

HPI Interview: Nunn on Putin Doctrine

Former senator sees ‘reckless’ and ‘dangerous’ period in Ukraine war

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn was at a conference in Hungary when a coup d’etat toppled Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev in the summer of 1991. A Soviet contact called him. “You’ve got

to get over here,” Nunn was told. “Big things are happening; great opportunities and huge dangers.”

Once in

Moscow, Nunn would spend half a day milling around the Russian White House where Boris Yeltsin had made his stand. In the Duma, Nunn sat for two days in the gallery and watched the debate which would bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union, a stunning turn of events that, literally, no one saw coming.

“I combined that with having been so involved



Russian President Putin announcing a troop mobilization while threatening to use nuclear weapons. Sam Nunn with Sen. Lugar in Moscow in 2007.

with the Vietnam War and knowing what happened when a country lost a war,” Nunn explained to Howey Politics Indiana during a 2007 interview in Yekaterinburg during a codel with Sen. Richard Lugar. “I saw that Russia was unraveling and multiplied it by a hundred because we lost

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Immigration stunts

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In terms of political “stunts,” Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has hit the motherlode! His decision to fly 50 Venezuelan immigrants from not Florida, but Texas to poshly liberal Martha’s Vineyard has earned him pub, man, pub.

It also means that the two current Republican presidential frontrunners – DeSantis and Donald Trump – are both now under criminal investigation.

Speaking Monday on Sean Hannity’s show on Fox News hours after the sheriff of Bexar County, Texas, announced a criminal investigation into the flights, DeSantis said, “It’s really frustrating. Millions of people



“It rests on you to make the decisions whether we move forward with a responsible cannabis program or we continue to stay in the dark ages.”

- State Rep. Jim Lucas, testifying before a summer study panel, noting that 24 veterans commit suicide daily.



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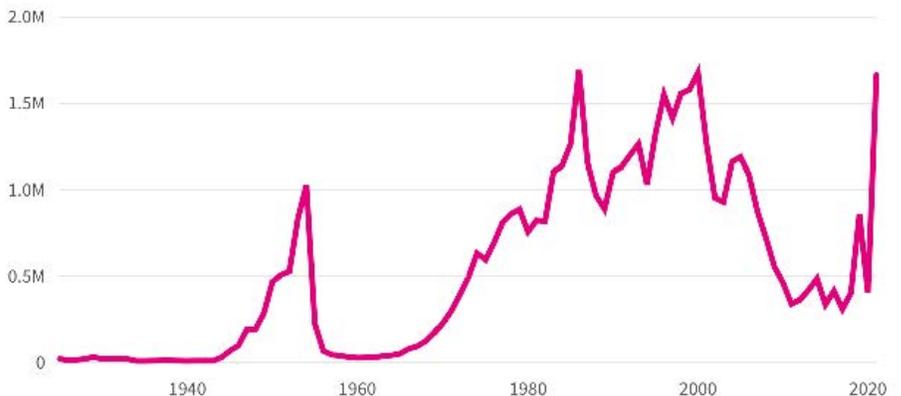
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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



Border apprehensions



since Biden's been president, illegally coming across the southern border. Did they freak out about that? No. You've had migrants die in the Rio Grande – you had 50 die in Texas in a trailer because they were being neglected. Was there a freakout about that? No, there wasn't."

His office released a statement Tuesday morning backing the decision to send the migrants: "Immigrants have been more than willing to leave Bexar County after being abandoned, homeless, and 'left to fend for themselves.' Florida gave them an opportunity to seek greener pastures in a sanctuary jurisdiction that offered greater resources for them, as we expected. Unless the MA national guard has abandoned these individuals, they have been provided accommodations, sustenance, clothing and more options to succeed following their unfair enticement into the United States, unlike the 53 immigrants who died in a truck found abandoned in Bexar County this June."

It's playing well in Florida, where DeSantis must fend off U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist on Nov. 8 before he runs for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination. A USA Today/Suffolk poll this week shows DeSantis leading Crist 48-41%. And while a Politico/Morning Consult poll had Trump leading DeSantis nationally 52-19%, in Florida the governor had a 48-40% lead over the former president.

The other "immigration" governor, Republican Greg Abbott of Texas, had a 47-38% lead over Democrat Beto O'Rourke in a Dallas Morning News poll.

The problem with the DeSantis Martha's Vineyard stunt is that this is a crisis for those seeking a better life in America, as well as Texas and Arizona border towns that have been engulfed by more than 2 million apprehensions so far this year.

According to CBS News, this all-time high in apprehensions is being driven by immigrants from Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, leftist nations that do not maintain formal diplomatic ties with the U.S.

The Biden administration had been messaging to potential migrants from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras about the dangers involved. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) released July statistics on Aug. 15, and observed, "This marks the second month in a row of decreased encounters along the Southwest border. While the encounter numbers remain high, this is a positive trend and the first two-month drop since October 2021," said CBP Commissioner Chris Magnus.

"In May, CBP launched a digital advertising campaign to dissuade irregular migration by targeting the lies smugglers use to lure the vulnerable into a dangerous journey that often ends in removal or death," said Magnus. "That danger was highlighted in the recent takedown of a deadly human smuggling network based in Guatemala responsible for the death of a Guatemalan woman who died in Texas in April 2021. These are among many actions we are taking to reduce irregular migration and dismantle the human smuggling operations that put these

migrants in danger.”

Another problem facing the U.S. is that if we can't get a handle on this humanitarian crisis in the next few years, the specter of climate change is only going to make things worse.

“Climate change is reinforcing underlying vulnerabilities and grievances that may have existed for decades, but which are now leading to people having no other choice but to move,”

Andrew Harper, special advisor on climate action for the UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, told CNBC.

Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, told CNBC at least a third of the migrants LIRS works with cite climate-related reasons as a primary factor for their displacement. “You may see migrants who are initially internally displaced due to crop failures. But then because of that initial displacement, they become more vulnerable to gang violence and persecution, which then leads to international migration because the situation becomes worse,” Vignarajah said.

The other American dilemma is the lack of political will to find a bipartisan, comprehensive solution.

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks put it into partisan terms when he tweeted last month, “4.9 million illegal immigrants have crossed our border since Biden took office. That's more than the total population of the median U.S. state.”

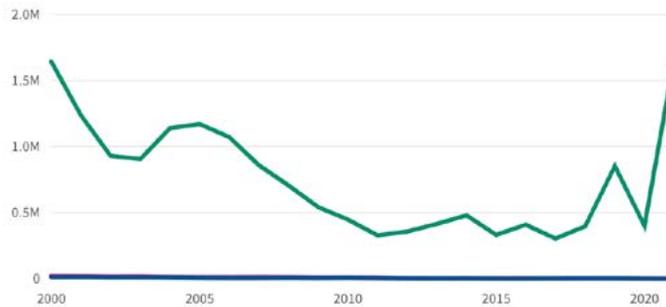
The Cato Institute observed on Jan. 20, 2021: President Trump entered the White House with the goal of reducing legal immigration by 63%. Trump was wildly successful in reducing legal immigration. By November 2020, the Trump administration reduced the number of green cards issued to people abroad by at least 418,453 and the number of non-immigrant visas by at least 11,178,668 during his first term through November 2020. President Trump also entered the White House with the goal of eliminating illegal immigration but Trump oversaw

Border apprehensions

By location of apprehension

SELECT A LINE

■ Coastal Border ■ Northern Border ■ Southwest Border



a virtual collapse in interior immigration enforcement and the stabilization of the illegal immigrant population. Thus, Trump succeeded in reducing legal immigration and failed to eliminate illegal immigration.”

So here's a challenge to Rep. Banks, who aspires to be majority whip next January, as well as Sens. Todd Young and Mike Braun: Do something. Do something comprehensive in 2023, a non-election year.

We don't need stunts.

