC, \$1,500 from Al Hubbard and \$1,000 from Chris Gibson. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Whetstone.

HD32 Republican: Suzie Jaworowski, Paul G. Nix and Fred Glynn. This is a newly drawn open seat. Jaworowski reported \$18,175, expenses of \$13,325 and an ending balance of \$6,295. She has received about \$5,000 in late contributions, including \$1,000 from Elect Republican Women and \$1,000 from Fadness for Fishers. Glynn reported \$48,461 raised and \$38,018 cash on hand. Nix has raised just \$2,647. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Glynn.

HD41 Republican: Richard Bagsby, Mark Genda, and Shane Weist. According to Dave Bangert's Based in Lafayette, Bagsby is a construction managing superintendent from Tippecanoe County; Genda owns Genda Funeral Home in Frankfort and is a former school board member; and Weist is sales manager for Tempest Homes, former head golf pro at Coyote Crossing and Battle Ground golf clubs and former Fairfield Township Board member. The winner in the May 3 primary will face Democrat Greg Woods, a procurement specialist from Lebanon who ran against Brown in the 2020 election.

Bagsby said, "When the COVID pandemic happened, my wife and I were at a disbelief about how it was handled. Our children were mandated to wear a mask. We have two children who have speech impediments, and that severely affected them. In our frustrations and going to school board meeting after school board meetings and arguing back and forth with them as far as getting an exemption for our children, we'd seen that our fight wasn't with them. It was really with the Statehouse and how things are handled. And that's why I'm running. I believe that I can contribute and put the people first by displaying what the Constitution is, what it was written for and what it means, what it stands for."

Genda said he was approached by people who suggested he'd be a good candidate. "The more I thought about it, and the more I researched it, I thought I would be a good candidate, because of the fact of my people experience," Genda said. "I believe strongly that this position is about the people, not about the ideals. It's people forward. That's why I'm running. I'm a people person, and I'm a communicator. And I believe that's what's missing." Weist said, "I'm running because I love serving people, my community and my state. I have three young children. And I want to make sure that we're passing conservative, fiscally responsible policies that will lead to

HPI Horse Race Congressional Republican Primary Ratings

1st CD: Blair Milo, Jennifer-Ruth Green, Mark Leyva, Nicholas Pappas, Ben Ruiz, Aaron Storer. **LEANS MILO**

7th CD: Bill Allen, Angela Grabovsky, Russell (Rusty) Scott Johnson, Jennifer Pace, Gerald Walters. **LIKELY GRABOVSKY.**

9th CD: Erin Houchin, Mike Sodrel, Stu Barnes-Israel, J. Michael Davisson, Jim Baker, Dan Heiwig, D. Eric Schansberg, Bill J. Thomas, Brian Tibbs. **Leans Houchin.**



HPI Horse Race Indiana House Republican Primary Ratings

Tossups

HD41: Richard Bagsby, Mark Genda, and Shane Weist.

HD 50: State Rep. Dan Leonard and Lorissa Sweet.

Leans

HD 22: State Rep. Curt Nisly and State Rep. Craig Snow. **LEANS SNOW.**

HD 45: State Rep. Bruce Borders and State Rep. Jeff Ellington: **Leans Borders.**

HD 93: State Rep. John Jacob and Julie A. McGuire: **LEANS McGUIRE.**

HD 33: State Rep. John (J. D.) Prescott and Brittany Bridges Kloer: **Leans Prescott.**

Likely

HD 7: State Rep. Jake Teshka, Sarina Williams, and Timothy Jaycox: **Likely Teshka.**

HD 20: State Rep. Jim Pressel and Heather Oake: **Likely Pressel.**

HD 25: Kent Abernathy, Becky Cash, Douglas Rapp, and Matthew D. Whetstone: **Leans Whetstone.**

HD 60: State Rep. Peggy Mayfield and Brittany Carroll: **Likely Mayfield.**

HD 65: State Rep. Chris May and John Lee: **Likely May.**

HD 72: State Rep. Ed Clere, Jackie Grubbs, Tom Jones: **Likely Clere.**

HD 81: State Rep. Martin Carbaugh and David Mervar: **Likely Carbaugh.**

HD 91: State Rep. Robert W. Behning and David Hewitt: **Likely Behning.**

HD 32: Suzie Jaworowski, Paul G. Nix and Fred Glynn: **Likely Glynn.**

Safe Republican Incumbents

HD 11: State Rep. Michael J. Aylesworth, Andrew R. Boersma, and Pierce Fischer. **HD 21: State Rep. Tim Wesco** and Stephen Gray. **HD 31: State Rep. Ann Vermilion** and Andy Lyons. **HD 47: State Rep. John Young**, Luke Campbell, Scott C. Strother, and Robb Greene. **HD 49: State Rep. Joanna King** and Amy Rainey, who dropped out. **HD 53: State Rep. Robert W. Cherry** and Meghan C. Carver. **HD 52: State Rep. Ben Smaltz** and Curt Hammitt. **HD 56: State Rep. Brad Barrett** and Mark A. Pierce. **HD 59: State Rep. Ryan Lauer** and William M. (Bill) Nash. **HD 79: State Rep. Matthew S. Lehman** and Russ Mounsey. **HD 85: State Rep. Dave Heine**, Stan Jones and Chris Pence. **HD 88: State Rep. Chris Jeter** and Chrystal Sisson. **HD 90: State Rep. Mike Speedy** and David Waters.

Indiana Senate Republican Primary Ratings

Tossups

SD 4: Jeff Larson and Johannes Poulard.

Leans

SD 14: Tyler Johnson, Ron Turpin and Denny Worman: **LEANS TURPIN.**

SD 23: Christian Beaver, Spencer Deery, Fountain County Clerk Paula K. Copenhaver, and Parke County Republican Chairman Bill Webster. **Leans Deery.**

SD 47: State Sen. Kevin Boehnlein and State Sen. Gary Byrne. **Leans Boehnlein.**

Likely

SD 25: State Sen. Mike Gaskill, and Evan McMullen. **Likely Gaskill.**

Safe

SD 26: Delaware County Councilman Scott Alexander, and Katherine (Kat) Kritsch. **Safe Alexander.**

Contested Democrat Congressional Races

3rd CD: Gary Snyder, Phillip Beachy, Aaron (A.J.) Calkins. **LIKELY SNYDER**

8th CD: Adnan H Dahir, Ray McCormick, Peter F.H. Priest II. **Leans McCormick.**

Indiana Senate Democratic primary races

Leans

SD46: Andrea Hunley, Karla Lopez Owens, Indianapolis Councilwoman Kristin Jones, Ashley Eason, Bobby Kern.

