



The evolution of the U.S. abortion debate

With SCOTUS poised to repeal Roe, a look at how the abortion lines have changed in Indiana

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When the U.S. Supreme Court voted 7-2 in the 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion, Lt. Gov. Robert Orr had been a contributor to Planned Parenthood. When a young Repub-

lican named Mike Pence first ran for Congress in 1988, the abortion issue wasn't a campaign hallmark.

As the nation grappled with the fallout of Roe, it was Northeastern Catholics who mounted the initial vanguard against legalized abortion. After the 1994 Republican Revolution,

the pro-life bulwark shifted to the South and Midwest, helping to create the red center of the nation, while the



coasts (along with Illinois and Colorado) became blue.

In the 1990s in the Indiana General Assembly, Republican House Speaker Paul Mannweiler and Senate President Pro Tem Robert Garton were pro-choice, while Democrat House Speaker John Gregg was pro-life.

Elaine Godfrey noted in *The Atlantic*: "President Ronald Reagan detested abortion but endorsed exceptions for rape in the 1980s; George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, and Donald Trump all also indicated their support for the measures. The National Right to Life Committee sup-

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The state of Hoosier kids

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Last week, Politico broke the story of a leaked SCOTUS draft opinion that would by a 5-4 margin terminate Roe v. Wade which has legalized abortion over the past 49 years.

"We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled," wrote Justice Samuel Alito. "It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives. Roe was egregiously wrong from the start. Its reasoning was exceptionally weak, and the decision has had damaging consequences. And far from bringing about a national settlement of the abortion issue, Roe and Casey have enflamed de-



"A lot of these younger people need to toughen up. I'm a person, you know, if I'm going to dedicate part of my life to the republic to get stuff done, there are different people, different styles. DC is a tough place so you need to have tough cookies around."

- U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz



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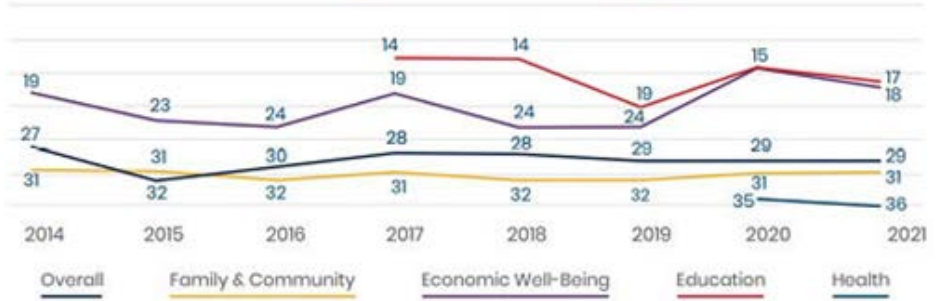
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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



Child Overall Well-Being and Domain Rankings; Indiana: 2014-2021



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Low birth-weight babies Total: 6,607 | 8% 2010 | 8.2% 2019 | Worse |
| Children without health insurance Total: 119,000 | 9% 2010 | 7% 2019 | Better |
| Child and teen deaths per 100,000 Total: 494 | 28 2010 | 29 2019 | Worse |
| Children and teens ages 10 to 17 who are overweight or obese Total: N/A | 30% 2016-2017 | 37% 2018-2019 | Worse |

bate and deepened division.”
When the Dobbs case out of Mississippi is announced in late June or early July, Gov. Eric Holcomb will almost certainly call a special session of the General Assembly and Indiana is expected become one of 26 states to outright ban abortions. This will likely preclude the traditional carve outs that had allowed abortion in the case of rape, incest or if the life of the mother is in peril.

“The vast majority of House Republicans, including myself, have been abundantly clear that we want to take action to further protect life should the U.S. Supreme Court overturn, in full or in part, Roe,” Republican House Speaker Todd Huston, R-Fishers, said in a statement Tuesday. “We will continue to await the court’s final decision.”

“I have a hard time being the person that’s part of taking of a life,” Holcomb said on Wednesday. “And I’ll review the decision that has impact on that.” Holcomb said a special session is “obviously on the table,” but said there are “a lot of ifs, ands and what-ifs” that potential legislation will look like.

The outright outlawing of all abortion will bring more children into our state. I was curious about how the children already with us are doing,

so I read the 2022 Kids Count Data Book published by the Indiana Youth Institute.

Indiana is home to the 14th largest population of children nationally, with more than 1.57 million children younger than 18, including 51% who were males and 49% females. Some 4.5% of Indiana’s population identify as LGBTQ+, and 34% of the LGBTQ+ population has children.

According to the Indiana Department of Health, the number of abortions in Indiana grew by 119, or 1.6%, to 7,756 during 2020. That increased number remained below the some 8,000 performed in 2018, Indiana’s highest number since 2014.

Indiana ranks 36th in the United States in kid’s health, with 8.2% of babies born with low birth-rate in 2019. In 2020, some 101,618 (or 6.3%) Hoosier children did not have health insurance. However, Indiana is higher than the U.S. rate for children without health insurance, which was 5.1% in 2020. Indiana ranks 40th in the nation for children without healthcare; it is also the lowest-ranked state for children without health insurance compared to our neighboring states: Michigan (10th), Illinois (18th), Kentucky (20th), and Ohio (24th).

Indiana’s 2020 infant mortal-

ity rate was 6.6 per 1,000 live births and there were 527 deaths. Black infants were more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday (13.2 per 1,000) than White infants (5.5 per 1,000) and Hispanic/Latino infants (6.0 per 1,000). The infant mortality rate stood at 5.26 in Illinois, 6.23 in Kentucky, 6.5 in Michigan and Ohio, and 3.8 in Massachusetts. In Canada it was 5, in Cuba 5.8, in Germany 3.9, in Japan 2.8, in Russia 10.5 and in Mexico 18.4.

In 2020, some 10.9% of expectant Hoosier mothers smoked while pregnant. This percentage has steadily decreased since 2008, when 18.5% of expectant mothers smoked.

Indiana's teen birth rate for ages 15-19 continues to decrease (2018: 22 per 1,000 improved to 2019: 21 per 1,000), though it is still above the national rate (17 per 1,000). In 2020, some 4,126 babies had a mother between the ages of 15 and 19. This represents 5.3% of total births.

The report states upfront that "Indiana's overall child well-being ranking has stayed consistent at 29th since 2019." Overall, Indiana ranks third best among neighboring states with Illinois (21st), Michigan (28th), Ohio (31st), and Kentucky (37th).

Indiana ranks 25th with 8% of our kids living in high poverty areas. Some 35% of Hoosier children are living in a single-parent family, which ranks 27th.

In 2019, neglect was reported as a reason for

87% of referrals to remove children from homes, and 91% of reasons for foster care placement. Of the 7,547 total removals conducted in 2020, some 61.1% included parent drug and/or alcohol abuse as a contributing reason. Some 20.9% of Hoosier children have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences.

Hoosier children living with a grandparent stood at 19% in 2014, 23.9% in 2016, 29.9% in 2018, and 23.5% in 2020. In 2018 and 2019, 6.0% of Indiana adults reported having an alcohol use disorder in the past 12 months, compared to 5.7% nationally; 9.9% of Indiana children have lived with someone who had a problem with alcohol or drugs, higher than the national rate (8.6%).

The Number of Indiana children in foster care were 20,763 in 2014, 34,269 in 2018, 30,237 in 2019 and 26,913 in 2020. There were 8,676 open Children In Need of Services (CHINS) cases in 2020, prompting 7,547 removals.

If medically-supervised abortions are going to be banned, the question here is: What will Hoosier leaders do to protect those children arriving from the womb? ❖

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Post-Roe, from page 1

ported legislation that included exceptions in the 1990s. Even the Hyde Amendment, the federal law that prohibits federal funds from being used to pay for abortions, has long contained these exceptions."

Just 10 years ago, in 2012, two Republican Senate candidates, Richard Mourdock of Indiana and Todd Aiken of Missouri, lost their contests following remarks about rape and abortion. Mourdock called rape during his final Senate debate with Democrat Joe Donnelly a "horrible situation" but "something that God intended to happen." Aiken somehow seemed to think a woman could avoid getting pregnant when he said, "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

Donnelly would go on to win the 2012 Senate seat by surging to a 7% plurality.