We need border security, and more workers. Indiana had a 2.8% jobless rate, and according to Indiana Workforce Development, had 158,813 unfilled jobs as of July 18.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce noted in August, “We hear every day from our member companies, of every size and industry, across nearly every state, they're facing unprecedented challenges trying to find enough workers to fill open jobs. Right now, the latest data shows that we have over 10 million job openings in the U.S., but only around 6 million unemployed workers.”

Stunts over immigration have become the sugar high in American politics. It's time for real solutions.

Or as The Bulwark's Mona Charen writes, “We are fortunate that so many hard-working people want to come here. If we had our act together, we would reform our laws to take many more legal immigrants (who would begin the application process in their home countries) and hire more immigration judges to hear asylum claims while clarifying that only severe cases will be eligible for that status (not economic migrants). We are an aging population with a declining birth rate. Our national spirit needs the infusion of energy and dynamism that immigrants provide. If our laws are clear, we can reduce the crush of hopefuls at the border. With more legal immigrants, our economy will thrive. Our tax receipts will increase. We'll have the nurses, truckers, teachers, cooks, train conductors, and construction workers we desperately need. And we will be thanked and strengthened by people whose lives we save.” ❖

Nunn, from page 1

one conflict that was devastating to our psyche and military.”

Today, Nunn heads the Nuclear Threat Initiative, the organization he collaborated with Sen. Lugar, which yielded the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program that would eventually secure and eliminate thousands of Russian nuclear, chemical and biological weapons at a cost of less than \$20 billion. Lugar told me in 2007,

“We had spent \$6 trillion trying to contain the Soviet Union and now it's all going to come loose.”

On Monday, HPI interviewed Nunn in the week after Russian forces were in retreat in northeastern Ukraine, a nation Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded on Feb. 24. Not only did Putin strike out in Kiev, he's been through a series of military, economic and political humiliations. Not only was his enfeebled army in retreat in Ukraine, he failed to get full backing from Chinese President Xi. Indian President Modi lectured him on ending the war.

And 18 local officials from Moscow and St. Peters-

burg had called on him to resign. "We, municipal deputies of Russia, believe that the actions of its President Vladimir Putin are harmful to the future of Russia and its citizens," the public statement said. "We demand Vladimir Putin's resignation from the post of the President of the Russian Federation!"

Is Nunn witnessing history potentially repeating? Could Putin face a similar fate as Gorbachev, or worse?

"We're in the most dangerous period we've been in since the breakup of the Soviet Union," Nunn told HPI on Monday, comparing it to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. "We have the threat of escalation, we have the threat of Russia bombing supply lines which would involve Poland and NATO. We have the increased dangers of cyber interference to command and control, (and) warning systems leading to blunder. The Russian invasion makes that all more likely. As you mention, we have the added danger of turning a nuclear power plant into a military base.

"It is a very dangerous time," Nunn said.

On Tuesday in an address to the Russian people, Putin issued a threat that, while aimed at a domestic audience, jangled nerves in the West. Putin announced the mobilization – Russia's first since World War II – just weeks after Ukraine launched a stunning counteroffensive that forced some of his troops to retreat. He noted "statements by some high-ranking representatives of the leading NATO states about the possibility of using nuclear weapons of mass destruction against Russia."

"To those who allow themselves such statements regarding Russia, I want to remind you that our country also has various means of destruction," Putin added. "We will certainly use all the means at our disposal ... It's not a bluff."

If there is to be a change of regime in Russia, it will most likely come in the form of a military coup, analyst of Russian politics Vladimir Juškin told ERR. "There are only two possibilities for change. A popular uprising would take longer, but a military coup is a more realistic option. They are already voicing their displeasure. Russia is peculiar in that everything happens at a moment's notice. And it can happen as an uprising, when the people no longer have food, or as a military coup, when the army sees it is being turned into the scapegoat and refuses to go along."

New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman writes in a Wednesday posting: "People talk, and every Russian soldier or Russian-speaking Ukrainian who sided with Putin has to be thinking: 'Do I stay? Do I run? Who will protect me if the front breaks?' Such an alliance is highly vulnerable to cascading collapse – first slowly and then quickly. Watch out. Why? Because Putin has already

alluded several times to being willing to contemplate using a nuclear weapon if Ukraine and its NATO allies start to overwhelm his forces and he is staring at complete humiliation. I sure hope the CIA has a covert plan to interrupt Putin's chain of command so no one would push the button. I am also aware that as part of this outcome Putin could be replaced by someone worse, someone from his ultranationalist right who claims that Putin did not fight hard enough or was sabotaged by his generals. Or, Putin could be replaced by a power vacuum and disorder – in a country with thousands of nuclear warheads."

Retired Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling told

The Bulwark's Charlie Sykes earlier this week, "One factor that not a whole lot of people are saying much about is, truthfully, the Russian army is bad. As Ukraine has gone in one direction in terms of a positive transformation over the last 15 years, because of kleptocracy, corruption, poor training, poor leadership, lousy recruiting, and just the way they purchase and acquire equipment and treat their soldiers, the Russian army has deteriorated and gone in the opposite direction."

Abbas Gallyamov, Putin's former speechwriter, told CNN last Thursday, "Putin's image is tarnished. The next thing which is going to happen in Russian politics within the next like several months, maybe up to half a year, is the elites will start looking for a successor."

The OVD-Info monitoring group counted at least 1,332 people detained at rallies in 38 different cities across the country after Putin's morning address to the nation.

Konrad Muzyka, a defense analyst for Rochar Consulting, told the New York Times of collapsing Russian morale, "It is no longer science fiction to think that the war will end in a matter of weeks, months, and not years."

New York Times Paris bureau chief Roger Cohen adds, "Mr. Putin cornered is Mr. Putin at his most dangerous. That was one of the core lessons of his hardscrabble youth that he took from the furious reaction of a rat he cornered on a stairwell in what was then Leningrad. His speech at once inverted a war of aggression against a neighbor into a defense of the 'motherland,' a theme that resonates with Russians."

Sykes asked Hertling about "black swan events," unpredictable sequences that can have severe consequences. What are the black swans that we should be keeping an eye out for?

"If something happens to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, that's a scary event, but people are planning for what to do next, and they have talked about these things," Hertling explained. "The Ukrainian army is [also] going to capture a lot of Russian prisoners, probably within the next week, if they haven't already captured them."

And then there is President Putin's threat of using nuclear weapons, something Nunn now calls the "Putin

Political Report
 Weekly Briefing on Indiana Politics
 Friday, Sept. 7, 2024

Nunn-Lugar's war against WMD
 Historic act carves up chemicals & nukes, but as Moscow rises, how long will it last?

By BRIAN A. HOWE
 LONDON - The Soviet Union was a humanitarian, demographic, economic, political, social and environmental disaster of epic proportions. Even with its implosion 18 years ago, the profound damage it left behind, along with today's ways that will continue to send out seismic shocks throughout the world, it will continue to impact India, Europe and the United States for decades to come.

Traveling with U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar and former Sen. Sam Nunn between Aug. 24 and Sept. 2, the reader of the Social Issue creates notes in all these spheres. The essential goal is to secure the unambiguous adoption of Soviet arms nuclear.

Nunn mulls '08 dialogue
 By BRIAN A. HOWE
 WASHINGTON - As a chief primary sponsor, the issue resolution (for back thereof) on an internet campaign could trump a 1000 million metric ton, demographic targeting by cable TV companies, the emergence of personal candidates today - these are some of the topics in the mind of nuclear threat resolution Chairman Sam Nunn as he prepares an independent presidential run in 2008.

Nunn was accompanied by his assistants, a former and his former staff Carter and Doug Baker as they

See Richard Lugar and former Senator Sam Nunn (right) in a conference at the Albright Defense Ministry. The two have been on a 15-year mission to save humanity from WMD. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

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QUOTE
 "Chemical weapons were first discussed five years ago with Sen. Lugar and nobody believes Russia would be willing to destroy its chemical weapons, but it's happened." - Russian Federation Agency for Atomic Energy Minister Sergei Kiriyenko

Doctrine." The theory is if Putin is backed into a political or military corner, he might unleash his nukes.