LEANS JONES

SD25: Anderson Councilwoman Tamie Dixon-Tatum, and Aaron Higgins. **Leans Dixon-Tatum.**

Likely

SD1: State Sen. Michael Griffin and Martin Del Rio. **Likely Griffin.**

great opportunities for future generations to make sure that they can live the Hoosier dream, just as we do. I want to make sure to protect our rights. I am very anti-mandate, I want to make sure that the rights remain in the hands of the people and are not taken away by the government." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD45 Republican: State Rep. Bruce Borders and State Rep. Jeff Ellington. HRCC has nominally been involved in this member v. member showdown after Ellington abandoned HD62 and moved into HD45. HRCC reported a \$1,253 in-kind contribution to Borders, who began the cycle with \$17,354, had \$22,350 in receipts, \$8,153 in expenses and an ending balance of \$31,591. Borders loaned his campaign \$45,000 and received \$2,500 from Sen. Jon Ford's Committee. Ellington began the cycle with \$18,638, had \$30,550 in receipts in his pre-primary report, \$23,683 in expenses and an ending balance of \$25,504. He received a late contribution of \$2,000 from KS Rolloff.

In an interview with Indiana Public Media, Ellington said he's the best fit for HD45. "I've worked on some major legislation and got three major bills passed," Ellington said. "One deals with fire districts. The (Indiana) Fire Association took this bill across the nation; it's model legislation. It protects fire districts from being annexed, from stealing their revenue. I compare it to a school district trying to bully up for a smaller school district and take their revenue. So this protects fire districts. We have a problem with volunteer firefighters throughout Indiana, there's a lack of them. And we're trying to figure out how to incentivize more volunteer firefighters." Asked why he should represent HD45, Ellington said, "Well, I always like to have property owners and citizens, especially voters, to



have a voice in whatever process. Whether it's annexation, whether it's manufacturing, location, whether it's schools – the more voice your citizens have, the better the situation is. And that's all about annexation, make sure your voice is heard. You know, it's been skewed in favor of cities and towns for 30-plus years. So that's just one of those little loopholes that I think needs to be changed to give people more of a voice. I represent 60% of you already. I've been there since 2016. I go to your fundraisers; I go to your Farm Bureau meetings. I go to your 4-H fairgrounds. I make investments with my time and what little dollar I have for your efforts. This is not an on-election, off-election thing I do. I do it every day, every week. I answer my phone seven days a week. I'm very responsive."

Borders was asked by Indiana Public Media if he was upset at Ellington for moving into HD45. "The bottom line is he does not live there. He claims that he does. You're gonna find the vast majority of his vehicles, of his assets, his businesses over here in Bloomington," Borders said. "Where he's claiming to have moved into, it's an old woolen factory there in Bloomfield. What I contend is that he simply owns an address, but that's not his residence. There don't seem to be any signs of life over there. He felt like he could win this year if he remained in District 62, but he would have trouble during presidential years because there's a heavier Democrat turnout in Monroe County. Even though, you know, the City of Bloomington had been carved out. The bottom line was that he was looking for an area where it would be easier for him to run. So that's why he and his wife had purchased this old factory building four years ago."

Asked, "What makes you the right guy for District 45?" Borders responded, "Well, for one thing, I do tell people the truth. I absolutely do. And I'm going to segue back on to something as well. (Ellington) had signed a no tax pledge, that he would not increase taxes. Well, he

voted for the gas tax. And not only did he vote for it, but what he voted for was a bill that put it on autopilot. And so every year, that tax increases with inflation. So it didn't just increase that year, it goes up. I did vote against that bill because I don't like taxes going on autopilot. If we're going to increase taxes, we should be accountable to the voters for that. And the other thing is he also increased registration fees. And what we found out doing opposition research is that two of his primary vehicles that he drives around in – one is a Mercedes-Benz and one is a Lexus, they're both very nice luxury vehicles – what he did is he voted to raise your taxes, my taxes, and then to raise everybody's registration fees, and he was cheating. I mean, he was putting state representative plates on those vehicles. And he had never registered (them) in the State of Indiana."

Horse Race Status: We give Borders an edge in this second member v. member race he's faced (the other coming after 2010's reapportionment). **Leans Borders.**

HD50 Republican: State Rep. Dan Leonard and Wabash County Councilwoman Lorissa Sweet. Rep. Leonard is clearly feeling the heat. He started the cycle with a balance of \$37,223, has raised \$215,904 this year, spent \$210,468 and had an ending balance of \$43,660. Leonard received \$1,000 from Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch. Sweet has raised \$23,610, spent \$9,577 and had an ending balance of \$17,224.



Leonard, who has held HD 50 since 2002, is no stranger to primary challenges. In 2020, he narrowly prevailed against John Stoeffel in the Republican primary, winning with 53.7% of the vote before winning easily against Democratic candidate Jorge Fernandez in the general election. With the significant change in the makeup of the district, Leonard said that he knows the challenges he will face in getting to know potential new constituents and voters. "I think my past history of representing portions of Whitley County and all of Huntington County and part of Allen County and part of Wells County kind of speaks for itself," Leonard told the Wabash Plain Dealer. "We've been able to get a lot done. We've been able to bring a lot of grants and money back to the district. Some of that is – I can't say that it's based on seniority, but having some history in the General Assembly does help bring a lot of things back to the district you represent."

Sweet told the Plain Dealer that she would use her "budgeting experience at the state level to reduce wasteful spending, balance the budget and lower or eliminate some of the tax burdens on Hoosiers." Sweet said she is a "constitutional conservative. I will fight for your right to make decisions concerning the health of you and your family, your children's education, and your ability to

work and worship unhindered." Sweet said she vowed to "defend and uphold the Constitution" and "fight to preserve rights and freedoms for future generations." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD72 Republican: State Rep. Ed Clere, Jackie Grubbs, Tom Jones. Rep. Clere received a \$10,000 late contribution from the Indiana Business for Responsive Government on April 19. Clere had a beginning balance of \$23,656, another \$55,800 in receipts in his pre-primary filing, \$29,514 in expenditures and \$49,941 cash on hand. Grubbs has spent \$10,108 and had an ending balance of \$17,639. Jones has spent \$31,126 and had an ending balance of \$727. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Clere.