Indiana – like Oklahoma, Florida, Kentucky and other states – now seems poised to pass a law to further restrict abortion. In a letter, Indiana Republicans called



for a special session following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on the challenged Mississippi law. This ruling is expected in late June or early July. "As a state that recognizes that life is a precious gift that should never be neglected, it is our desire that you, as the governor of Indiana, ensure that those values are upheld without delay," the letter stated. "We have a responsibility to Hoosiers to ensure that our state laws are aligned with the Supreme Court's decision if Roe v. Wade is wholly, or partially, overturned."

Erin Murphy, Holcomb's spokeswoman, said Holcomb has received the letter. "He is absolutely considering it while he awaits a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court," Murphy said. Holcomb told the NWI Times' Dan Carden on Monday that a special session following the U.S. Supreme Court ruling is "to be determined," adding, "I'm waiting to see what the court submits in their final decision."

State Sens. Jean Breaux, D-Indianapolis, and Shelli Yoder, D-Bloomington, released a joint statement criticizing the letter. "This special session would only put

women in direct danger," they said in the statement. "If we call a special session in the name of protecting women and children, it should be to pass laws that fund child care, support foster services, reinstate the child tax credit and support Hoosier women and children in real ways."

According to research by the Guttmacher Institute, an abortion rights organization, Indiana is classified as a state "likely to ban abortion," surrounded by several of the institute has classified as "certain to ban abortion" (Indiana Citizen).

Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita and 17 other states have filed an amicus brief before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in support of a controversial Texas abortion law that makes abortion illegal in that state after heartbeat activity is detected in an embryo (Indiana Lawyer). Indiana is leading the 18-state brief filed Monday, joined by Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah and West Virginia. The states are requesting the 5th Circuit vacate the preliminary injunction against the Texas law known as Senate Bill 8, which virtually ended abortion in the nation's second-largest state after six weeks of pregnancy.

"This case does not permit, much less require, the Court to address S.B. 8, but instead presents a question of considerable significance for federalism and the separation of powers – whether the U.S. Attorney General has inherent authority to challenge state laws as violative of individual constitutional rights even absent congressional authorization," the amicus brief reads.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt signed a bill into law on April 12 making it a felony to perform an abortion, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, as part of an aggressive push in Republican-led states across the country to scale back abortion rights.

Mississippi's law prohibits abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy, significantly earlier than Roe and later court decisions allow. The Mississippi law was immediately challenged and has not yet gone into effect. Indiana's current law bans abortions after the first trimester. It is highly likely that the legislature will seek to further reduce this time limit with some legislators, like Republican Reps. Curt Nisly and John Jacob (both defeated in the May primary), seeking a complete ban. Indiana is likely to retain the "life of the mother" exception but we might see efforts to

include exceptions in cases of rape or incest even as other states have eliminated or decided not to include these exceptions.

In 2020, 7,756 women had an abortion in Indiana, up from 7,637 one year prior, a total of 119 more abortions, or a 1.6% increase, following a 5% decline in 2019 (Carden, NWI Times). Records show there were 79,058 live births in Indiana in 2020, or more than 10 times the number of abortions. Hoosier women, coming from 90 of the state's 92 counties, accounted for 7,372 abortions, or 95%. Residents of other states obtained 384 abortions at Indiana clinics and hospitals, primarily women from Kentucky. Women in their 20s procured 4,599 abortions, or 59.3% of the state's total. Women in their 30s had 28.2% of Indiana's abortions; those age 19 and younger, 9.2%; and age 40 and up, 3.3%. Altogether, 5.7 per every 1,000 Hoosier women between ages 15 and 44 had an abortion in 2020, up from 5.5 per 1,000 Indiana women of child-bearing age in 2019.

These new abortion laws are being advanced by state legislatures that are overwhelmingly men and controlled by Republicans. This issue could energize women, especially younger women who have grown up in an era of abortion restrictions but not to this degree. The issue might give Democrats an opportunity with Independent voters. We might not see impacts in the 2022 election but it could be a mobilizing issue in 2024 and, like the Senate races in 2012, the impact might be felt



first in statewide elections.

The operative words in that last paragraph are "could" and "might."

While the November mid-term election had been poised to be a pocketbook sequence (though the House Jan. 6 Committee will likely issue a report by next fall), the \$64,000 question is whether the fight over abortion will change the dynamic. At this point, it is impossible to say what impact it will have.

National polling shows Americans are not ready for a full repeal. Last October, four pollsters asked specifically about the Roe v. Wade decision. While the precise framing of the questions differed, all found support for upholding the decision in the 60% range, with the share who wanted to see it overturned hovering around the 25% mark:

- Quinnipiac: 66% of likely voters said they agreed with the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision, with 27% saying they disagreed.

- Kaiser Family Foundation: 69% of adults said they did not want to see the Supreme Court overturn its

Roe v. Wade decision, with 27% saying they did want it overturned.

- ABC News/Washington Post: 62% of registered voters said the Supreme Court should uphold Roe v. Wade, with 24% saying the Supreme Court should overturn it.

- Fox News: 61% of registered voters said the Supreme Court should let Roe v. Wade stand, with 28% saying the Supreme Court should overturn it.

- A Ball State University Bowen Center Hoosier Poll published in 2019 found Hoosiers split: 19% of Hoosiers expressing support for legal abortion in all cases compared to 17% who think it should be illegal in all cases. Another 29% of Hoosiers said abortion should be legal in most cases, compared to 28% who said it should be illegal in most cases.

In the wake of the release of the Alito draft decision, early public opinion polling shows little evidence of a massive swing against Republicans based on the impending threat to Roe, the Washington Post reported on Tuesday. A CNN survey taken in the immediate aftermath of the leak showed that Americans favored keeping Roe intact by roughly two to one, yet Republicans still enjoyed a 7% advantage over Democrats when voters were asked about their mid-term preferences – a margin that would easily swing both chambers to the GOP.

Meet The Press Daily observed last week: "This is a draft opinion, so it's possible (though unlikely) that a justice could switch his or her vote later this summer; we have no idea what other issues will dominate the rest of the year; and midterms are traditionally referendums on a sitting president, not on what happens at the U.S. Supreme Court. But here's what we DO know, as we wrote back in December: If you get rid of Roe, every single state will need a position on fetus viability, weeks when you can/can't have an abortion, parental notification, sonograms and possible exceptions (like on rape, incest or threat to the mother's life). And every single primary and general election could be dominated by those specific positions – all in a nation where a majority of Americans believe that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, and where even more say they support Roe v. Wade."

[Yahoo News](#) reporter Tom LoBianco observed this week that "in the more than three decades former Vice President Mike Pence has been involved in politics, his

opposition to abortion rights has been one of his bedrock principles. But in that time he's avoided settling on precisely what he would do if given the reins of power. He hasn't locked in a clear position in recent years. Exceptions for cases of rape and incest? He was for it in 2010 but hasn't said where he is now. Bans from six weeks after conception or 15 weeks? Pence's political advocacy group, Advancing American Freedom, filed an amicus brief supporting the Mississippi state ban after 15 weeks, but he hasn't said if he would take it further if given the chance."

Meanwhile, there is rampant speculation that not only will the Indiana General Assembly and other red state assemblages not stop at outlawing abortion, they will also target chemical abortion drugs, contraception and same-sex marriage.

Bloomberg Law reported: "Legislators pushing for a stricter anti-abortion law in Louisiana have lost the support of a major lobbying group because the bill would permit homicide charges against those who end pregnancies. The bill (H.B. 813) is inconsistent with the policies of Louisiana Right to Life because it "does not exempt women from criminalization," the group said in a statement.

The bill's sponsor, Louisiana State Rep. Danny McCormick (R), said, "Our plan is to move forward with this bill to give the unborn the same protections as the born. We knew it would upset the establishment." McCormick's office on Monday referred questions to the Texas-based Foundation to Abolish Abortion, which helped draft the bill. "Both the U.S. and Louisiana constitutions require equal protection under the law for all persons," the group's president, Bradley Pierce, said in an email to Bloomberg Law. "This bill simply

acts consistently with the belief that a fetus is a person from conception. The mother and anyone else involved with an abortion would be entitled to all due process protections; the bill explicitly does not alter any existing presumption, defense, justification, immunity, or clemency that may apply to a case of homicide."