"The theory of nuclear deterrence of the past made this type of intervention less likely," Nunn said. "In the case of the Putin doctrine, if one makes both nuclear and conventional war, I think it's a reckless addition to the previous theories of deterrence."

Here is the HPI Interview with Sam Nunn:

HPI: I remember you describing the time in late 1991 when you rushed to Moscow and literally witnessed the implosion of the Soviet Union from the gallery in the Duma. What are you seeing today with the Putin regime in Russia? Is there the kind of rot in the Russian military that reminds you of a similar set up in the old USSR? Are we witnessing a similar situation now?

Nunn: That whole series of events was not predicted. I don't think this series of events that may transpire in the next year, or two or three are predictable either.

HPI: I agree.

Nunn: Barbara Tuchman wrote a book called "The Guns of August" and she wrote another book called "The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam," which wasn't as well known at the first one, but basically had 10 chapters of some of the worst decisions by leaders in the history that led to very serious disasters. I think if she were alive today she would write another chapter on Putin's decision to invade Ukraine. I clearly think it is a march of folly. I think he is at a course of events that I believe will follow Afghanistan with the Soviet Union. He's made some very, very bad mistakes that are tragic for Ukraine, tragic for Europe, and extremely reckless and dangerous in terms of possible escalation, and I think in the long run, tragic for Russia. It is certainly not something I can predict. I do believe that the Afghanistan experience for the Soviet Union (left) the Soviet military very badly discredited. There were a lot of factors leading to the demise of the Soviet Union. More directly, it led to Gorbachev, not just becoming the leader, but I think it gave him a tremendous amount of space for taking on a radical new course of perestroika and glasnost. I think if the military and security apparatus had not been so discredited, they never would have given Gorbachev that much space. When they finally did attempt a coup, it was extremely inept and not supported. So it was a huge factor. What happened in the Soviet Union first – and it certainly a factor in the final breakup – I don't think it was the dominant factor, it was the economic, but it was a factor.

HPI: When Gorbachev died this past summer, there were accounts that described the rot throughout

the Soviet system that he encountered, putting him on his fateful course of reform that ultimately failed. It appears we're seeing a similar situation within the vast Kremlin kleptocracy, where funds that were supposed to be rebuilding the Russian military ended up in the pockets of Russian oligarchs. Is there a parallel there?

Nunn: I think so, although the oil prices being up for almost the whole Putin regime has given him the impression of being a strong economic leader with a lot of the Russian people. Of course, oil prices are still up but I think it's not an apples and apples situation.

HPI: Understood.

Nunn: Back in those days you did not have that kind of oil boom that you're having now. Definitely the military ineptness is a really big factor. Putin misjudged his own military and his failure of intelligence or his failure

to listen to the intelligence ... we do know that Putin has extremely bad reading or understanding of the intelligence, or he was badly misinformed as to Ukrainian reaction, to his own military's capability, to his understanding of the will of NATO and the will of the United States, and certainly as to the leadership of Ukraine, as well as the courage and tenacity of the Ukraine people.

HPI: Was it a mistake during the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction era to have

Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus give up their nuclear arsenals?

Nunn: I don't think so. Ukraine never got control of their nuclear arsenals, in terms of operations. They did have physical control, but you have to remember the Soviet army had broken up and the Ukraine did not have much of a military force at that stage. I was in meetings with the Russian military where it was very apparent that Ukraine getting operational control strongly implies that never happened. I don't think (it) would have been the same if they had tried to retain nuclear weapons. Something would have happened a long time ago.

HPI: Because Putin does not have to answer to a Politburo, and because there is no line of succession within the Russia Federation, Sen. Angus King has described Vladimir Putin as "the most dangerous man in history" because he controls this vast nuclear arsenal, has repeatedly threatened to use them, and now appears to be backed into a corner. Do you agree with Sen. King?

Nunn: We've had a lot of bad characters in history, so I wouldn't be that sweeping, but a lot depends on what he does from here, on. A decision Putin is going to



Sam Nunn and Sen. Lugar chatting with then Ambassador William Burns at Spaso House in Moscow in 2007. Burns is now CIA director. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

have to make is whether he's going to have a protracted conflict or whether an insurgency will cross his border. Or will he do the sensible thing and at least abandon all the territories that he captured since February, and set in motion for the people of Crimea a sense of their own decision-making. Is he going to be able to do that without losing his job, or losing even more than his job? I don't know the answer to that. It's unknowable at this moment. He enjoys the prosperity of high oil prices and continues now. This situation is much more unpredictable.

HPI: This past week we've seen 18 local officials from Moscow and St. Petersburg and other municipalities call for Putin's resignation, at great physical and legal peril to themselves. Do you see that as a shot across his bow to his rule from a domestic standpoint?

Nunn: I'm sure that is very troubling to him. He's isolated himself a lot in the last four or five years. I think given the performance of his military and given that the military would be frustrated with the leadership and Putin would be frustrated with them due to the decision-making, the Russian soldiers on the ground don't know why they are there; don't know why they are fighting. So there is a lack of political leadership that goes beyond military command, it goes to the leadership of the country.

HPI: Do the attacks around the Zaporizhzhia Power Plant keep you up at night? I believe, for the first time in history, nuclear power plants are now in a war zone, leading to concerns about a catastrophic radiation incident similar to Chernobyl.

Nunn: It is reckless. I hope the IAEA at least going in there has helped the situation some, has helped ease the risk, but this being used as a military base with weapons being fired there and weapons being fired from there, whatever their source it threatens the electrical and water supplies which could lead to a meltdown without cooling. It's a very reckless act. It would also be very damaging to Russia's commercial leadership in terms of nuclear power. It puts that in real jeopardy. I think Putin's implicit threats of the use of nuclear weapons is another reckless act and the repercussions of that are going to endure. As I view it, we, and I mean both the U.S. and Russia, from time to time had nuclear doctrines that basically not only announced that we would use nuclear weapons in response to an attack, but NATO for years had a doctrine, and still does, and Russia has gone toward that which would be that an existential conventional attack would require a nuclear response. That's been NATO's view for a long time. Now what you have is a Putin Doctrine where, basically, a large nuclear power invaded a country that did not have nuclear weapons, and then added to that the threat of the use of nuclear weapons in the event that someone interfered with his invasion of

a third country. Of course, that bluff was called in a very vivid way by the Biden administration and by our allies in Europe. If you think about it, in theory at least the threat of using nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack ... or an existential conventional attack ... is a new doctrine now that Putin has articulated. It has not succeeded in my view, but nevertheless the doctrine ... has basically made nuclear war and conventional war more likely in general beyond this particular Ukrainian invasion. The theory of nuclear deterrence of the past made this type of intervention less likely. In the case of the Putin Doctrine, if one makes both nuclear and conventional war, I think it's a reckless addition to the previous theories of deterrence.

HPI: Are we now in the most dangerous period since the Soviet collapse?

Nunn: We're in the most dangerous period we've been in since the breakup of the Soviet Union. If you go back to the Cuban Missile Crisis ... it's hard to compare, but without much doubt we have the threat of escalation, we have the threat of Russia bombing supply lines which would involve Poland and NATO. We have the increased dangers of

cyber interference to command and control; warning systems leading to blunder. The Russian invasion makes that all more likely. As you mention, we have the added danger of turning a nuclear power plant into a military base. It is a very dangerous time.

HPI: What should my readers be watching? What tell-tales are you going to be looking at in the next six months on where all of this may be headed?

Nunn: Will Putin find a way to get out of Ukraine? That's the fundamental question. A second question is when Zelensky says basically he's going to take back every part of Ukraine territory, he's said this implicitly, which includes Crimea. The Russians have large military forces there. That's a real question. If Zelensky makes any kind of compromise that includes Crimea, then what do his nationalists do in Ukraine? Will he be able to continue with very strong and courageous leadership if he makes any kind of compromise on territory? A third question is if Crimea becomes the next geographic battleground, what do the U.S. and Europe do in terms of the understanding the huge escalation, but in terms of economic costs of what would undoubtedly be a tragic conflict? I see those questions as looming large, starting with Putin and going to leadership in Ukraine and then, third, European, NATO and U.S. reaction. Those are the things I'll be watching.