HD93 Republican: State Rep. John Jacob and Julie A. McGuire: Rep. Jacob won a stunning upset over appointed State Rep. Dollyne Sherman in June 2020. He has developed a reputation of being one of the most far right legislators in modern times and has earned the targeted bullseye from the GOP establishment. Businesswoman Julie McGuire has raised a stunning \$560,447, has disbursed \$517,857 and had a cash balance of \$42,590. She received a late \$10,000 contribution from the Indiana Business Responsive Government PAC and \$2,500 from Elect Republican Women. Rep. Jacob began the year with \$24,839, raised \$37,280, had \$7,857 in expenditures and had an ending balance of \$54,201. He has received less than \$5,000 from individuals in late contributions.



LEANS MCGUIRE.

Governor

Daniels says it's time for woman gov

Purdue President Mitch Daniels spoke Monday at the Lugar Series luncheon recognizing this year's class of the series at the Indiana Roof Ballroom. He noted that the last three elected lieutenant governors – Becky Skillman, Sue Ellspermann and current incumbent Suzanne Crouch – were graduates of the series (Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb had been appointed by Gov. Mike Pence). Daniels noted that four of Indiana's statewide office holders are also Lugar Series graduates. He then said that it is high time that Indiana elects a woman governor and that she should be a graduate of the series. Lt. Gov. Crouch said in Brazil, Ind., earlier this month, "My experience at the state and local level in the executive and legislative branches have prepared me to be a lieutenant governor and work alongside the governor. I also believe that God puts us in places for a reason, I think I'm in a place for a reason and you can expect an announcement later this year." There have been 45 female governors elected in the U.S., but Indiana is one

of 19 states which has never elected a female. Indiana has just had one major party female nominee, Democrat Jill Long Thompson in 2008. While Crouch hasn't declared candidacy for the open 2024 gubernatorial seat, she will have the backing of financier Bob Grand. Other potential GOP contenders are men, including U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, U.S. Reps. Trey Hollingworth and Jim Banks, Chairman Kyle Hupfer, and Eric Doden. Informed and reliable sources tell HPI that Ambassador Joe Donnelly is expected to return from the Vatican to seek the Democratic nomination

Biden approval -28% in Indiana

Perceptions of President Joe Biden's job performance worsened across most of the country in the first quarter of this year, deepening the challenges for his party in key states ahead of this year's midterm elections that largely overlap with the 2024 presidential map. According to Morning Consult Political Intelligence quarterly tracking in all 50 states, more voters now disapprove than approve of Biden's job performance in 40 states, including -28% in Indiana. ❖

Sec. Pete ranks second in Dem '24 list

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – In a recent Washington Post analysis of the top 10 prospects for the 2024 Democratic presidential nomination, former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg is ranked second.

Of special interest in the evaluations written by Post political reporter Aaron Blake is Buttigieg moving up from a prior analysis to be listed ahead of Vice President Kamala Harris, now No. 3. No. 1 of course is President Joe Biden. The incumbent president almost certainly wouldn't be turned away by his own party if he seeks reelection.



Why was Harris dropped down a slot, with Buttigieg moving ahead of her? Because "it's not at all clear" that Harris is using the vice

presidency effectively as a launchpad and "she's done little to change the perceptions that harmed her 2020 (presidential) campaign," including messaging problems.

Because Buttigieg, who ran so impressively in '20 with a background as South Bend mayor, would in '24 have "more heft" as a Cabinet member, secretary of transportation.

The move of Buttigieg ahead of Harris was described as "not with any great conviction on our part." But there also was this observation: "To the extent people don't want Biden or Harris, he's next in line just in terms of sheer plausibility."

Well, I do hear from people who don't want Biden. Also from people who don't want Donald Trump as the Republican nominee. They just can't believe that the 2024 presidential race could be a rematch. Believe! Not that it's a sure thing, but that it's quite possible.

It seems almost certain that Trump will run. Why wouldn't he? With his solid base, the Republican nomination is his for the asking. Democrats are sinking in the polls, enhancing his chances. And he would love to reclaim

the presidency to wipe away the ego-shattering "loser" stigma from the 2020 defeat he still pretends to have never happened. He could again command the attention of the world and get revenge on Republicans who wouldn't fight to change the election results and Democrats he regards as mortal enemies.

On the Democratic side, who would have a better chance than the incumbent president? Maybe it's somebody on the Washington Post list. And maybe not.

Biden was the only potential Democratic nominee last time who could have defeated Trump. The same could be true next time. While Fox News portrays any rambling by Biden as a sign he's losing it, would he again come across as more stable, reasonable and likeable in a direct comparison with the rambling Trump?

Maybe Democrats will get their act together and fight to prevent another Trump term rather than fighting each other after they are trounced in the congressional elections this fall.

Some of those who can't believe Trump will run again also once couldn't believe he ever would be president. Some of those who can't believe Biden will run for reelection also once couldn't believe he ever would be the Democratic nominee.

Wishful thinking is involved. Some Republicans wish Trump would go away and their party would return to more traditional conservative principles and be less divisive. Some Democrats wish for a more progressive president who somehow could bring about another New Deal. That top 10 list of Democratic prospects offers quite a variety.

Included are No. 10, New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; No. 9, California Gov. Gavin Newsom; No. 8, Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey; No. 7, Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio; No. 6, North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper; No. 5, Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota; No. 4, Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. Then come Harris, Buttigieg and Biden.

It probably will be Biden. But if he doesn't run, all the others on the list and quite a few more will be in a wild scramble for the nomination.

Colwell is a columnist for the South Bend Tribune.

Ending hospital monopolies is needed to restore free markets

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – For most of my adult life, I've described myself as a free market economist. But, I should explain just what that means, and how it influences what I research and write about. The best way to start this essay is to observe that nearly all economic research examines

the points at which markets fail. It is rare to find a technical economic paper that reports markets working especially well.

In the past 25 years, across several hundred studies, I think I've concluded markets are working well in no more than one or two papers. This is largely how the rest of scientific publishing works.

There would be no need for virologists if there were no viruses that made people unwell. But, most of the time we are not unwell due to viruses, and very few papers in virology focus on well people.

Markets are much the same. Most of the time, in most places, markets work well. They allocate goods or services to those who value them most and they push factors of production, such as talent or equipment, to the places they'll be most productive. Without any conscience design, markets tell us when there is too little or too much of a commodity in a certain place. This causes humans to 'truck and barter' from places of plenty to places of scarcity.