While the Senate failed to codify Roe in a vote on Wednesday, coming up 10 votes short as Republicans and Democrat Sen. Joe Manchin blocked the bill, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Republicans might seek to codify anti-abortion laws nationally.

"Right now, it's unknown territory for both sides," McConnell (R-Ky.) said in a Post interview last week. "I don't think it's going to override inflation, crime, open bor-

Majority of adults say abortion should be legal in some cases, illegal in others

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...



Note: Pie chart shows combined result of three separate questions. Adults who answered that abortion should be legal in all cases but skipped the follow-up question were coded as "legal in all cases, no exceptions." Adults who answered that abortion should be illegal in all cases but skipped the follow-up question were coded as "illegal in all cases, no exceptions." See topline for full details.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
"America's Abortion Quandary"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

ders, school frustrations and all the other things that seem to be driving the president's numbers into the tank."

In an interview with USA Today, McConnell added that a national abortion ban is "possible" if Roe v. Wade gets overturned this summer. "If the leaked opinion became the final opinion, legislative bodies – not only at the state level but at the federal level – certainly could legislate in that area," McConnell told USA Today when asked if a national abortion ban is "worthy of debate." "And if this were the final decision, that was the point that it should be resolved one way or another in the legislative process. So yeah, it's possible."

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a potential 2024 Republican presidential candidate, said on Sunday a national abortion ban floated by McConnell is "inconsistent with what we've been fighting for for decades, which is that we wanted the Roe v. Wade reversed and the authority to return to the states. And so as a matter of principle, that's where it should be."

But Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer



(D-N.Y.) said Monday, "Senate Republicans will no longer be able to hide from the horror they've unleashed upon women in America. After spending years packing our courts with right-wing judges ... the time has come for Republicans – this new MAGA Republican Party – to answer for their actions."

Conservative commentator Will Saletin writing in The Bulwark observes: "State-by-state battles over abortion might go one way or the other, depending on tactics. But the war to shape

majority opinion on this issue, if not to set national policy, will likely be decided at the strategic level, by a struggle to define what the debate is about. Is the debate about the decision itself – whether to end a pregnancy? Or is it about who makes that decision? Those two perspectives have squared off before. In 1989, when the Supreme Court began to roll back Roe, pro-choice strategists framed the issue with a catchy question: 'Who decides?' That question dominated the debate for years, and it likely will do so again, thanks to a paradox of public opinion: Most Americans don't like abortion, but they also don't like the government telling them what to do." ❖

For many, abortion hasn't been a major priority

By KELLY HAWES
CNHI Indiana Bureau

ANDERSON – Late last year, Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux wrote an article for the website FiveThirtyEight titled, "What Americans really think about abortion."



The answer, she discovered, is not much. "Given the longstanding, intractable division on abortion, one might think that Americans hold murky views because they're actively, even painfully, wrestling with the matter," she wrote. "But that's not what I found when I dug into the issue. The truth is that many Americans just don't like talking or thinking about abortion."

That might soon change.

The U.S. Supreme Court seems poised to overturn a 49-year-old precedent in Roe vs. Wade, and at least some voters are mad about it. Listening to the noise, you might get the idea that America is split down the middle. The re-

ality is significantly more complicated. The folks who care deeply about this issue make up less than half of the U.S. population.

Gallup has been polling on the issue since 1975, and it has found consistently that most Americans fall into an ill-defined middle. Most support restrictions on abortion but never an outright ban. In 2018, pollsters asked whether abortion should be legal if a woman's life were in danger, and almost everyone said yes. The number was 83% if the procedure were carried out during the first three months of pregnancy. It dropped to 75% for an abortion carried out in the late stages.

Asked if abortion should be legal for a child conceived through rape or incest, 77% of respondents said yes for an abortion performed in the first three months. The number dropped to 52% for an abortion carried out during the final three months. Gallup found 56% of respondents saying abortion should be legal in the first trimester if doctors found the child would be born with a mental disability, but the number fell to 35% if an abortion were carried out for that reason in the final three months of pregnancy.

Results were similar for a child with a life-threatening illness. Gallup found 67% supporting an abortion in the first three months, but the number fell to 48% for an abortion carried out in the final three months of pregnancy.

In 2021, Gallup asked respondents if they favored a ban on abortions after the 18th week of pregnancy, and 56% said no. Asked if they supported a ban after detection of a fetal heartbeat, 58% said no. Asked if they supported a ban after detection of a genetic disease or disorder, 57% said no.

Gallup has been asking since 1989 whether respondents would like to see the precedent in Roe v. Wade overturned, and the answer has consistently been no. Support for overturning the precedent has never been higher than the 36% recorded in 2002. It dropped as low as 25% in 2006.

What those in the middle really want, Thomson-DeVeaux wrote, is for the combatants to find a compromise. "Clearly identifying an acceptable middle ground

on abortion isn't easy for most people to do, though," she wrote. "That's in part because many Americans don't know much about abortion to begin with, and perhaps as a result, their views aren't usually more specific than a belief that the procedure should be available in at least some cases."

Until now, most Americans haven't paid much attention to this issue. Abortion doesn't usually rank all that high on the priority list for most voters. The question now is how moderate voters will react when the Supreme Court issues what will likely be an unpopular opinion. What will those folks in the middle do when legislatures across the country start imposing total bans on abortion?

Will they take to the streets? Will they turn out to vote? We'll find out soon enough. ❖

If Hollingsworth drops \$15M, is an 2024 INGov win automatic?

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Word on the street is that U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth is planning to pump up to \$15 million into his prospective 2024 Republican gubernatorial nomination contest.

It's a race that could pit the retiring congressman against U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, who loaned his 2018 U.S.

Senate campaign \$5.5 million which helped him defeat U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita, giving the Jasper businessman a decisive early spending edge. By the time Braun had defeated

U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly in the general election, FEC reports revealed he had raised \$19.6 million while loaning his campaign \$11,569,962.

So the 2024 race is poised to be an unprecedented self-funder event. The race is expected to draw Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Fort Wayne businessman Eric Doden, former state senator Jim Merritt and possibly U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, Attorney General Todd Rokita and Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer.

Braun is expected to make a decision on whether to seek reelection or return to Indiana for a gubernatorial run after the November mid-terms. Hollingsworth is working with Messer to make contacts across the state prior to announcing later this year. Rep. Banks told Howey Politics Indiana earlier this spring that his 2024 decision depends on what direction Braun goes. Crouch, who will have the support of legendary financier Bob Grand, is expected to announce later this year.

The question is, do self-funders always win? And can a candidate who is out-raised win?

The most recent answer to that second question is that raising an extraordinarily bigger amount of money occurred in Fort Wayne, where SD14 candidate Ron Turpin (\$391,000) raised more than double that of Tyler Johnson (\$140,000), who went on to score an impressively large victory on May 3.

But what about gubernatorial races?

The most recent example was Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin's defeat of Democrat Terry McAuliffe in November 2021, even though he was out-raised \$68 million to \$64 million.

In the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race, Republican Gov. Brian Kemp was out-raised by Democrat Stacy Abrams \$27.4 million to \$21.4 million. Should Kemp defeat former senator David Perdue in this spring's primary, he is expected to face a rematch with Abrams.

But those races weren't defined by the concept of self-funding. The most recent example of a self-funder's defeat came in 2006 when Democrat Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm (now the U.S. secretary of energy) triumphed in a reelection bid over Republican businessman Dick DeVos, who pumped \$35 million of his own money in. It wasn't close, as Granholm won 56-42%.

There are two self-funder campaigns operating on Indiana's doorstep. In Michigan, Republicans Kevin Rinke and Perry Johnson have pumped a combined \$4.5 million into their race thus far, according to the Detroit Free Press. Rinke has pledged to put as much as \$10 million into his bid. That would exceed the roughly \$6 million former Republican Gov. Rick Snyder spent from his own fortune in his successful 2010 campaign for gover-



nor.

In Illinois, Democrat Gov. J.B. Pritzker has pledged \$90 million of his personal fortune to his reelection campaign this November. He could face Republican Aurora Mayor Richard Irvin, who has received a pledge of \$35 million from Chicago billionaire Ken Griffin (worth \$26.3 billion, according to Forbes). Pritzker, who is worth \$3.6 billion, spent more than \$171 million in his 2018 election victory over Republican Gov. Bruce Raunier.