HPI: Do you have any postscripts to the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction era that come to mind in the relief of the current situation?

Nunn: Anyone who believes the world would be safer if Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus had nuclear weapons is misreading history very badly. ❖



Nunn and Lugar get an inflight briefing after visiting the Mayak Fissile Material Storage facility in Russia in 2007.

Morales has his own hell week

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – This has been Diego Morales’s hell week. After media reports began questioning the Republican secretary of state nominee military record that reveals that Morales didn’t complete his eight-year commitment and was discharged at the rank of private, his campaign told the Capital Chronicle, “As to the validity and what is typical and not typical of the forms you can contact the United States Army and the Indiana National Guard.”



Why does this matter? Because Morales has made his military service a key component of his campaign and by contrast, Democrat nominee Destiny Wells is a lieutenant colonel in the

Army National Guard and Libertarian Jeff Maurer currently serves in the Indiana Air National Guard in Terre Haute.

On Tuesday, Importantville’s Adam Wren convinced Morales to talk. “Why did you enlist in the military even before you were a citizen?”

Morales responded, “I am a legal immigrant who came to America legally, respecting the rule of law. My family and I had the opportunity to come to America, to come to Indiana, and we settled down by the Ohio River in Clark County. I was a senior in high school. I knew zero English. I had no friends. I had nothing. I had to start from scratch. But I had Hoosiers welcome me with open arms. When I went to my high school, Silver Creek High School in Sellersburg, everyone was kind and nice. And they just welcomed me with open arms. And I said, Wow, someday I would like to give back to this community that has already given me [a welcome]. Went to college. Worked two jobs to pay for my education. Hoosiers were kind to me. And I said I think it is time for me to show my love and gratitude to Indiana and America. And I said, In what ways? I think one of the honorable ways is to give back to the military. So with a green card in my wallet, I enlisted in the U.S. military, simply to give back and show my love and gratitude to America.”

Wren then observed that Morales’ military record had come under fire. He asked Military.com reporter Steve Beynon about Morales’s DD-214 and NGB-22 forms. Beynon said, “It’s safe to say he had an unremarkable career and didn’t take his time in the National Guard seriously. His military experience, based on his record, is as basic as it gets. This was a part-time soldier with no combat

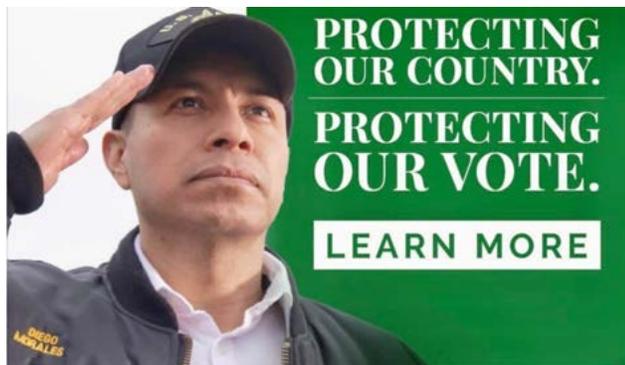
deployments, never held a leadership role, and never attended any prestigious Army training.” Your response?

Morales: “I’m happy to tell you that I am very proud of my service in the military. As I said, with the green card in my wallet, I tried to give back to this great country that has given me everything. I’m grateful for all my fellow military brothers and sisters who have given back to our country.”

The IndyStar’s Briggs was unimpressed: “I don’t know how to interpret that any way other than to conclude Morales either did not leave the military on his own terms or he quit and he’d rather not say that. What are the alternative explanations? However you want to read it, the non-answer is a stunning sidestep for someone who has defined his public persona and political campaign around the narrative of being a ‘U.S. Army veteran’ who was ‘willing to put his life on the line to protect his country.’”

But Morales’ military record wasn’t all that came to light. Indiana Public Media reported that Morales will not debate Wells and Maurer, with his campaign saying his focus is on “traveling to all 92 Indiana counties.” Maurer said Morales is hiding. “If your ideas are so bad that you can’t even stand in front of a crowd of people, of your neighbors, to defend them, then something’s wrong. You need better ideas,” Maurer said.

As for “bad ideas,” Morales backtracked on his call to reduce early voting from 28 to 14 days, telling Fox59 that the current system is “working.”



Meanwhile, Lt. Col. Wells was endorsed by the VoteVets PAC, which represents more than 1.5 million veterans and military families, supports veterans running for office around the country. “In these turbulent political times, our veterans, communities and country need leaders like Destiny Wells, who will continue to serve the nation and put the country first.” said Jon Soltz, chairman of the VoteVets PAC.

Wells said, “I am honored to be given VoteVets’ endorsement. As a military intelligence officer, I have seen first hand the state of democracy across the world and I am proud to have VoteVets’ support as I continue to defend access to democracy in the Indiana Secretary of State’s office.” **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

U.S. Senate

Star profiles McDermott ‘Trump’ campaign

Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., wasn’t going to let a chain barrier stop him from getting to a sign post marking the Illinois-Indiana border during a tour he was giving of the city of roughly 77,000 along Lake

Michigan (Lange, IndyStar). Before any of his passengers could utter a word, he threw his bright, blue-striped 2010 Mustang Shelby GT500 into reverse and went off road near the property of a data center he had lured to the city at the site of a dirty coal plant along the coast. The car, one of two Mustangs he and his wife bought after he lost his 2020 1st Congressional District election, bounced and dipped through the uneven tall grass, every bump noticeable in the sports car. "That's one of the things about being mayor," said McDermott. "You can sort of do things other people can't." McDermott, 53, is unpredictable, a bit of a wildcard who seems to do quite frankly whatever he feels like doing. He does things maybe he shouldn't as mayor. He cusses on his biweekly podcast. He makes off-color jokes. He smoked marijuana in a campaign ad. Don't tell McDermott he's the underdog. "I think I'm going to win," McDermott told IndyStar, listing off his support for legalized marijuana and abortion rights as two of the primary reasons. "How many people thought Donald Trump was going to win the president in 2016?" **Horse Race Status:** Safe Young.



someone who worked for the late Congresswoman Jackie Walorski for years. Yakym reflects on Walorski's successful nine-year tenure in Washington, where she went to "shake things up" and deliver results for Hoosier families and businesses. Yakym goes on to say that "families are

suffering right now and Washington isn't listening to the concerns of Hoosiers across the district as President Biden, Nancy Pelosi and Washington Democrats lead our nation in the wrong direction." He then points out

how Walorski showed him that "if you fight hard enough, stand for conservative values, and never give up, you can bring change." Yakym closes by committing to keeping this spirit, "Jackie's spirit," alive to honor her legacy and serve Hoosiers in Washington as Indiana's next Republican Congressman for the 2nd District. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Yakym.

Congress

1st CD: State Police Alliance endorses Green

The Indiana State Police Alliance endorsed Jennifer-Ruth Green. "On behalf of over 2,000 active and retired Indiana State Troopers, Motor Carrier Inspectors, and Capitol Police Officers, the ISPA is pleased to endorse Jennifer-Ruth Green. Jennifer-Ruth swiftly established an early rapport with our organization and continues to include our leadership in various opportunities of public discussion. She is a leader who will provide a fresh perspective in Washington," said Cory Martin, executive director at Indiana State Police Alliance.

Green responding to U.S. Frank Mrvan's vote "against lower natural gas prices as winter approaches": "Whether it's soaring food prices, record-high gas prices, or jacking electricity and heating bills through the roof, Congressman Frank Mrvan has dutifully supported the Biden-Pelosi agenda 100% of the time at the expense of working-class Hoosiers," said Kevin Hansberger, Green's communications director. "Yesterday, Mrvan had a chance to undo new natural gas taxes he voted for with the fraudulently named Inflation Reduction Act. Instead, Mrvan doubled down on his attacks on working-class Hoosiers and seniors living on a fixed income." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Mrvan.