Markets allocate financial assets, land, and scarce commodities like copper and platinum in ways that humans could never effectively design. From the most basic level of human exchange to complex international trade, there are almost no examples where free markets don't outperform any other human-contrived arrangements. They give us the most goods and services at the lowest price.

If all markets worked freely, there'd be no real need for economists and nothing for us to study. But alas, too many markets aren't free. Economists define three broad conditions where markets do not operate freely. In each of these cases, some intervention in free markets may be needed to approximate market outcomes.

The first example of market failure is in a public good. A public good is one where no alternative market will form, because no one can be excluded from receiving the benefits of the good or service. For example, national defense benefits everyone, regardless of their tax rates. So, there'll be no free market for the Air Force. If it is to



exist, government must pay for it.

The second example is markets in which the production of goods or services affects more than just the buyers or sellers. The textbook example of this is pollution, which imposes some cost on people who neither buy nor sell the polluting good or service. In this case, the costs are higher than the seller perceived, so the price is too low and the quantity of the item produced is too high.

There are also instances where the production of goods benefits more than those who receive them. Education and vaccines are the textbook examples. Of course, schooling and disease prevention benefit us individually, but living in places with better-educated people boosts everyone's incomes. Living in places that are heavily vaccinated reduces everyone's risk of disease. This is why we publicly fund education and vaccines.

The third type of market failure are monopolies, of which there are two types. Natural monopolies occur when a single producer is the lowest-cost provider of a good or service. The classic example is a water, sewer, retail natural gas or electricity service. In these cases, the cost of building competing infrastructure would make the product more expensive for everyone.

Contrived monopolies occur most typically when there is room for competition, but firms are able to exclude competitors from the market. Often government creates these 'barriers to entry' by rival firms. Patents are temporary barriers to entry. Other times, firms manage to create their own monopolies by buying up competitors or firms in their supply chain.

Free market economists understand that for markets to be truly free, market failures must be addressed. To do this, government has to provide public goods. Government also must have a hand in regulating polluters and funding education.

There is plenty of room for disagreeing about details, and government rarely gets it just right. In fact, most of those economic papers about market failures explain how government can do better. A large number of those economic studies argue that government should lighten regulatory restrictions, or perhaps use market mechanisms more effectively.

Still, to a free market economist, paying for a U.S. Navy, allocating tax dollars to create a first-rate education system or regulating mercury emissions are well within the scope of government. We free market economists also argue that government should own or regulate utilities in the case of a natural monopoly. We would also agree with the existence and enforcement of laws against contrived monopolies. In fact, the economic argument against monopoly power is that it interferes with the free functioning of markets.

American anti-trust laws outline a number of behaviors that are illegal if they lessen competition between firms. The first law, named for GOP Sen. John Sherman, outlawed cartels and price-fixing. Interestingly, Sherman's more famous brother is best remembered for

“remodeling” Atlanta in 1864. Regardless, several court cases led Congress to expand anti-trust laws to prohibit a wide range of activities if they reduced competition. The 1890 Sherman Act outlawed monopolies after they occurred, but the 1914 Clayton Act outlawed behaviors that led to monopolies.

Today, Indiana’s legislature wrestles with powerful and well-entrenched monopolies in our not-for-profit hospitals. Let’s see if the things those hospitals have done to secure and maintain their monopolies sound like things that were outlawed more than a century ago to preserve free market competition.

The Clayton Act outlawed mergers and acquisitions that lessened competition. These mergers could be horizontal, such as a single network buying hospitals in several adjacent counties to remove competitors. They could also be vertical, through the acquisition of clinics or referring physicians’ offices, which would keep other hospitals from being built in a region.

The same law made it illegal to charge different customers different prices if doing so helped cause or preserve monopoly power. This is called price discrimination, and can only be successful if the actual prices charged to consumers are almost wholly invisible. The Clayton Act also barred “exclusive dealings,” such as requiring physicians with admitting privileges to send patients exclusively to your hospital. Another example might be forcing ambulance services to deliver patients only to your hospitals.

If these actions sound familiar to you, you’d be right. They are part and parcel of Indiana’s hospital monopolies. Aggressive legislation to dismantle these monopolies is an unequivocally free market economic approach for those whose time has come. ❖

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.

Think before complaining about inflation

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – The March Consumer Price Index (CPI) convinced many an economic cosmic cataclysm is about to occur. Yes, an 8.5% increase over the same period last year is startling. That’s why inflation led off the evening news and dominated newspaper headlines.



Yet, when the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) announced its March CPI figure, it also reported the March 2022 CPI figure exceeded the February 2022 number by 1.3%.

This 1.3%, this short-term number, was the one often headlined in the past. If prices sustained that monthly growth rate, they would be 16.8% higher by the end of 12 months.

Clearly, a 16.8% prospective inflation rate is scarier than an 8.5 retrospective rate. Both rates are technically correct, but many CPI components are highly variable, and the purpose of the Index is to tell us where we have been, not to forecast the future.

Forecasting the CPI is perilous. Consumers and suppliers change behaviors in response to non-economic factors like Ukraine. Often these are short-term changes. Offsetting these transitory variations are the less volatile weights assigned to each of the 300 or so items in the CPI. They are based on the Census Bureau’s Consumer Expenditures Survey.

Thus, the CPI has two distinct elements, the prices we face and our expenditures, which become weights applied to those price changes. If the price of pizza goes up, most of us will try to offset that increase by ordering a medium pepperoni instead of that large meat lovers’ delight.

These weights reflect well-established patterns. Between 2010 and pre-Covid 2019, the item with the greatest change was medical care which rose from a weight of 6.6% to 8.8% of consumer spending. In sum, during this period, 37% of items in the CPI gained importance while the remaining 63% decline in relative importance.

Issuing the CPI each month is a massive task requiring the collection of price data at a very detailed level.

In May 2021, a pound of sliced bacon for breakfast was \$6.35, up 18.7% from a year earlier. Eggs were selling at 1.62/dozen down 2¢ (-0.9%) from a year ago. Coffee was 2.2% more expensive per pound. The electricity used prepare breakfast cost 14¢ per kwh, up 4.5%

Not all prices had such moderate changes. What we heard about was the gasoline for your car cost you 58.2% more in 2021 than in 2020, before Ukraine became our concern. Now we have data showing the gasoline increase for March ‘21 to March ‘22 was 70.1%. That’s called runaway inflation, but remember, it applies to only one, albeit important, item.