Governor

Holcomb dismisses Liberty Defense

Indiana's May primary didn't see a wave of ultra-conservative challengers ousting incumbent state lawmakers, despite a more concerted push on that front this year (Smith, Indiana Public Media). Many conservative challengers to Republican incumbents this cycle sought to channel anger among some voters over steps Gov. Eric Holcomb took during the COVID-19 pandemic to help protect Hoosiers. That includes his early "Stay-At-Home" order and his mask mandate. Most of those challengers failed. But Holcomb was largely dismissive of questions about what those results mean for his standing at the Statehouse. "Let's just review the facts: I ran a race," Holcomb said. "I received more votes than anyone that's run for governor in the history of this state."

Congress

CD5: Spartz called 'worst boss'

U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz topped a nonpartisan group's "Worst Bosses" list last year, winning the dubious title of most staff turnover in the House. Her retention record is only getting worse (Politico). Four aides are departing the Indiana Republican's office this month after another exited weeks ago, leaving a skeleton crew of staffers in the first-term lawmaker's D.C. office. Spartz's exodus is on the radar of GOP leadership, which has tried to address her performance as an employer at least twice since the end of last year, according to a senior Republican close to the matter. The frequent departures stem from an allegedly unhealthy work environment, according to interviews with eight people, including more than a half-dozen former staffers as well as Republicans familiar with her office dynamics who were granted anonymity to speak candidly. They described Spartz as an unpredictable boss whose temper can rocket from tepid to boiling. Those former staffers and other Republicans told POLITICO she frequently yells and curses at aides, belittling her staff's intelligence and berating them in front of others — members, constituents and even with reporters in close proximity. On more than one occasion, three former staffers said, Spartz likened her aides' writing skills to those of elementary-school students and proclaimed that her children were more talented than her staff. "That's the common theme: Staffers do their job, and then Victoria

comes in saying that they have no idea what they're doing, that they are morons, calling them 'idiots,'" said one former staffer. "Senior staff was amazing. "A lot of these younger people need to toughen up," Spartz told Indy Politics. "We have a lot of good people, which for me is very important. I want to make sure that I'm extending my team in the district and make sure we serve constituents. I'm a person that, you know, if I'm going to dedicate part of my life to the republic I need to get stuff done. "There are different people, different styles. You know, my style is to deliver results. D.C is a tough place so you need to have tough cookies around."

Braun calls for LGBTQ ratings

U.S. Senators Mike Braun (R-IN), Roger Marshall, M.D. (R-KS), Mike Lee (R-UT), Steve Daines (R-MT), and Kevin Cramer (R-ND) signed a letter May 4 obliging the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board to create a T.V. rating warning about LGBTQIA+ content in children's programming (CBS4). The letter, addressed to Mr. Charles Rivkin, Chairman of the Board, begins with thanking the board for "empowering parents through the provision of tools that enable them to identify television content that is not suitable for certain ages". The letter then goes on to warn the board about the "concerning topics of sexual nature becoming more aggressively politicized and promoted in children's programming". Drew Anderson of the Indiana Democrats reacted, saying, "There should be a warning label put up everytime Mike Braun goes on TV because his antics are more about extreme partisanship and debunked conspiracies than actually creating a better future for all Hoosiers. Mike Braun sure seems to care a lot about other peoples' love lives -- from telling LGBTQ Hoosiers how they should act to believing that interracial marriages should be voided. Democrats join with the majority of Hoosiers and Americans in telling Mike Braun: 'Get a life!'"

Nation

NRSC frets as Barnette surges in PA

Influential Republicans in Washington and among the nationwide party elite are having a belated "oh s--t" moment over the previously unimaginable prospect that Kathy Barnette could win their party's nomination for the open Senate seat in Pennsylvania (Axios). In Barnette, who's been soaring in the polls ahead of Tuesday's primary, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell would be dealing with a general election candidate who'd be an opposition researcher's dream — potentially endangering the GOP effort to take back the Senate. McConnell has been fixated on ensuring the 2022 midterms are not a repeat of the 2012 or 2010 cycles. The Kentuckian said Republicans missed good chances to win the majority in those years because they nominated candidates who talked about things like "legitimate rape" or had to publicly assure voters they weren't witches. Barnette has surged after releasing a powerful video — "It wasn't a choice. It was a life." — in

which she movingly talks about how her mother was raped when she was 11 and yet Barnette is the living, breathing byproduct of that horrific circumstance. She joins Missouri Senate candidate Eric Greitens — whose alleged misdeeds are numerous and graphic — on a list of potential Republican Senate nominees giving heartburn to GOP leadership. They not only create the potential of blowing winnable seats but being unmanageable for McConnell should he return as Senate majority leader next year.

Musk to reinstate Trump to Twitter

Elon Musk said he would reverse Twitter Inc.'s ban on former President Donald Trump (Wall Street Journal). "I do think that it was not correct to ban Donald Trump. I think that was a mistake because it alienated a large part of the country, and did not ultimately result in Donald Trump not having a voice," said Mr. Musk. ❖

The culture wars turn to cannibalism

By JACK COLWELL
South Bend Tribune

SOUTH BEND – Most of us think cannibalism is in bad taste. So, it's the perfect issue for culture wars.

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis stoked culture wars and boosted his Republican presidential nomination prospects with a law to crack down on teaching sexual orientation in kindergarten through grade 3. No more kindergarten teachers grooming kids with sexual orientation topics. No more first graders being taught the LGBTQs instead of the ABCs.



One little problem: There were no reported cases of kindergarten or early-grade teachers doing such things. Nor was anyone advocating that the little kids be indoctrinated with sexual topics.

So what? That's not the point. The strategy in culture wars is to create an issue, even if no problem exists. You sucker opponents into expressing outrage over your tactics, creating an impression that they actually support the supposed evil. Then you stand defiantly in their way, a patriot worthy of hefty campaign contributions.

Democrats, never understanding why they lose so often in culture wars, get suckered in time after time.

While there were reasons for Democrats — and even Mickey Mouse — to oppose the Florida law, it certainly wasn't to protect inappropriate sex topics in kindergarten. But lot of voters now believe that's what they promote. And contributions pour in for DeSantis to stop those creeps.

What's next? Cannibalism would be a perfect issue for culture wars. Introduce legislation to prohibit teaching of cannibalism in kindergarten through grade 3. Stop the kindergarten teacher in Tallahassee from grooming little cannibals. Stop the first-grade teacher in Orlando from preaching that cannibal lives matter most. Stop the second-grade and third-grade teachers in Sarasota from promoting a cannibal diet as healthy.

Just a guess: There are no such teachers. So what? That's not the point.

Would DeSantis have an appetite for cannibalism? Probably not. He's moving on other issues. But if you think nobody would bring up cannibalism as a critical issue facing the nation, you're wrong. It already has been brought up and spreads across the internet, across the nation.

Remember Pizzagate? Conspiracy theorists, interpreting hacked emails of Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, found that Clinton and other Democratic, entertainment and media elites were engaged in child sex-trafficking, part of a global cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles. In addition to molesting the kids, they would eat their victims to ingest life-extending chemicals from young blood.

Kids being victimized in Washington were captive in the basement of a pizzeria. The pizzeria has no basement. So what? That's not the point. The story, even if there are a few flaws in details, riled people to rage, even to shoot up the pizzeria in an effort to free nonexistent kids from a nonexistent basement. It spurred growth of QAnon and spread conspiracy beliefs about Donald Trump storming back, maybe with John F. Kennedy Jr. by his side, to reclaim the presidency.

"Save the Children" rallies spread nationwide. Saving children from abuse is commendable. But saving them from being eaten, as some of the signs declared, is something else. Slices of pizza decorated many signs, a reminder of the supposed horrors in that pizzeria basement.

Speaking out against taking Pizzagate seriously risks being accused of opposing efforts to save children and halt cannibalism. Saying the wrong thing, even in innocently ordering a pizza, can be dangerous. Conspiracy theorists delving into the Pizzagate horrors determined that email mention of ordering "cheese pizza" was a code for "child pornography." Hey, same first letters of the words.

To protect your reputation in these days of culture wars, don't order a cheese pizza. Never ever with extra cheese. ❖

Colwell is a columnist for the South Bend Tribune.