2nd CD: Yakym up on TV

The Yakym for Indiana 2nd CD campaign released their first television ad titled, "[Jackie](#)." The ad will be seen on both broadcast and cable across Indiana's 2nd Congressional District. The 30-second ad opens with Rudy Yakym, Republican candidate for Indiana's 2nd Congressional District, introducing himself direct to the camera as

General Assembly

HD74: McNamara faces abortion issue

A local lawmaker was at the forefront of the Indiana General Assembly's recent abortion debate, and she now faces re-election challenges from the ideological left and right (Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press). Rep. Wendy McNamara, a Republican who's represented District 76 the last 12 years, carried the House version of Senate Bill 1, the legislation that became law following a special session. It imposes a near-total ban on abortion, and as Gov. Eric Holcomb penned his signature, McNamara said the bill "makes Indiana one of the most pro-life states in the nation." Seeking a seventh term, McNamara's opposed by Democrat Katherine Rybak, who supports abortion rights, as well as self-described "independent conservative" Cheryl Batteiger-Smith, who feels the near-total ban wasn't enough. Rybak and Batteiger-Smith are seeking political office for the first time. The legislation that became law was aimed at protecting women and babies, McNamara said upon its passage. It prohibits abortion at any stage of gestation except in cases of rape, incest, fatal fetal anomalies or when the pregnant person's life is at risk. Rybak and Batteiger-Smith, meanwhile, were not shy about airing their views on the subject. "I say shame on her (McNamara) for sponsoring that bill," said Rybak, a retired attorney who still does family mediation and other legal work. "I think abortion is a very complicated issue. Every person's situation is different, and I don't think a bunch of politicians in Indianapolis should be making that decision for all of the women in Indiana." God put it in my heart instantly that I needed to be a voice for the unborn, and I didn't feel we had that representation in Southern

Indiana,” said Batteiger-Smith, who has worked in an Evansville insurance office for many years and was an Indiana Republican Convention delegate this year. **Horse Race Status:** Likely McNamara.

SD31: FOPs endorse Walker

Local law enforcement organizations in Fishers and Lawrence announced their support for State Senator Kyle Walker today in his reelection campaign for Senate District 31. Senate District 31 encompasses parts of Hamilton and Marion counties, including all of Fishers and part of Lawrence. The Fishers Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 199 and the Lawrence Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 159 cited Walker’s record on advancing efforts to reduce crime in Central Indiana and support law enforcement. “Sen. Walker has taken meaningful action to help reduce crime across our region and support local law enforcement officers as we protect and serve,” said Christopher Owens, President of the Fishers FOP Lodge 199. “Sen. Walker has worked closely with our Fishers police officers to support, amplify and strengthen the work we’re doing to keep the community safe.” **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Local

Carrasco, Mears debate

The candidates for Marion County prosecutor were finally able to address the issues plaguing the city of Indianapolis head to head in a public forum on Tuesday (Darling, WIBC). The forum put on by North Shadeland Alliance had the candidates answering questions in a debate-like event. The topic that dominated the discussion was Indy’s problem with violent crime, but there were also questions asked about low-level marijuana possession and abortion. “I’ve been very clear about where I stand on those issues,” said incumbent prosecutor Ryan Mears (D). “I don’t think it’s appropriate to continue to prosecute simple possession of marijuana. I don’t think it’s appropriate to prosecute women doctors and nurses (over abortion). We’re going to focus on violent crime. We’re not going to waste time on those other issues.” His challenger, former state inspector general Cyndi Carrasco (R), believes the focus on violent crime from Mears has not been all there. “The people who got to participate (in the forum) got to see there is a big difference between the prosecutor (Mears) and myself,” she said.

Presidential 2024

Pence to speak in Indy Oct. 4

Former Vice President Mike Pence will speak at an Indianapolis event next month, one of his first speaking opportunities in Indianapolis since he left Washington D.C.,



last year (IndyStar). Pence is the keynote speaker at The Remnant Trust’s 25th Anniversary Celebration on Oct. 4 at the Columbia Club. The Remnant Trust is nonprofit based in Indiana “committed to elevating educational standards and the public’s understanding of individual liberty and human dignity” through historical documents. A dinner ticket is \$350 per guest and a ticket that includes both the dinner and reception with Pence costs \$750 per guest. Sponsorships range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Proceeds will expand the trust’s educational programming.

Trump sees ‘problems’ if indicted

Former President Donald Trump said Thursday the nation would face “problems ... the likes of which perhaps we’ve never seen” if he is indicted over his handling of classified documents after leaving office, an apparent suggestion that such a move by the Justice Department could spark violence from Trump’s supporters (Politico). The former president said an indictment wouldn’t stop him from running for the White House again and repeatedly said Americans “would not stand” for his prosecution. “If a thing like that happened, I would have no prohibition against running,” Trump said in an interview with conservative talk radio host Hugh Hewitt. “I think if it happened, I think you’d have problems in this country the likes of which perhaps we’ve never seen before. I don’t think the people of the United States would stand for it.” Hewitt asked Trump what he meant by “problems.” “I think they’d have big problems. Big problems. I just don’t think they’d stand for it. They will not sit still and stand for this ultimate of hoaxes,” Trump said.

Trump begins to amplify QAnon

After winking at QAnon for years, Donald Trump is overtly embracing the baseless conspiracy theory, even as the number of frightening real-world events linked to it grows (AP). On Tuesday, using his Truth Social platform, the Republican former president reposted an image of himself wearing a Q lapel pin overlaid with the words “The Storm is Coming.” In QAnon lore, the “storm” refers to Trump’s final victory, when supposedly he will regain

power and his opponents will be tried, and potentially executed, on live television. As Trump contemplates another run for the presidency and has become increasingly assertive in the Republican primary process during the midterm elections, his actions show that far from distancing himself from the political fringe, he is welcoming it. He's published dozens of recent Q-related posts, in contrast to 2020, when he claimed that while he didn't know much about QAnon, he couldn't disprove its conspiracy theory.

At the end of Saturday night's Donald Trump rally, something strange (well, more strange than usual) happened. As the former president delivered the eight-minute monologue that concluded his speech, dramatic strings music began to play in the background and a portion of the mesmerized crowd raised their hands with their pointer fingers extended in an odd salute (Yahoo News). The song has not been definitively identified, although some — including The Daily Beast's Will Sommer — said it is titled "WWG1WGA" after the QAnon slogan, "Where we go one, we go all," and is affiliated with the movement. The New York Times' Maggie Haberman speculated Trump may have used a song titled "Mirrors" by film and TV composer Will Van De Crommer. But, as a music professor who analyzed "Mirrors" after Trump used it in a video told Vice in August, the two songs are "identical."

Trump approval at 34%

Former President Trump's favorability rating has dropped to a new low after slowly trickling down over the past few months. A new NBC News poll released Sunday found that 34% of registered voters said they have a positive view of Trump, while 54% say they have a negative view of him. Trump's favorability rating was at its lowest in April 2021, when his rating fell to 32% in the same NBC poll. The former president's favorability score is down slightly since last month, with the same 54% saying they have a negative view of Trump, but 36% saying they had a positive view of him. While Trump's favorability score has trickled down, President Biden's score has gone up, though only slightly. This month, 45% said they approve of the president — a 2-point increase since last month. Contrarily, 52% of voters say they disapprove of Biden, which has gone down 3 percentage points since last month.