You can blame whomever you will for inflation, but you better be looking in the mirror when you do. Prices and purchases are interdependent. You can’t just shift full responsibility for inflation casually to people you don’t like. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at morton-jmarcus@yahoo.com. Follow him and John Guy on “Who Gets What?” wherever podcasts are available or at mortonjohn.libsyn.com.

A crazy plan to cancel all of student debt

By **CRAIG DUNN**

CARMEL – Wha, wha, wha! The sounds from Millennials are deafening. The chants of baristas with philosophy degrees and anthropologists with whatever those degrees are called can be heard across this great land, “Pay off my student loans, wha, wha, wha!”



Your cries have been heard by our Comforter-in-Chief, President Joe Biden and his merry band of “let’s give away cash” socialists in the United States Congress.

President Biden and Congressional leadership would love to find some legal way to cancel the student loan debt of nearly 45 million Americans. With a prospective ugly election fate at the mid-term elections staring them in the face, what better way for Democrats to get many in their base who are disenchanted with \$5 a gallon gasoline and 9.5% inflation back on board the Biden choo choo?

Two years ago in this publication, I warned about the exploding student debt problem and the many challenges that it presents. I identified runaway college tuitions with no market controls, easy money loan access to students who either shouldn’t be borrowing money to pursue a five-year college major in navel lint picking and the protection against bankruptcy afforded to student loan lending organizations by the generosity and opportunism of Congress as the major causes of the problem. I noted that if something wasn’t done soon to deal with the growing problem, there would be serious societal and economic problems.

I will admit that I didn’t expect students to quit borrowing money or to be any wiser with their choice of majors. I also did not expect colleges to eliminate the bureaucratic bloating and financial mismanagement that has served to drive up tuition costs. I seriously never anticipated Congress to take the one step necessary to end the problem for all time, eliminating bankruptcy protection from the student lenders. This is all just a nice way of saying that I expected the problem to continue and get worse and it has!

I work as a financial consultant, and I would like to tell you some of the stories that I have heard in the course of my day-to-day duties. There is the young married couple, both employed, who signed up for college classes, took out maximum loans for tuition and room and board and then canceled their classes and pocketed the refund to use as a down payment on a starter home.

There were the parents of a daughter who had just earned a degree in paleontology who told me that she had just borrowed the maximum to pay for a master’s degree in the same subject and living expenses in Africa where she had to pay to dig in the dirt. There was also an engineering graduate who borrowed money all four years to pay for spring break each year. These are just a few examples of how the outstanding student loan debt grew to \$1.6 trillion.

The truth is that for every low paid teacher struggling under the burden of student debt, there are several attorneys, doctors, engineers and businesspeople making very nice incomes who are managing the student loan debt just fine. Let’s not forget that for every American who has student debt, there are at least seven who have none.

I realize that the typical Democratic Socialist believes that money does grow on trees, or at least in a printing press, and that it should be Christmas every day of the year. But there are plenty of good reasons why President Biden or Congress should not cancel student debt. Here are a few:

Executive orders should not be the way to get things done when Congress won’t pass legislation. It is the ultimate governmental shortcut and nothing but a Constitutional end run.

The benefits of student loan forgiveness are highly regressive. The top 20% of households hold \$3 in loans for every \$1 held by the bottom 20%. Those with graduate degrees make more money as a rule and much debt is used to finance great paying advanced degrees. You might think that poor children borrow more to pay for college. Rich families tend to borrow more than poor families. They like to send their kids to colleges where their classmates are named Biff, Buffy and Chatsworth Osborne III. Those schools cost a lot more than IVTC, Ball State or Maurice’s School of Cosmetology.

Spending government money to bail out those with college debt will not dramatically improve the economy. During the COVID-19 pandemic citizens with only a high school degree had an unemployment rate nearly double the unemployment rate of those with a college degree.

Student debt forgiveness at this time is merely a one-trick pony that is immensely unfair to all of those who have previously paid off their loan debt and for the generations to come who will immediately take on student debt as soon as existing debt is canceled.

I asked one of my daughters this morning what she would think if Biden canceled all student debt after she worked so hard for the last decade to pay hers off. She dug deep into her barrister vocabulary book and responded, “It stinks!” No, paying off student loan debt for only those that have debt now makes as much sense as putting a tourniquet on a head wound. It would only serve to perversely incentivize students to borrow even more in the hopes that some future president struggling in the polls would come to their financial rescue.

Our tax code clearly discriminates against classes of people in a manner that I believe is grossly unfair, if not unconstitutional. What's next after student loan forgiveness? Forgiving those with home improvement loans? Forgiving mortgage indebtedness? Writing off credit card debt? You start singling out groups of people for extraordinary financial treatment and you just don't know where it stops.

I've already told you a few stories about some of my clients. Here are a couple of happy ones. One of my 21-year-old clients decided to go to welding school instead of college. He graduated after one year and started with a salary of \$112,000. Another client dropped out of a major state university where he was studying engineering. He now works as a plumber for a salary of over \$100,000 and loves it. There are alternatives to college for our young people.

I have already stated what I believe is needed to correct the long-term problem with student loans. Educa-

tion inflation must be contained and to do that the free flow of money coming from student loans must be controlled by sensible lending which will drive educational institutions to focus on degrees that offer the economic ability to repay loans. Sensible lending will come when government guarantees end and students are allowed the protection of our bankruptcy laws.

If society wants to incentivize certain lower paying degrees such as social work, education or ancient Zoroastrianism, then it can create programs to gradually cancel debt for years of service.

Just as our society offers equal opportunity for success but not equal outcomes, educational and occupational choices should only offer equal opportunity but not government-backed insurance against making a bad choice. ❖

Dunn is the former Howard County Republican chairman.

Are masks worth it?

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI State Bureau

ANDERSON – Former Surgeon General Jerome Adams wants you to meet Mr. Melvin. "He was my Uber driver today," Adams tweeted. "He also has had a double lung transplant and is waiting on a kidney transplant. I wanted you to meet him because he is impacted by the recent mask ruling. ..."



Mr. Melvin, Adams said, is the sort of person you're talking about when you say people are on their own in protecting themselves against COVID-19.

Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, is no fan of the ruling striking down the president's mask mandate for people using various forms of public transportation. He called it "a bad decision, sloppily done."

"It's creating chaos," Benjamin told the website MedPage Today. "We all knew we were going to have to do a transition, but I hoped the transition would be more orderly – sitting down and saying, 'OK, we're going to stop the masks; here's what it means.'"