The lives of Mothers over the past century

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – Last summer a reader penned me a note, asking that I write about the changes in women’s lives over the past century as a tribute to Mother’s Day. That is a fine way to consider the sweep of recent economic history. I do so through the experiences of four women, my and my wife’s grandmothers. This provides enough passage of time to fully see the immense changes of the past century and longer, while still connecting it to people we knew and loved.



Three of these women were born in southern Indiana, one in southern Illinois, all at home and on farms. They were born between

1897 and 1911, before Mother’s Day was widely celebrated. They lived between 75 and 99 years. All four were born of mostly Scots-Irish stock, whose great-grandfathers walked westward to claim the lands owed Revolutionary War veterans. They carried common names – Baker, King, Sipe and Young.

All four had fathers or grandfathers who’d fought for Union regiments in the Civil War. One man was wounded, one died and one lost a brother to the war. Like most American women of their generation, war would revisit them in ghastly ways throughout their lives.

Three of the four women finished high school, and one attended a woman’s business school immediately afterwards. One finished college later in life. Another made it only through eighth grade but was allowed to attend again a second year before working full-time at her family’s dairy farm. All were well-read and possessed of a love for learning, art and crafts. Their paintings, embroidery, tatting and crochet are among the only family heirlooms any of their grandchildren possess.

All four women married. Two were widowed young; one with four children at home, and the other with three. One remarried, raising four more children; the other was widowed for 62 years. Tuberculosis and war wounds claimed their husbands in their 30s and 40s. A third lost her husband to a farming accident decades later. These



were difficult lives, plagued with risks few of us imagine today.

These remarkable women bore 15 children, all at home and before antibiotics. One gave birth during the 1937 flood, with the physician arriving by boat, and another bore two children in a log cabin. Their children suffered what were then common diseases of childhood, including rheumatic fever and polio. Still, these 15 children grew to adulthood. All the sons served in the military. One died in battle and two more from illness connected to their military service.

Only two of these women worked at paying jobs outside the home. One was a school teacher at 17 in Canaan, Ind. She lived with a host family through the week and was driven daily by carriage to a one-room school, returning on horseback to her family on Friday. Later in life she finished college and returned to the classroom. The other, widowed young and with four boys to feed, worked in war factories in 1941 and a variety of jobs thereafter.

Of course, labor at home was tough, as any contemporary mother can attest. None of these families had electricity before the 1940s, and “farm work” meant breakfast prepared on wood stoves after pre-dawn milking, among other chores. Their stories of cooking meals during harvest and planting seasons are worthy of several columns. Much of their labor went to their communities, through churches, schools and civic groups. In my mind’s eye, I picture my grandmother, in her well-ironed apron, canning fruit for a local covered bridge festival that survives in Rockville to this day.

These women passed into middle age with few of the modern conveniences we take for granted. Each lived one-third to half their lives without electricity or indoor plumbing. Their homes were largely self-sustaining. They raised their own chickens for eggs and meat. They slaughtered their own livestock each year and smoked the meat.

Gardens supplied their herbs and vegetables. They made and mended their own clothes and skinned rabbits and squirrels for dinner. The aprons they wore served not only to keep their dresses clean, but also as potholders, dishtowels, and cloths to wipe a child’s tears. These simple items should have been the model for superhero capes.

Whatever surplus crops they could save were sold for shoes, books and tools. By the standards of their time, these women ranged from lower middle class to solidly



upper middle class. Most moved up and down the income ladder due to the Great Depression or loss of a husband. By today's standards, they were very poor, living well below the modern standards of poverty. This was not unusual for the era, and none of these women described themselves in those terms. They lived in communities that valued their fellowship and wisdom. In such places, one is never really impoverished.

Insofar as we can recall, only one of our grandmothers, the youngest, ever travelled overseas or took more than one or two vacations.

Only two of our grandmothers ever learned to drive a car. Still, they lived at a time of stunning technological and economic growth. They were born when life expectancy was fewer than 50 years, and the last one passed away when expectancy was close to 80 years. Nothing like this has happened before anywhere in the world.

Over the course of their lifetimes, the inflation-adjusted standard of living of Americans grew more than 800%. This great enrichment saw them live through a time of unrecognizable change. The world they were born into would've been more familiar to a European peasant of 1650 than to anyone born after World War II.

These times are worlds apart, separated by more economic growth in one century than in the previous hundred centuries combined.

This widening prosperity gave extraordinary opportunities to their children. We grandchildren were born healthy, in hospitals, in a world of antibiotics and wonder medicines. All of us completed high school and most graduated from college. Of the 36 grandkids, all lived to adulthood, and 33 are still alive, with the youngest of us in our 50s. Though a disproportionate number of these grandchildren went to war, all of us came home. With most of us now in our 60s, my cousins have already exceeded the lifespan of our grandmothers' generation by a third.

The oldest of these four women voted in 1920, the first election in which women in the United States could participate. That was an important moment that marked the essential change in the opportunities for women. Over their lives, the experience of women in civil life changed more than in all the time before it. In some ways these women were ahead of their times. They were all equally or better educated than their husbands and worked outside the home at twice the rate of women of their times.



On this Mother's Day it is both comforting and optimistic to think upon the vast sweep of history these women lived through. They built a life through tragedy and heartbreak, and we can today draw strength from their example. Of course, I view them a bit differently. I am thankful for them as mothers and grandmothers, and for the love, support and encouragement they gifted us. ❖

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.

Recalibrating U.S. defense in light of Ukraine war

By **CRAIG DUNN**

CARMEL – There once was a time when the thought of thousands of Russian tanks and light armored vehicles pouring through the Fulda Gap into Germany sent shivers down the spines of NATO military planners. Before the United States could airlift or send a sufficient quantity of M1A1 Abrams tanks to meet the attacking Russians, ole Marshall Boris Bettenoff could be found sipping Chablis in a café on the Champs Elysees.



This was a potent and existential threat to western Europe and NATO, not to mention the thousands of American boys we keep in Germany to serve as

a rapid response force. What we have learned since the Russkies invaded Ukraine in late February is that a fresh-faced, newly trained volunteer holding a shoulder-fired Javelin anti-tank weapon can easily take out the toughest of the Russian tanks. With the massive increase in Javelins it is now "bye bye Boris!" I must assume that American defense contractors Raytheon and Lockheed Martin had a good inkling that they had a home run with the Javelin, but you just never know until you test them out on the bad guys.

The United States, its NATO allies, Russia, China and their allies and inquisitive minds in Iran and North Korea have all learned a great deal in the past few months by watching the day-to-day events in the proxy war between Ukraine and Russia.

In fact, Ukraine may be the largest military test tube in history. Proxy wars have always served as the experimental grounds for strategy, tactics and the use of new and untried weapons. Use of proxy wars began as far back as the Byzantine Empire but their use in a modern context began most notably in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. From 1936 to 1939 Spain tore itself apart in a fratricidal conflict between Communists and Leftists, the Republicans and the fascist Nationalists who were backed by Italy and Nazi Germany.

The Soviet Union poured weapons and advisors into Spain and the Italians and Germans did the same. Nazi Germany even sent entire air wings to Spain to practice bombing and dive-bombing sorties against helpless civilian populations. Pablo Picasso's "Guernica" was made possible due to the immense effort and inhumanity of the German Luftwaffe. Germany would later go on to use these same tactics against Poland, France and Great Britain.

Great Britain, though not a belligerent in Spain,

watched the devastating bombardments conducted by the Luftwaffe and wisely boosted both the numbers and efficiency of its own fighter plane wings and worked to develop radar to provide themselves with advance warning of enemy bombers.

Unfortunately, France apparently learned nothing from observing the Civil War in Spain. Their army hunkered down in fixed fortifications behind the Maginot Line and slept secure in their answer to the enemy's strategy in World War I. That is a common theme in most conflicts. One belligerent is fighting the last war and one belligerent is fighting the next war. This failure always proves costly to those who fail to look to the future.

Since the Spanish Civil War, there have been proxy wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan twice and several conflicts in Africa with Cuba doing the Soviet Union's dirty work. In each of these conflicts, lessons were learned and future plans refined. The United States boosted its work on fighter aircraft both during and after Korea to counter some early weaknesses against Russian made fighters. The F4 Phantom was a direct result.