Biden undecided on '24 run

President Biden told 60 Minutes last Thursday

 PatriotsInControl
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Donald J. Trump ReTruThed

Replying to @GodandCountryy, @realDonaldTrump, and 1 more

•45 🇺🇸



that while he intends to run for re-election in 2024, the decision is still up in the air. "Sir, are you committed to running again, or are there certain conditions that have to be right?" Pelley asked. "Look, if I were to say to you, I'm running again, all of a sudden, a whole range of things come into play that I have — requirements I have to change and move and do," Mr. Biden said. "In terms of election laws, and it's much too early to make that kind of decision. I'm a great respecter of fate. And so, what I'm doing is I'm doing my job. I'm gonna do that job. And within the timeframe that makes sense after this next election cycle here, going into next year, make a judgment on what to do. Look, my

intention as I said to begin with is that I would run again. But it's just an intention. But is it a firm decision that I run again? That remains to be seen."

Trump declassified docs 'by thinking about it'

In his first TV appearance since a court-authorized search of his Florida home last month, Donald Trump reasserted Wednesday that any documents taken from the White House to Mar-a-Lago were declassified while he was in office, adding that a president can carry that out "even by thinking about it" ([Washington Post](#)). "There doesn't have to be a process, as I understand it," Trump told Fox News host Sean Hannity. "You're the president — you make that decision."

Hot polls

- North Carolina: Democrat CHERI BEASLEY is ahead of Rep. TED BUDD 49% to 48%, per Civiqs. (Stay tuned to this one.)
- Georgia: Democratic Sen. RAPHAEL WARNOCK holds a slight lead over HERSCHEL WALKER, 45% to 41%, according to Monmouth. Meanwhile, CBS/YouGov finds Warnock ahead 51% to 49%. But GOP Gov. BRIAN KEMP leads STACEY ABRAMS 52% to 46%.
- Ohio: Republican J.D. VANCE leads Rep. TIM RYAN by 1 point in the Senate race, 46% to 45%, per Marist. But GOP Gov. MIKE DeWINE is crushing NAN WHALEY, 55% to 37%.
- New Hampshire: Democratic Sen. MAGGIE HASSAN is ahead of Bolduc 53% to 40%, per American Research Group, which also finds Republican Gov. CHRIS SUNUNU besting Democrat TOM SHERMAN 53% to 38%. Similarly, the University of New Hampshire has Sununu ahead 55% to 37%. ❖

Candidate quality really matters

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Now that summer’s officially over and public attention is turning to the mid-term elections, we know what the parties want us to concentrate on. Democrats are running on abortion access, threats to democracy, their big climate package, and a record of accomplishment on Capitol Hill. Republicans are running on crime, border security, inflation, and the economy in general.



But there’s another issue neither side is talking much about that deserves your attention this year. I’m talking about political skill. Not the kind that gets people elected, but the kind that helps them be effective once in office. Because right now, our democracy needs office-holders who’ve got it, in both parties.

In order to work well – to ensure that all the many voices of this remarkably diverse country are heard and reflected in the halls of power, and to make progress on resolving the challenges that face us – our democracy requires politicians who are adept at the basics. Politicians may not always be popular, but their ability to listen carefully to many sides of an issue, to find areas of common interest among them, to negotiate with their colleagues, and to hammer out compromises that move the ball forward are what make government work. Plain and simple.

One big reason a lot of people believe government isn’t working well is that politicians’ ability to explore common ground has gotten much scarcer than it once was. Partly, this is because there are many more interest groups out there. When I first arrived in Congress, representing a rural district, there were several groups interested in agriculture. Now, it’s scores – if not more. They’ve all got their points of view, and understanding their needs and forging common ground among them is complex and time-consuming. Moreover, they’re all more versed in how to apply pressure – with grassroots campaigns and all the tools of social media – than they once were, which complicates politicians’ lives further.

But even more worrisome, we’ve arrived at a point where the basic skills required of a politician are seen as suspicious, not helpful. In essence, many of the forces in contemporary society promote division, not compromise.

There’s partisan media, for instance, which both amplifies the extremes and encourages readers, viewers, and listeners to reject “squishy” politicians. There’s social media, which promotes and profits from misinformation and makes it easy to form online mobs. There are the political parties, which on the GOP side have embraced Trumpism and on the Democratic side are either divided or, cynically, trying to get GOP extremists nominated. And there’s the built-in perversion of democracy known as gerrymandering, which increasingly creates districts destined for single-party – and, hence, hard-core partisan – rule.

It would be tempting to throw up one’s hands, except that we can’t afford to. And, fortunately, we don’t need to, because the solution lies where it always has, in the hands of American voters. Many people will, of course, vote based on the issues that matter to them. That’s natural and appropriate. But we also need to vote as if our democracy depends on each ballot we cast, in favor of candidates who make it clear that they understand that on many of the issues in Congress or in their legislatures, they need to seek common ground and work with the other side if the country is to move forward.

Finding those candidates will take work, since you can bet their tv ads and campaign brochures and rhetoric on the stump won’t be highlighting their willingness to compromise. So it means paying attention in part to what



they say in smaller settings, as well as to their background and behavior. Do they have experience working with people of different viewpoints? Do they show they can listen carefully to people of all backgrounds? Have they shown the ability to find workable solutions to problems? Even if they’ve never held elective office, these are the kinds of skills we need in politicians right now – and whatever your party, they’re the skills the country needs you to put in office. ❖

Lee Hamilton was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

The political winds are shifting

By JACK COLWELL
South Bend Tribune

SOUTH BEND – Forecasts of red and blue waves in politics are about as precise as winter warnings of where lake effect snow will hit. Shifting winds off Lake Michigan determine whether South Bend is buried in white or accumulation dwindles a few miles west. Political winds shift as well.



Political forecasts early this year were for a big red wave, darn near a Republican tsunami, sweeping away Democratic control in Congress, certainly in the House, very likely in the Senate.

Make sense? Sure. Democrats in Congress were shooting at each other over things they couldn't do. President Biden's ap-

proval ratings were plummeting. Republicans were winning cultural war battles, especially in pinning a "defund the police" label on Democrats at a time of rising concern over crime. Redistricting and the history of midterm election trends were with the GOP.

But the political winds shifted.

Enough for Democrats to keep control of the House? Probably not. Republicans need only to pick up about five seats to gain control. Earlier Republican goals of an additional 50 seats now seem unreasonable. A dozen-seat gain is more likely.

Gerrymandering still is a factor. Republicans controlled the redistricting in a majority of the states. In Indiana, Republican redistricting was so skillful that the question analysts ponder isn't whether Republicans can keep a 7-2 House majority but whether they can capture a long-held Democratic seat centered in Lake County and gain an 8-1 advantage.

There still is the history of the party out of the White House making gains in the first midterm election in a new presidency.

Have political winds shifted enough to enable Democrats to keep the 50-50 Senate tie, with the vice president breaking ties in their favor? Probably so, if some very strange Republican nominees supported by Donald Trump keep performing as they have.

Does the forecast now for a diminishing red wave make sense? Sure. Winds shifted with the Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade and Republican-controlled state legislatures, such as in Indiana, banning or about to ban virtually all abortion. Polls and some summer election

results show the abortion issue has energized Democratic voters, particularly women.

Another reason the winds no longer push a strong red wave is Trump, himself so windy. He is huffing and puffing and threatening to blow the Republican house in. The last thing Republicans need is voter focus again on the Biden vs. Trump 2020 election. Trump lost then, decisively in the popular vote, and most voters are turned off by his whining about losing and pretending that he won.

Trump's troubles mount, over storming of the Capitol, his efforts to overturn election results and his mysterious haul of top-secret documents to his Florida resort. He spouts off about conspiracy theories, putting his ego ahead of concern about Republican candidates this fall. Why won't he instead talk of inflation?

Biden and Democrats finally have accomplishments to cite, although their skill in doing so is far from certain. They have, however, successfully turned the tables in cultural war battles. They have pinned a "defund the FBI" label on Republicans and come across as the defenders of the police assaulted in the Capitol insurrection.

Just as it's hard to predict where lake effect snow will hit or miss, it's difficult to determine where a red or blue wave will hit.