A lot of folks have decided it doesn't mean much. For them, the pandemic is over.

A recent survey by the polling firm Ipsos found two-thirds of respondents saying they had gone out to eat or visited friends in the past week. Just 9% described the state of the coronavirus in the United States as "a serious

crisis," and almost twice that many said it was not a problem at all.

A third of respondents said they had already returned to their pre-COVID routines, and another 23% said they expected to do so within the next six months. Only about a quarter of respondents said they were still wearing masks when they left home. That was down from 43% in early February. The number of Americans who said they were still practicing social distancing stood at 36% in the latest survey, the lowest level since last summer.

Still, public health experts recommend wearing a mask around people you don't know, even if you're fully vaccinated and boosted. "You should probably still wear your mask in transpiration areas – on a bus and at least when loading and unloading on a plane," Benjamin said.

All of that brings us back to Mr. Melvin, a man whose health conditions leave him particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Mr. Melvin might be able to stay home if he qualified for disability, Adams said, but he feels healthy enough to work and thus doesn't want to take money from the government.

"So he drives," Adams tweeted. "And last week, a judge ruled his workplace mask free." Adams, a former Indiana state health commissioner, is now executive director of health equity initiatives at Purdue University.

As he rode toward his destination, Adams noticed his driver was wearing an older surgical mask, one that had seen a fair amount of use. So Adams gave his new acquaintance the five-pack of KN95s he carried in his suitcase.

Will donning one of those masks actually help? Dr. Scott Gottlieb, former commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, says the answer just might be yes. "One-way masking works, if you wear the right mask," he

tweeted. "KN95, KF94 or better. For those at risk from COVID, or who want added safety even as those around them unmask, a high quality mask worn properly can afford a measurable degree of added protection."

We'd all be safer, of course, if everyone at a large gathering were wearing a mask, but the experts say one well-fitted N95-style respirator can filter out 95% of airborne particles all by itself, no matter what anyone else

in the room might be wearing.

As for those poking fun at the holdouts, Adams offers a reminder. "When you shame people like me for wearing a mask," he tweeted, "you shame us for thinking about people like Mr. Melvin."

Worse yet, he said, you might be shaming the people folks like Adams are trying to protect. ❖

How minority parties compete in 1 party states

By **LOUIS JACOBSON**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – The United States is a nation increasingly polarized by party and by state. In many states, one party dominates while the other flails in seemingly permanent irrelevance. In such states, primary voters for the dominant party are often able to flex their muscles to nominate a comparatively extreme candidate, who is all but assured a victory in the general election.

Is there another way for minority parties in lopsided states to compete? There does seem to be an appetite for alternatives this year. Consider:

■ In Utah, Republican Sen. Mike Lee is running for reelection. In recent years, Utah Democrats running statewide have been unable to break 40% of the vote. This year, Evan McMullin, a former third-party presidential candidate from the state, decided to run as an independent, touting himself as a centrist alternative to Lee. While McMullin has an uphill climb seeking to oust a Republican incumbent in Utah, he got a break last week-end when Utah Democrats pledged not to nominate a candidate in the race. This gives McMullin a somewhat better shot at stitching together enough Democrats and moderate Republicans to make the race competitive.

■ In Alaska, Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski is facing another Republican, Kelly Tshibaka, who has the backing of former President Donald Trump and the state Republican Party. Her candidacy could imperil Murkowski's hopes of winning another term, but Murkowski is banking on a voting system approved by voters that will be used for the first time in 2022. On Aug. 16, the state will hold an all-party Senate primary; the top four finishers, regardless of party, will then face off in the general election, which will use a ranked-choice voting system. This could boost Murkowski, who is considered one of the Senate GOP's few moderates and who has historically gained support from otherwise Democratic-leaning labor unions and Alaska Natives. In a ranked-choice system, Democratic voters would be able to rank Murkowski as their second choice and help her win in a second round against the

more conservative Tshibaka. Further aiding Murkowski is that the Democrats have no candidates in the race at this point. (The filing deadline is June 1.)

■ In Missouri, the open-seat race to succeed GOP Sen. Roy Blunt has produced a Republican primary in which the candidates have rushed to align themselves with Trump. This state of affairs so worried former Republican Sen. John Danforth that he issued a public call for an independent centrist candidate. Initially it seemed like he found one – Thomas P. Schneider, the former mayor of Florissant. But Schneider eventually decided not to run, instead endorsing one Republican (state Senate President Pro-Tem Dave Schatz) and one Democrat (beer heiress Trudy Busch Valentine), declaring them both to be "pragmatic" candidates.

Beyond these unusual matchups, there's a slightly different idea, so far untried, that might be worth a closer look: Having minority parties in states that are dominated by the other party decline to run their own candidate for certain statewide offices, instead urging their voters to cast ballots in the dominant party's primary

in order to produce a more moderate nominee. Voters in the minority party may not love casting a ballot for a member of the other party, but given their own party's difficulty winning in these states, having a moderate win the general election rather than an extremist would benefit the minority party on the policy front.

The calculation, put simply, is this: What does the minority party gain by consistently failing to crack 40% of the vote and yet, by continuing to run candidates, effectively empowering the dominant party's ideological fringe to choose their state's next governor or senator?

In theory, following this approach could work for either party – Democrats in deep red states, and Republicans in strongly blue states. It would not be advisable in states that are more evenly divided, because the minority party in these states is not consigned to electoral hopelessness.

As a practical matter, however, it might only show promise in a subset of these strongly Republican or strongly Democratic states – namely, those that have open primaries or a multiparty primary with a runoff general election.

In an open primary, voters may choose in private



which primary to vote in, without having to register with that party. Meanwhile, other states have an all-party primary as the first round, with some differences in design.

Collectively, this adds up to a non-trivial number of states, according to how the National Conference of State Legislatures categorizes the primary process in each state. Of the states where Republicans are dominant, 7 hold open primaries (Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, and South Carolina). In addition, Alaska has the aforementioned top-four primary with a ranked-choice general election, and Louisiana has an all-party general election with a runoff if no candidate gets 50% in its jungle primary format, where the first round of voting is held in the fall.

As for the states in which Democrats are dominant, 2 have open primaries (Hawaii and Vermont) and an additional pair have a top-2 all-party primary (California and Washington state).