In addition, the United States realized that they needed enhanced ground support air power after several tough slugfests with North Vietnamese forces. Both the A-10 Warthog and the Cobra attack helicopter emerged from the drawing boards after Vietnam. From Afghanistan the United States learned that a virtually stone age people could go toe to toe with the Russians if armed with Stinger missiles and anti-tank weapons. The shooting down of Russian jets and helicopters and the destruction of Russian tanks drove Russia from Afghanistan. The United States failed to learn much from watching the Soviets wallow in Afghanistan and paid the price during our own aborted foray into the country after 9/11.

Russia made five critical errors leading up to their invasion of Ukraine and they have led to unimagined military disaster. First, the Russians never expected the people of Ukraine to exhibit such bravery in the face of overwhelming odds. Second, Russia never expected NATO to supply such huge amounts of its best weapons systems to Ukraine. Third, Russia woefully overestimated the capabilities of its jets, helicopters, artillery and tanks to meet any challenge from the outgunned Ukrainians.

Four, Russia completely failed to account for the logistical needs of conquering Ukraine. Five, command and control systems used by the Russian army barely rise to World War II abilities. In short, this has been an expensive, embarrassing and bloody learning experience for an apparently clueless Russian military. We know many of the things Russia has learned from their unsuccessful invasion of Ukraine.

The salient question is what has the United States and her allies learned from the Ukrainian test tube. Hopefully, we have learned that we must know our enemies. Intelligence must look at the human element of your opponents with equal intensity as it looks at the weapons and tactics of our opponents.

We should now know that in conflicts where we will be functioning solely on the defensive, portable anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles such as the Stinger missile and Javelin missile should be present in massive numbers. We do not need 2,000 tanks in Europe that cost as much as \$9 million each. We need 10,000 shoulder-fired Javelins that cost \$178,000 for the launcher and \$78,000 per reload. With the Javelin system, a Russian tank in the open is a dead Russian tank. The Stinger ground-to-air missile is a real battlefield bargain. For \$38,000, 18-year-old Private Elvis Owens can easily destroy a \$4 million Russian T95 tank. That is a pretty good trade off!

There will also be some bigger discussions in the halls of the Pentagon and Congress when it comes to big ticket military items. I would imagine that high priced new fighter jets and ground attack aircraft may be a much tougher sell in the world of the amazing drone.

I watched a YouTube video where a single Turkish-made drone, flown by the Ukrainians, took out a flying helicopter, four tanks and six helicopters on the ground during one flight. Drones have amazing capabilities, are

cost efficient and require someone who is good at video games to use them, instead of costly pilots. I also see the days of the American aircraft carrier as numbered. We will keep them in service while they last, but I believe the United States Navy will be looking for ways to launch unmanned drones from frigates and submarines, rather from the enormous, personnel-laden and costly American super carriers.

I am sure that the United States and its allies have thousands of intelligence officers dedicated to analyzing the various aspects of Ukrainian conflict. There will be many lessons to learn whether we act on the lessons or not. Future military victories will depend on what we learn from the Russians' tragic invasion of Ukraine. I hope we take this schoolwork seriously.

One additional interested party is closely keeping an eye on Ukraine. Taiwan is feverishly working on their own portable anti-aircraft, anti-tank and shore-to-ship missile systems. Hopefully, the Chinese will have not to mess with the little kid on the block. As the Russians have learned, the little kid may have a nasty punch. ❖

Fighting inflation is a tough job

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Want to sign up to be an inflation fighter? Don't think it's just something for the Fed, Congress, and Big Business to do?

It's like being a forest fire fighter. Inflation is a blaze that's hard to contain once it gets going. It can be started by careless people on the ground as well as by strikes of lightning from above.

Our current inflation is a result of two efforts by the Fed, the Administration, and the Congress (including both parties) to avoid economic disasters in 2008 and 2020.

In 2008, Wall Street imploded, and the entire credit system of the U.S. was endangered. The credit system enables us to buy a car, a house, and our daily groceries with our credit/debit cards. It enables the car dealer to have a selection of cars on the lot and the grocer to have a variety of goods on the shelves.

In 2020, COVID struck. As more and more people got sick, some businesses had to close because customers weren't buying as much, or even any, of the goods and services they had before COVID. The response to both crisis situations was to prop up the economy with a flow of cash, giving the economy a transfusion of money which enabled businesses and households to function.

Those transfusions were made by the Fed buying and holding the bonds and other IOUs of businesses. The Administration suspended payments of consumer debt (mortgages, rents, student loans). The Congress authorized payments to firms, governments and households to sustain their purchasing power and hence employment.

Inflation starts with key prices, like petroleum, going up and others then follow. But we have seen it rise as well when consumers are willing and able to spend more to sustain their living standards. This time around, we had supply problems as well.

All of us, except the very poor, could hold back on spending, but we don't want to stop the escalation of our expectations. We're willing to pay those monthly fees for entertainment to Netflix and other streaming services. We "need" and "deserve" that premium ice cream. Eating out is part of our "lifestyle" and, after all, we're supporting the wait-staff.

We'll use about five gallons of gas a week, but we'll keep a full tank because the price is going up. But if we didn't keep an inventory of gas, the demand for gas would go down and prices could fall.

Want to fight inflation? It's just like voting; your actions are but one of many, but important. "The silent majority" is ultimately a minority.

Higher interest rates have a braking effect on the economy, discouraging borrowing. They are but a signal, a warning flag, urging caution in consumption. Aggressive consumer resistance to buying everything we feel entitled to have, is a responsible way to fight inflation. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at morton-jmarcus@yahoo.com.



The kinds of seats that flip during mid-terms

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Immediately following Republicans’ strong showings in the New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial races last November, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R, CA-23) suggested that the results indicated that any district where Joe Biden won by 16 points or less would be competitive this year. He was referring to the margin Biden won in New Jersey in 2020, 57%-41%; a year later, Gov. Phil Murphy (D-NJ) won by just a little more than 3 points.

If this midterm looks like the previous four, it may be that McCarthy wasn’t dramatically overstating things – not necessarily because Republicans will carry all those seats, but rather that Republicans, broadly speaking, could compete in many such seats if there’s a backlash against the president.

We are now less than half a year from the 2022 midterm elections. Our usual caveat is that a lot can change in that amount of time, and sometimes new developments can alter the political dynamic. The Supreme Court’s looming decision on whether to throw out Roe vs. Wade is certainly one of those. But along with that caution, there’s also the possibility that not much will change in the electoral environment between now and November. After all, 6 months ago -- around the time of those aforementioned gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia -- President Biden’s approval rating, per the FiveThirtyEight average, was 43% approve/51% disapprove. Today it’s 42%/52%, slightly worse.

If the Democrats’ position does not improve, 2022 likely will be the fifth midterm in a row in which the non-presidential party has enjoyed a strong electoral environment. In those years, the opposition party won a clear House majority in each election: Democrats won 233 and 235 seats, respectively, in 2006 and 2018, and Republicans won 242 and 247 in 2010 and 2014, respectively (a majority is 218 seats). Republicans won 213 House seats in 2020, a high starting point for an opposition party trying to recapture the House majority in a midterm.

With all that said, and with McCarthy’s comments from several months ago in mind, we thought we’d take a look at those past midterms and assess the potential size

of the House battlefield.

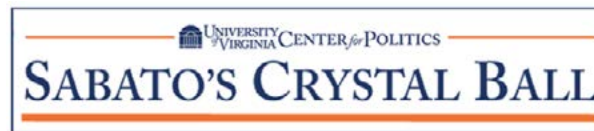
Those elections provide some clues as to how big a Republican wave, if it materializes, might be. What follows is a look at how the composition of the House changed in those 4 elections compared to the House results in the previous (presidential) election year. The primary question we’re trying to answer is this: In a wave-style midterm environment, as all 4 of the past midterms effectively were, how high can the wave go? What kinds of seats are truly vulnerable? With redistricting mostly but not entirely finished, we can take a closer look.

Joe Biden got 51% nationally in 2020. A district where he got 53% would be D+2, and one where he got 49% would be R+2. These figures are also expressed in the tables. So the midpoint of each table is the R+1 to D+1 range (or 50%-52% Biden in 2020).

We then looked at districts where the president did 2-4 points better or 2-4 points worse than he did nationally, and so on and so forth until we reached districts where the president did either more than 10 points better or more than 10 points worse than he did nationally. In recent years, those kinds of districts have not been plausible targets for the other party. And districts that are a bit more competitive than that often aren’t plausible targets for the other side in a wave, either. The district-level data we used to compile the tables are primarily from Daily Kos Elections, which keeps an excellent history of presidential results by congressional districts.