In 2020, predictions were for a blue wave. It did come across many states, with Democrats winning the presidency and control of Congress. Though not robust, the wave helped Biden to win in Michigan. Then the wave stopped at the Indiana line. Winds shifted, sending a bright red wave rolling across Indiana. Trump won big. Democrats lost big in all the races they had hope of winning.



Forecasts of political waves or lake effect snow mean something. Just don't expect them always to be precise. ❖

Colwell is a columnist for the South Bend Tribune.

Sen. Graham's abortion bill lands with a thud

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News Indiana

ANDERSON – At first glance, Lindsey Graham's abortion bill almost seems reasonable. The measure calls for a ban on abortions after 15 weeks, but it provides exceptions for pregnancies brought about by rape or incest and for situations in which the mother's life is in danger.



How you react to such a measure might depend on where you live. Indiana, for example, now bans nearly all abortions. Under a law that took effect Thursday, the state allows the procedure during the first 10 weeks of a pregnancy brought about through rape or incest. It allows a woman up to 20 weeks to end a pregnancy under conditions that threaten her life.

Pro-choice Hoosiers might well support a measure that would ease those restrictions, but Graham's bill doesn't do that. The South Carolina senator's proposal would not affect the more stringent laws already on the books in states across the country, but it would impose restrictions in states where no such limits now exist.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called the bill "wildly out of step with what Americans believe."

"Republicans in Congress are focused on taking rights away from millions of women," she said. "The president and vice president are fighting for progress, while Republicans are fighting to take us back."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi seemed to relish the discord enveloping her colleagues across the aisle. They know they're digging a hole, she said, "and they just keep digging." She joked about the ongoing efforts to shrink the amount of time a woman has to consider her options. "There are those in the party that think life begins at the candlelight dinner the night before," she said.

While Republicans are divided, she said, Democrats are united in their support for a woman's right to choose.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell shows no interest in a unified message. "I think every Republican senator running this

year in these contested races has an answer as to how they feel about the issue," he said. "I leave it up to our candidates who are quite capable of handling this issue to determine for them what their response is."

Though Graham insists his bill will get a vote if Republicans take back control of Congress, McConnell isn't so sure. "I think most of the members of my conference prefer that this be dealt with at the state level," he told reporters.

This approach is called federalism. States set their own tax rates. They set their own speed limits. They allow gambling, or they don't. They legalize marijuana, or they don't.

They set their own environmental regulations.

But does it really make sense for the same medical procedure to be called health care in one state and a crime in another? Should a woman's basic rights really change when she crosses a state line?

Graham says his bill would put U.S. abortion policy in line with other developed nations such as France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark and Spain, but would it really? Do the countries he cites really have abortion restrictions that vary from region to region?

Survey after survey has found that Americans generally support a woman's right to choose, but they also believe in restrictions. Maybe a woman should have 20 weeks to decide whether to carry a pregnancy to term. Maybe she should have 15. Congress really ought to resolve that issue.

Graham says Democrats have made clear where they stand. They want a bill that would restore the rights that had been guaranteed under Roe vs. Wade. He says his bill offers a chance for Republicans to make a similar statement. "You have states and the ability to do it at the state level, and we have the ability in Washington to speak on this issue if we choose," he said. "I have chosen to speak."

You have to give him credit for that. ❖

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





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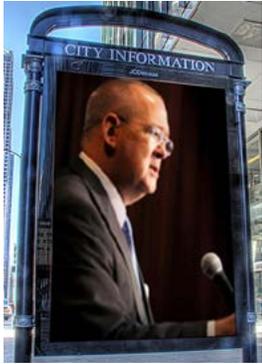
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Why do we care about the British Monarchy?

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Many across the United States will have spent this week watching coverage of the British Monarchy. Millions of Americans from all walks of life will read, watch and listen to coverage of the Queen’s funeral. This is quite a stunning turn of events, after all we endured considerable discomfort to rid ourselves of that crown. There are two important lessons in her life and position that merit considering.



The British Monarchy does not enjoy a lengthy period of support here. My ancestors arrived on this continent as refugees from the restoration of King Charles II, having recently fought against the Crown. Their disdain for the monarchy surely led their grandsons to fight throughout our Revolution. This is a common history that belongs to millions of Americans.

The foundational document of our Republic was hate mail to King George III. It is splendid irony that the most important sentence in the English language comes from our Declaration of Independence. It begins “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal...” I need not finish it. The Declaration rejects not merely the king, but the idea of a kingdom itself.

Our anti-monarchical sentiments run deep. Captured British cannons remain on display at West Point, and the “Shot Heard ‘Round the World” that launched our Revolution still echoes across the globe, most recently in protests of China. So, how could it be that we Americans, possessors of our own rich inheritance of freedom, would offer such regard and care for that monarchy?

The first reason, and one that is pregnant with lessons, is that institutions change. A monarchy that began as an enforcer of brutal power, later evolved. By the time young Elizabeth made her first public speeches at 14, the monarchy served a unique role that supported and expanded liberal democracy. It is not a perfect institution, nor is Britain a perfect democracy. But, sometime in the 20th century, the role of the monarchy shifted wholly to that of public duties in support of a modern democracy.

It was probably her father, who crafted the role into what it is today. King George VI entered Naval Service at 17, and distinguished himself in combat. His ascent to

the throne came through the failure of his brother to complete his duties. George VI kept his family in London as it was brutally bombed, and sent his teenage daughter into military service. The future Queen Elizabeth II drove and repaired trucks. Service to the nation, not monarchical rule or elegant celebrity, became the job of a queen.

The 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth saw the British Empire release some 43 nations from colonial control. In so doing, most elected to remain part of a loose commonwealth of friendship. Her role was to graciously watch her nation’s flag lowered for many ceremonial exchanges. This open support of liberty and freedom was critical at home and abroad. It is worth noting that representatives from nearly all these former colonies will attend her funeral.

The modern monarchy of George VI and Elizabeth II saw their democratic nation help defeat the three great scourges of modernity – fascism, communism and imperialism. Ironically, Britain’s dispensation of its own imperial holdings made it a great nation, where before only an imperial one once stood. The Monarchy helped its citizens understand that they could make this transition successfully and with grace. That is what strong, stable, adaptable institutions do – help us navigate change while ensuring continuity.

The lesson for Americans is then about the strength of our institutions – are they changing for good or ill? We must ask ourselves whether we have a Congress, judicial courts and a presidency that can sustain us through dark and troubled times. Do we have governorships and state legislatures with the mettle to see us through lasting challenges? I don’t ask if we have the correct people in these offices; we often do not. I ask

whether we have the right rules, norms and focus on procedure that defend our liberty.

On a more grassroots level, do we trust those who run our schools and police our streets? Do we trust the generals and admirals who defend our shores, or those people in uniform who serve? Do we trust the professors, the public health officials, the priests, ministers and rabbis, the CEOs and CFOs, the trial attorneys, nurses and physicians?

All these occupations have institutions that sustain their work. We must ask ourselves if these institutions are growing and strengthening or withering away. Do these organizations discipline the conduct of their members, do they eject miscreants and herald the heroes among them? More importantly, we might ask what we individually do to strengthen these institutions.

This is not a partisan concern. I cringe when I hear a president claim that he “has a pen and a phone” to avoid the Congress, or shatters Constitutional limits on student debt relief. So too do I worry when a president skips past Congress on war powers, or bends intent of



Congress to impose tariffs. These acts weaken institutions even when undertaken by good people with whom I agree. The institutions matter; for as we have lately learned, elected office sometimes attracts the very worst of people, devoid of character, lawless, and possessing no moral compass or ethical constraint. And, that leads to our second lesson about Queen Elizabeth II.

Much will be written about her strength of character, so I will touch lightly upon it. Queen Elizabeth II was the richest woman in the world, but led what must have been a near-slavish life of public service. She did this for more than seven decades, likely performing some 30,000 public events, averaging more than one per day since she was a girl. A similar workload killed her father in his 50s. Yet, she performed this job honestly, diligently and without complaint or personal scandal. It was her duty, and she did it. That is character.