Collectively, that's 13 states where, logistically, this sort of strategy might show the most promise. It's rare in these states for the minority party to exceed the low 40s in a presidential, Senate, or gubernatorial race. The few exceptions include the election of Democrat John Bel Edwards in Louisiana and Republican Phil Scott in Vermont. Both Edwards and Scott had moderate positions that enabled them to attract dominant-party voters; both were elected to replace unpopular dominant-party governors; and Edwards's initial victory was aided by the personal baggage of his Republican opponent, David Vitter.

At least one state, Hawaii, has tacitly moved in this direction. There, the Democratic Party is so dominant that numerous Republican officeholders have switched their party affiliation to Democratic. These party switchers have typically been accepted warmly by Democrats, making the party unusually diverse ideologically. For instance, Mike Gabbard, a same-sex marriage critic (and the father of former Democratic presidential candidate and former Rep. Tulsi Gabbard), was named chair of the state Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee after switching from Republican to Democratic. Aaron Johanson, a former House Republican leader, now chairs the House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee. Whether the impetus was their ability to win office in the first place or their ability to make a mark on policy, both of these party-switchers -- and others -- realized that having a Republican affiliation was no longer in their political interest.

In Vermont, polling has shown that while a core of party members do stay within their own primary, others will go where the action is, said Chris Graff, a longtime observer of Vermont politics. Graff said he expects to see a number of Republicans voting in this year's Democratic primary for the state's open U.S. House seat, because they know the winner of that primary will win the seat in November.

Alaska is another state with somewhat malleable political affiliations. In 2014, a fusion ticket consisting of Independent Bill Walker and Democrat Byron Mallott

won the gubernatorial race, and the state House has been controlled for several years running by a coalition of Democrats, independents and breakaway Republicans. While the GOP generally wins statewide elections in Alaska, "Democrats have been able to significantly assist moderate Republicans in winning legislative races and the governorship," said Jerry McBeath, a University of Alaska Fairbanks political scientist. "This happens in the competition for endorsements of influencers, and the reluctance of Democratic Party leaders to put money in races of Democratic candidates without broad enough appeal."

In 2014 in Kansas, the Democratic Senate candidate went so far as to withdraw, allowing Independent Greg Orman to compete head-to-head against Republican incumbent Pat Roberts. Orman ended up losing by about 10 points in a strongly Republican election cycle, but his 43% of the vote might have been better than a Democrat could have gotten against such a longtime figure in Kansas politics.

In states that have all-party primaries followed by a top-two general election, such as Washington state and California, creative matchups are happening, even without active efforts to change voter behavior. In the 2018 California Senate race, for instance, incumbent Democrat Dianne Feinstein faced fellow Democrat Kevin de León in the top-two general election.

And this year, it's plausible that in the California attorney general's race, a former Republican running as an independent -- Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert -- could make the final round of voting instead of a Republican candidate. Schubert would be following in the footsteps of Steve Poizner, another former Republican who made the final-two round in the race for California insurance commissioner in 2018, losing by only about 6 percentage points (Republicans running in other statewide offices that year lost by significantly more).

Of course, there are lots of reasons to be skeptical of creative ballot approaches working. For starters, it's a heavy ask for state party officials to acknowledge their own impotence and decline to run a candidate for a top office in their state. "If the minority party doesn't field a candidate or candidates for statewide office, the other party will use that to beat the minority party over the head that it lacks relevance," said Andy Brack, publisher of Statehouse Report, a South Carolina political newsletter. "It will hurt the party and be 'proof' that it is weak. That's not smart if you want to lead."

For many leaders of minority parties, even the slim possibility of backing a winner from their own party may be too appealing to resist (even though most such winners in recent years have depended on running against a significantly wounded candidate from the dominant party, including Roy Moore in Alabama, Matt Bevin in Kentucky, Kris Kobach in Kansas, and Vitter in Louisiana).

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Russell Berman, The Atlantic: The names Todd Akin, Richard Mourdock, Sharron Angle, and Christine O'Donnell have been lost to history, consigned to the dustbin of Beltway barroom trivia. For Mitch McConnell, however, they remain an all-too-fresh reminder of opportunities squandered. McConnell became Senate majority leader in 2015, but had it not been for those four flawed and ultimately defeated Republican candidates, he might have reached his dream job years earlier. Now McConnell is trying to regain that powerful perch, and a slate of similarly problematic contenders in key states may be all that stands in his way. On paper, Republicans have a prime opportunity to recapture the Senate majority this fall. They need to pick up just a single seat to break the current 50–50 tie, and the political environment is tilting heavily in their favor. President Joe Biden's approval rating is mired in the low 40s, inflation is rampant, and the Democratic majority rests on a trio of vulnerable incumbents in states—Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada—that the president carried by fewer than 60,000 votes combined in 2020.

Yet the GOP may be stuck with candidates whose pockmarked, and in a few cases, scandal-filled, résumés could render them unelectable—or at least they would have in an earlier era. In Missouri, a state that should not be attainable for Democrats, the Republican nominee could be Eric Greitens, a former governor who resigned in disgrace over sexual-misconduct allegations and whose ex-wife has accused him in court filings of abusing her, as well as their son. The likely GOP nominee in Georgia, Herschel Walker, is a former NFL star with his own stormy past. Former President Donald Trump has endorsed celebrities making their first runs for office, J. D. Vance in Ohio and Dr. Mehmet Oz in Pennsylvania, whose reversals on key issues—including, in Vance's case, Trump himself—offer ripe targets for critics on the left and the right. The lone vulnerable Republican incumbent, Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, has campaigned against COVID-19 vaccines and has seen his popularity plummet in a state that Biden narrowly won two years ago.