Even though this election was only about a decade and a half ago, the political landscape in the House was markedly different in 2006 than it is now. Democrats still retained a superior ability to win in unfriendly districts, both in the South -- the one-time preserve for House Democrats -- and elsewhere. For instance, Democrats won both at-large seats in the Dakotas in 2004, even as George W. Bush easily won each state.

Still, even in this different era, the bulk of Democrats’ 2006 midterm gains – 21 of 30 – came in districts where Bush won 55% of the vote or less (or less than R+5). Meanwhile, Democrats won 172 of the 179 districts where Bush received less than 50% of the vote, even as Republicans remained resilient in the districts that most closely matched the presidential vote, losing only two seats among that evenly-divided group. One striking feature of 2006 was that the Republicans held up reasonably well in some of the most competitive seats, but they easily lost the House anyway. This helped set up some of the Democratic gains in 2008.



| | 2008 | | 2010 | | Change | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | D | R | D | R | D | R |
| Obama 2008 percentage (Obama won 53% nationally) | | | | | | |
| 64 or above (D+11 or more) | 104 | 1 | 105 | 0 | 1 | -1 |
| 61-63 (D+8 to D+10) | 19 | 2 | 20 | 1 | 1 | -1 |
| 58-60 (D+5 to D+7) | 29 | 1 | 29 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 55-57 (D+2 to D+4) | 24 | 3 | 14 | 13 | -10 | 10 |
| 52-54 (R+1 to D+1) | 24 | 12 | 12 | 24 | -12 | 12 |
| 49-51 (R+2 to R+4) | 15 | 21 | 2 | 34 | -13 | 13 |
| 46-48 (R+5 to R+7) | 13 | 25 | 5 | 33 | -8 | 8 |
| 43-45 (R+8 to R+10) | 11 | 32 | 2 | 41 | -9 | 9 |
| 42 or below (R+11 or more) | 18 | 81 | 4 | 95 | -14 | 14 |
| Total | 257 | 178 | 193 | 242 | -64 | 64 |

Republicans netted an impressive 64 seats in 2010, rebuilding quickly from their lopsided losses in 2006 and 2008. A lot of what happened in 2010 was realignment, as Democrats from very Republican-leaning seats were largely wiped out. About a third of the Republican gains (23 of 64 net) came in districts where Barack Obama won 45% of the vote or less: That includes the aforementioned Dakota seats, and many others in conservative-leaning turf. Those kinds of seats are basically sorted out now by presidential preference and are not compelling targets for either side.

Republicans did not flip any seats where Obama won 58% of the vote or more; the two they won in that election were districts they already held: Robert Dold (R) successfully defended IL-10 in the Chicago suburbs as an open seat, and Rep. Jim Gerlach (R, PA-6) defended his district in the Philadelphia area. Neither are in the House anymore, and Democrats hold versions of their old districts. Republicans did, however, flip 10 seats in the Obama 55%-57% range, although remember that Obama won 53% of the vote, so those seats were a little bit closer to the median than they would be now, because Biden won just 51% of the vote. Overall, the Republican wave crested at the D+4 mark.

This midterm perhaps didn't feel like a wave because Republicans only netted 13 additional seats compared to the previous election. But they also were starting from a high point (234 seats won in 2012) and the majority they did win, 247 seats, was the biggest the party had won since right before the Great Depression. Still, Democrats did not lose any seats where Obama got 59% of the vote or more -- although they had a couple of very close calls -- and Democrats only lost 9 where Obama got between 53%-58%. Otherwise, Republicans eliminated all the Democrats in seats where Obama got 43% or less, and they won all but 5 of the 227 districts where Obama won less than 50% of the vote. That there were so many of those districts -- Obama got less than 50% in a clear majority of House districts despite winning 51% of the popu-

| | 2012 | | 2014 | | Change | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | D | R | D | R | D | R |
| Obama 2012 percentage (Obama won 51% nationally) | | | | | | |
| 62 or above (D+11 or more) | 113 | 0 | 113 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 59-61 (D+8 to D+10) | 23 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 56-58 (D+5 to D+7) | 26 | 1 | 24 | 3 | -2 | 2 |
| 53-55 (D+2 to D+4) | 16 | 3 | 13 | 6 | -3 | 3 |
| 50-52 (R+1 to D+1) | 14 | 12 | 10 | 16 | -4 | 4 |
| 47-49 (R+2 to R+4) | 4 | 27 | 3 | 28 | -1 | 1 |
| 44-46 (R+5 to R+7) | 2 | 36 | 2 | 36 | 0 | 0 |
| 41-43 (R+8 to R+10) | 0 | 40 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| 40 or below (R +11 or more) | 3 | 115 | 0 | 118 | -3 | 3 |
| Total | 201 | 234 | 188 | 247 | -13 | 13 |

lar vote -- speaks to the strength of the Republicans' gerrymandering power in the post-2010 redistricting cycle, although court interventions would weaken the Republican edge in subsequent years.

Donald Trump won just 46% of the vote in 2016, whereas the winners in the previous 3 elections won between 51%-53%. So the

Trump 45%-47% range is the midpoint here. Still, what we see is that the Democratic gains came almost entirely in districts where Trump won 53% of the vote or less. Just 2 of their 41 net gains came in seats where Trump did better; Democrats also defended Rep. Collin Peterson (D, MN-7) in a district where Trump won 62%. He is the real outlier here, and he would lose in 2020. The "fake" outlier, as it were, is that lonely 1 in the Republican column among the districts where Trump won 35% of the vote or less. That is a Pennsylvania district, PA-5, that was changed in redistricting between 2016 and 2018. We used the maps in place at the time of the midterm election as a baseline, and that district was a Republican-held swing district during the 2016 election. For the purposes of this analysis, you can safely ignore it (had the 2018 lines actually been in place during the 2016 election, Democrats would have almost assuredly won the seat).

Overall, Democrats won all 187 districts where Trump received less than 45% of the vote, and Republicans won only 10 of the 233 where Trump won less than 51% of the vote.

Conclusion: Signs for 2020

McCarthy's claim in the aftermath of last year's elections that Democrats in Biden +16 seats are vulnerable actually squares somewhat with this history, although

we would probably set the bar a little lower. It seems pretty hard for an opposition party to win districts where the president got 55% or more of the vote even in a midterm wave, although it does happen. But the lion's share of the gains generally come below that mark. ❖

Table 4: House results by presidential margin, 2016 vs. 2018

| | 2016 | | 2018 | | Change | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | D | R | D | R | D | R |
| Trump 2016 percentage (Trump won 46% nationally) | | | | | | |
| 57 or above (R+11 or more) | 1 | 125 | 1 | 125 | 0 | 0 |
| 54-56 (R+8 to R+10) | 1 | 37 | 3 | 35 | 2 | -2 |
| 51-53 (R+5 to R+7) | 2 | 36 | 8 | 30 | 6 | -6 |
| 48-50 (R+2 to R+4) | 7 | 16 | 18 | 5 | 11 | -11 |
| 45-47 (D+1 to R+1) | 10 | 13 | 18 | 5 | 8 | -8 |
| 42-44 (D+2 to D+4) | 11 | 7 | 18 | 0 | 7 | -7 |
| 39-41 (D+5 to D+7) | 20 | 6 | 26 | 0 | 6 | -6 |
| 36-38 (D+8 to D+10) | 26 | 0 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 35 or below (D+11 or more) | 116 | 1 | 117 | 0 | 1 | -1 |
| Total | 194 | 241 | 235 | 200 | 41 | -41 |

James Briggs, IndyStar: Ten years ago, Mitch Daniels set an ambitious goal: Double the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Indiana colleges so that 60% of adults have a postsecondary credential by 2025. A decade of governance under Daniels, Mike Pence and Gov. Eric Holcomb has failed to improve Indiana's status as one of the worst states in America for educational attainment. As of 2020, 28.9% of Hoosiers had a bachelor's degree or higher (11th-worst in the U.S.) That's up from 22.7% in 2010, yet growing at a far slower rate than the nation as a whole. By Indiana's own standard, the state is going to fall far short of Daniels' 2025 benchmark, even when giving credit for almost every kind of certificate under the sun. The state's inability to educate children — and to entice college students to stay after they graduate — is pushing Indiana toward an economic crisis, which, so far, has been masked by low unemployment. But a reckoning is looming.