McConnell is well aware of the GOP's good fortunes this year—and how easily the party could blow it. "How could you screw this up?" the once and perhaps future majority leader mused recently in Kentucky. "It's actually possible. And we've had some experience with that in the past." He was referring to the GOP's missed chances in 2010 and 2012, when Akin, Mourdock, Angle, and O'Donnell suffered their ignominious defeats. Akin and Mourdock each lost winnable races in Missouri and Indiana, respectively, after they both drew nearly universal condemnation for comments defending their opposition to abortion even in cases of rape. (Akin suggested that women who were raped somehow could not get pregnant, while Mourdock said that a pregnancy caused by rape is something "God intended to happen.") Angle, a Tea Party favorite in Nevada, made plenty of head-scratching remarks of her own as she lost her bid to oust Harry Reid,

then the Democratic majority leader. O'Donnell ran a TV ad in which she said the following words verbatim: "I'm not a witch. I'm you." ❖

James Briggs, Indystar: Long before Mayor McDermott was appealing to people who want to smoke pot, U.S. Sen. Todd Young was out on TV and at events warning about an "inflation crisis." I remember it well because last August I wrote that Young was lying about inflation. My rationale at the time was that all the avenues of inflation, such as used cars, had easy-to-track explanations (rental car companies, for example, were buying massive quantities of vehicles to replenish their supplies as people started traveling again) and that Young was trying to score cheap points on the Biden administration, which, to that point, had been popular. Sen. Todd Young has been a critic of government spending that contributed to inflation. Welp. Young was right about inflation — to a greater extent than I understood in December when I acknowledged Young was right about inflation the first time. Rocketing prices have only worsened this year and, unless it tapers quickly or some other problem rises to the forefront, inflation is likely to be the defining issue of this year's midterm elections. This is especially a problem for McDermott and all other Democrats running in congressional races this year because it's increasingly clear that Democrats exacerbated inflation by stuffing too much money into the American Rescue Plan Act. ❖

Mickey Mauer, IBJ: By a vote of 53 to 47, the U.S. Senate gave its "advise and consent" and confirmed Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court, adding an exclamation point to a major campaign promise of President Joe Biden to nominate the first black woman to the highest appellate court in the federal judiciary. The vote reflected the polarization and politicization of the Senate with only three Republicans joining all Democrats to confirm the nomination. Neither of our Indiana senators crossed party lines. Sen. Mike Braun's "no" vote was expected. Recall Braun's declaration when running for Senate that he was going to Washington as a conservative Republican to support President Trump and the Trump agenda. We know that Sen. Braun dances to the party drummer but I expected more from Sen. Todd Young. Young, a well-educated former Marine who had distinguished himself in his runup to the nomination for Senate, kindling hope that he would honor his promise of a fresh voice for Indiana. In rejecting Justice Jackson, he not only echoed the words of our junior senator, his riff would have brought down the house at the Crackers Comedy Club: "... Restoring civility to the Supreme Court confirmation process is in our national interest. It can help build trust in both the court and the Senate itself." Where was the civility, Sen. Young, when members of your party viciously attacked the character of this nominee? ❖



State to pay Camm \$4.6M

NEW ALBANY (AP) — A former Indiana state trooper cleared of killing his wife and their two children at a third trial after spending 13 years in prison will receive \$4.6 million from the state to settle a federal lawsuit, his attorneys said Wednesday. David Camm's settlement was reached in January, entered into court in February and confirmed Wednesday by his attorneys. "There is not enough money in the world to compensate David Camm for what he has been through," one of the attorneys, Garry Adams, said in a statement. Camm, 58, was convicted by two different juries in the shooting deaths of his wife, Kim, 35, and his children, Brad, 7, and Jill, 5, on Sept. 28, 2000, in the garage at their Georgetown, Indiana, home in Floyd County. Both times he won appeals that sent his case back for retrial. The jury at his third trial in 2013 acquitted him.



New law disarms indicted sheriff

CROWN POINT — Lake County Sheriff Oscar Martinez Jr. will be prohibited from carrying a handgun in public, both on- and off-duty, beginning July 1 (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). A new Indiana law authorizing all adult Hoosiers age 18 and older to carry a handgun in public without needing to obtain a state permit ironically bars Lake County's chief law enforcement officer from doing the same due to a pending felony charge against Martinez. Under current law, county sheriffs and other law enforcement personnel automatically are exempt from the state's handgun permit requirement. But that exemption was deleted by the Republican-controlled General Assembly in House Enrolled Act 1296 because beginning July 1 no one will

need a permit to carry a handgun in public.

Lacy abruptly leaves BMV early

INDIANAPOLIS — The man in charge of the Indiana BMV has abruptly resigned a month earlier than expected ([IndyStar](#)). Gov. Eric Holcomb had previously announced that BMV Commissioner Peter Lacy would step down on May 27, but those plans were cut short Wednesday without any explanation or formal announcement. "Peter Lacy notified the governor of his resignation effective immediately," said Erin Murphy, a spokeswoman for Gov. Eric Holcomb, in an emailed response to [IndyStar's](#) inquiries about Lacy's sudden exit. She would not provide a reason for the earlier-than-expected departure.

Purdue, Duke to explore nuke power

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (AP) — Purdue University and Duke Energy say they plan to jointly explore the feasibility of using advanced nuclear energy to meet the campus's long-term energy needs and reduce its carbon footprint. Purdue and Duke said Wednesday they intend to study power produced through small modular reactors, or SMRs, which are significantly smaller than traditional nuclear power plants. Purdue President Mitch Daniels says, "No other option holds as much potential to provide reliable, adequate electric power with zero carbon emissions."

Young urges Biden to keep Title 42

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Senator Todd Young spoke publicly Thursday pushing for the Biden administration to not let Title 42 expire ([WIBC](#)). The public health policy that allows the government to turn away migrants at the border for public health reasons is set to expire soon.

Young thinks that would be a mistake. "Immigration officials have warned that letting Title 42 Expire would make our immigration crisis three times worse," said Young. "Three times worse after a year where we had 2 million illegal boarder crossings. Now, according to the administration the pandemic continues on airplanes where they continue to fight for a mask mandate. The pandemic continues in the halls of congress where the administration continues to lobby for billions of dollars in emergency relief funds. But, on the boarder they say the pandemic is over."

GOP canvasser quits over Trump

LANSING — Tony Daunt, a longtime Michigan Republican insider, resigned Tuesday night from the GOP's state committee, saying party leaders had made the coming election a test of "who is most cravenly loyal" to former President Donald Trump ([Detroit News](#)). Daunt, who is one of two Republican members of the Board of State Canvassers, made the comment in an email addressed to Judy Rapanos, chairwoman of the 4th Congressional District Republican Committee. The message was obtained by [The Detroit News](#). Instead of focusing on Democrats' "myriad failures," Daunt wrote that "feckless, cowardly party 'leaders' have made the election here in Michigan a test of who is the most cravenly loyal to Donald Trump and re-litigating the results of the 2020 cycle." Daunt described Trump as a "deranged narcissist."

MC Mayor fires 4 commissioners

MICHIGAN CITY ([WNDU](#)) - Michigan City Mayor Duane Parry served four commissioners with the Michigan City Housing Authority (with charges for their removal on Tuesday. The charges filed by Parry outline a documented history of MCHA's failures.