Before long, the governor — whether it's Holcomb or a successor — and the Indiana General Assembly are going to have to act with urgency to educate the state or it is going to slide into the abyss. That's the unmistakable conclusion of three reports on Indiana's economy released since last year. Brookings, American Affairs and Ball State University have each published deep dives with similar findings: Indiana is underperforming the nation by most metrics, it caters too much to low-paying jobs and does not do enough to educate citizens or attract new residents with college degrees. "Labor markets are screaming for people nationwide," Ball State University economist Michael Hicks told me. "They're screaming quietly. Local fast-food restaurants can't find \$15-an-hour workers, and they may complain about it, but the fact is the U.S. economy is so disproportionately demanding college graduates that almost everything else doesn't matter."

Hicks offers the latest compilation of evidence that Indiana is falling behind in a new study entitled, "Indiana's Poor Economic Recovery, 2010-2019," which tracks the state's policies and economic performance in the wake of the Great Recession. Hicks sums up the decade in one sentence: "In short, the low-tax, policies pursued from 2010 through 2019 failed to produce broad economic growth." During those years, Hicks writes that Indiana's economy grew at just 41% of the rate of the U.S. average. "Indiana has not had a single quarter of economic growth as fast as the nation since summer 2016," he writes. Broadly speaking, Indiana has failed to keep up. Hicks writes: "Indiana's weak recovery saw the state perform much worse than the nation in measures of job creation, GDP growth, population growth, productivity growth, and personal income growth." ❖

John Krull, Statehouse File: Once again, an Indiana politician has made national news. And — once again — not in a good way. U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz, R-Indiana,

drew the spotlight this time. She has earned the dubious distinction of being named the worst boss in Congress. She won the honor by having the worst staff turnover of any member of the U.S. House of Representatives or U.S. Senate. Politico decided to dig a little deeper. It talked to former Spartz staffers and Republican leaders in Congress, who apparently tried to intervene a couple of times to keep the Indiana congresswoman from abusing the people who work for her. What Politico turned up resembled something out of a situation comedy. Former Spartz staffers and GOP officials reported that the congresswoman routinely screams at subordinates and calls them "idiots" and "morons." She also so often changes her mind without telling anyone and then berates staffers for not anticipating her wavering thoughts that they have taken to making audio recordings of her instructions as proof that they followed them.

After Politico published its story, others followed suit. Our congresswoman even made People magazine. Spartz's response to the reports was self-justifying blather that evaded the issue. "I'm grateful to my current and former staff. I work extremely hard at a pace that is not for everyone. I remain focused on working hard for the people of Indiana," she said in a prepared statement. Ah, yes, the "I'm-working-so-hard-that-I-don't-have-time-to-be-a-decent-human-being" defense. ❖

Jason L. Riley, Wall Street Journal: Bill Clinton's famous formulation in 1992 was that abortion ought to be "safe, legal and rare." His goal was to coalesce liberal and moderate Democrats on the issue, but the wording also suggested that even among supporters of Roe v. Wade, abortion was properly viewed as undesirable: the fewer, the better. In the three decades since, the U.S. abortion rate has in fact declined—in recent years it's fallen to about half of what it was in the early 1980s—yet significant racial disparities persist. In other contexts, group differences in outcome set off alarms on the political left. The racial gap in test scores has brought calls to eliminate the SAT and other admissions tests. The racial gap in arrest and incarceration rates has brought calls to legalize drugs and reduce resources for law enforcement. Racial differences in wealth and income fuel progressive demands for slavery reparations and a larger welfare state. And so on. When it comes to abortion, however, left-wing concern seems to stop at making the procedure safe and legal, even while black-white disparities have not only persisted but widened. A 2020 paper by public-health scholar James Studnicki and two co-authors cites data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to note that the black abortion rate is nearly four times higher than the white rate: "Between 2007-2016, the Black rate declined 29% and the White rate declined 33%—meaning that the racial disparity actually increased rather than decreased."

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McCormick takes reins at Oak Hill

CONVERSE — Former state superintendent Jennifer McCormick is back in public education. The last elected state superintendent of public instruction was named interim superintendent of Oak Hill United School Corporation Wednesday evening ([Kokomo Tribune](#)).



Oak Hill is a small school district located on the border of Grant and Miami counties. McCormick will fill in while the school corporation conducts a search for superintendent. McCormick was not present at Wednesday's meeting. She is expected to start Friday, according to Deaton. McCormick served as state superintendent from 2017 to 2021. Just two years in to her tenure, she announced in 2018 she wouldn't seek another term, citing an overly political and "complicated" government structure.

New U.S. overdose record set in 2021

NEW YORK ([AP](#)) — More than 107,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year, setting another tragic record in the nation's escalating overdose epidemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated Wednesday. The provisional 2021 total translates to roughly one U.S. overdose death every 5 minutes. It marked a 15% increase from the previous record, set the year before. The CDC reviews death certificates and then makes an estimate to account for delayed and incomplete reporting. Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, called the the latest numbers "truly staggering." U.S. overdose deaths have risen most years for more than two decades. The increase began in the 1990s with overdoses involving opioid painkillers, followed by waves of deaths led by other opioids like heroin and — most recently — il-

licit fentanyl. Last year, overdoses involving fentanyl and other synthetic opioids surpassed 71,000, up 23% from the year before. There also was a 23% increase in deaths involving cocaine and a 34% increase in deaths involving meth and other stimulants.

Council moves to make seat vacant

CARMEL — About five months after the Carmel City Council approved measures to remove elected members from office, some councilors are using those procedures in an attempt to declare the city's central district seat vacant ([IndyStar](#)). That seat on the council is currently occupied by Councilman Bruce Kimball, who last attended a city council meeting in December 2020 before suffering from a stroke, according to a review of public meeting minutes. Councilors Sue Finkam, Laura Campbell and Tim Hannon have sponsored a resolution that aims to initiate the process to declare Kimball's seat vacant. The resolution, which is scheduled for review at the May 16 city council meeting, states that the process should be initiated to "ensure that the residents of the Central District are adequately represented." "I think the fact that we have several hundred million dollars of development proposed in the central district right now really put a spotlight on the fact that we don't have a councilor in the area," Finkam said.

Rep. Bauer calls for gas tax suspension

SOUTH BEND — State Rep. Marueen Bauer is asking Gov. Holcomb to suspend the state's gas tax until July ([WNDU-TV](#)). According to Bauer's office, Indiana's gasoline taxes are hitting nearly seventy-five cents a gallon. "The Republican supermajority has the power to suspend the gas tax and immediately help with the cost of living," Bauer said. "We are calling on their leadership now when Hoosiers need representation and action the most. While the supermajority spent

this year's session fighting national culture wars that no Hoosier wanted, I am confident that they can rise to this occasion to provide relief for Hoosier families."

Frank Anderson laid to rest

INDIANAPOLIS — History will remember Frank Anderson as a number of things — the first Black Sheriff of Marion County, a U.S. Marshal and the first Black Deputy Sheriff to patrol the Indianapolis streets ([IndyStar](#)). To Henry Hull, he was dad. "My dad was incredible in so many ways," Hull said from the pulpit of the Scottish Rite Cathedral in downtown Indianapolis. Hull on Wednesday shared his favorite characteristics of his dad surrounded by dozens of family members and law enforcement officers. Anderson, 83, died April 30. Mayor Joe Hogsett in his tribute to Anderson made note of the outcome. "Not only does it show just how many people liked Frank Anderson, but it's important to realize he did this against the political headwinds," Hogsett said.

Libertarians, Dems holding town halls

GREENFIELD — Indiana Democratic and Libertarian candidates are working together to hold a series of town halls across the state ([Indiana Public Media](#)). The events, organized by the state Democratic Party, invite Hoosiers to ask questions of the candidates ahead of this fall's elections. Democratic Secretary of State candidate Destiny Wells said the town halls are a response to what she calls the "divisiveness" in politics over the last few years. "We need to be responsible and show Hoosiers that politicians and candidates can work together and play together in the sandbox," Wells said. Libertarian U.S. Senate candidate James Sceniak said the town halls are vital to hear directly from voters. "I believe that any office we hold is a public servant office," Sceniak said.