It's not just jobs, it's wages

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – “Jobs, Jobs, Jobs,” bellows State Senator Puffy Stuffy. “Wages, Wages, Wages,” shouts State Representative Roberta Righteous.

“It’s like the Sinatra song, ‘Love and Marriage,’ you can’t have one without the other,” retorts the Senator.



“What world do you live in?” asks the Rep. “Indiana has 2.1% of the jobs in the U.S. and 1.7% of the wages. Only two other states have a larger negative difference in those figures. Simply put, Puffy, we’re 48th in the nation.”

“Now, Bobbie, consider who we represent,” the Senator pleads. “We in the General Assembly protect the Hoosier way of life. I’ve seen the list with California and New York at the top. They make movies and money. We make steel and soybeans.”

“Yeah,” says the Rep.

“Precisely,” says the Senator. “Manufacturing in Indiana has 76% of the Goods producing jobs in the state. Nationally, that figure is 57%.”

“Right,” says the Rep. “But we must be producing lower quality or less desirable products than they do in other states.”

“How dare you?” the Senator challenges with stentorian indignation.

“I’m just looking at the 2021 average wages of manufacturing workers in Indiana compared to those nationally,” replies the Rep. “A manufacturing job in Indiana

For citizens of a monarch-free Republic, that might be our most acute lesson to be drawn from her life. We cannot always find the best among us to run for office, and even those will be mere humans. Surely we can elect those who will discharge their oath of office, tell the plain truth, and when necessary suffer personal discomfort to complete their duties. We need not expect them to be perfect parents, decorated soldiers or flawless spouses. But character matters, now more than ever, and that is why we pay respects to the burial processions of someone else’s queen. ❖

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.

averages \$68,886, 10% below the national average of \$76,580.”

“But, Bobbie, the cost of living....” the Senator is cut off.

“Oh, that old bit of hogwash,” laughs the Rep. “You should know by now the cost of living is dominated by the price and rent payments for homes. And those costs are determined by the wages of workers. Low wages, lower housing prices. High wages, higher housing prices. How many times must you hear that?”

“It could work the other way,” he says.

“In your dreams,” she says.

“Well, our state is branching out, diversifying, thinking out of the box,” the Senator affirms.

“Oh, like tourism as a way of bringing in more visitors to Toad Hop, Gnaw Bone and Birdseye?” asks the Rep. “Are you aware that leisure and hospitality jobs are among the lowest paid jobs in the United States, making about 60% less than the average private sector job?”

“That’s why we need more of them,” the Senator puffs. “Increase the demand and wages will rise.”

Representative Righteous ignores this and continues, “Puffy, here in Indiana, workers in that sector earn 21.4% less than their counterparts nationally. Want to hear something really funny? That’s better than local government workers (like teachers in our schools) do. They hold jobs that make 21.7% less than local government workers nationally.”

The Senator makes sounds that cannot be reproduced in print. Then he says, “But remember jobs must precede wages, ‘they go together like a horse and carriage.’”

“Right,” says the Rep. “The horse does the work pulling the owners in the carriage.”

“Commie,” roars the Senator. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist.

Lessons from 1978 and 1982 inflation elections

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – “As the nation enters the political year... an unmistakable mood of depression and uncertainty lies across the land. Though the country continues to enjoy a broad-based prosperity and finds itself fighting no wars anywhere in the world, an overwhelming number of us have very little confidence in our political system and the government it provides.”

One could probably have written what we’ve quoted above about the political year of 2022. But the quote itself is from the introduction of the 1980 edition of the *Almanac of American Politics*, written by Michael Barone, Grant Ujifusa, and Douglas Matthews.

We have been thinking back on past election history in an effort to try to find an election or two that might inform us on what’s been going on this year. Based on our most recent analysis in the Crystal Ball, our best guess of net change in November is a GOP House gain somewhere in the teens and fairly modest net change in the Senate (perhaps no change at all, which would leave the Democrats with the same tied “majority” they have now, courtesy of Vice President Kamala Harris’s tiebreaking vote).

If this is roughly what happens seven weeks from now, it might seem like an odd outcome for a president, Joe Biden, whose approval rating is still clearly underwater despite a recent uptick. That’s because poor presidential approval contributing to significant presidential party losses in the House and/or the Senate have been a feature of the last 4 midterms (2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018). But there have been some indicators that 2022 may be different than those years, so maybe the more distant past offers some parallels.

Expecting any past midterm to perfectly foreshadow this one would be foolhardy. History can provide a rough guide about what we might expect under certain conditions, but it can also serve to limit one’s imagination if something truly unprecedented happens. A case in point would be one Donald J. Trump capturing the GOP presidential nomination in 2016, especially given the then in-vogue belief that candidates like him couldn’t win nominations without much formal support from elites in the party (it turns out a candidate like him could).

We also don’t think there’s much obvious, recent historical precedent for the Supreme Court’s landmark abortion decision back in June, at least in terms of it as a midterm factor. The Dobbs decision is one of the most important in recent decades, and it’s also unpopular. It’s also rare for the party that does not control the presidency or Congress to enact what is effectively a profound change in national policy, but that’s what the court, controlled by Republican appointees, has done. Typically, the party making

changes is the one in control of the elected branches, and the midterm can serve as a backlash to those changes. The Dobbs decision complicates that usual dynamic.

But ignoring history completely is also unwise; otherwise, one may fall into the trap of arguing that something is “unprecedented” when, in fact, it is not without precedent. Certainly a sour electorate is nothing new – as the quote above from 4 decades ago illustrates. Nor is there anything unique about the opposition party coming up short in certain ways in a midterm -- if that is indeed what happens this year.

That said, the specifics of this election, featuring both an unpopular president and also indications that the unpopular president’s party won’t be strongly punished, are a bit unusual.

It is pretty easy to find post-World War II midterms where unpopular presidents preside over bad midterm outcomes; in addition to the last four, years like 1946, 1966, and 1994 all qualify. One can also find instances of presidents with decent approval ratings presiding over bad midterms for their party, like 1958 and 1974 (the latter was Gerald Ford’s lone midterm, and the legacy of Richard Nixon and Watergate was likely a bigger factor than Ford’s approval rating). Popular presidents also can preside over good midterms for their party, like 1998 and 2002 – the only two instances since the war when the president’s party netted House seats in a midterm – but also years like 1962 and 1990, when the president’s party lost a little ground in the House but otherwise did well.

There are a couple of years, though, that might provide some clues for the 2022 situation. They also are midterms that don’t generally come up in lists of memorable U.S. elections – thus, readers may not remember them well or know their particulars: 1978 and 1982.

For various reasons, one could argue that both of these elections could or should have been worse for the president’s party than they otherwise were.

In 1978, Jimmy Carter’s lone midterm, Republicans only made a small numerical dent in the Democrats’ House and Senate majorities – they netted 15 seats in the House and three in the Senate, allowing Democrats to retain both chambers.

Carter would lose to Ronald Reagan in 1980. Republicans flipped the Senate that year, but not the House despite making a net gain of nearly three dozen seats.

The Reagan Revolution gave the GOP dreams of flipping the House for the first time in three decades; in 1981, the Republican National Committee chairman, Richard Richards, “flatly promised a House takeover.” But instead of Republicans netting the 26 seats they needed to win the House, they ended up losing 26 seats as Reagan struggled with low popularity and economic problems. However, while the House change in 1982 reflected a good Democratic environment, it was pumped up by Democratic redistricting gains that year. And Republicans



held serve in the Senate.

Let's take a closer look at these elections, and see what we might glean from them.

One commonality between these two elections and the election we're having now is the issue of inflation. Rising prices was a common problem for Americans in the 1970s through the early 1980s, when then-Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker – a Carter appointee who had also served in an important role at the Treasury Department under Richard Nixon – stamped out inflation through high interest rates. Many of the inflation statistics reported in recent months are the worst in four decades – right around the time of these two midterms.

Carter, though generally unpopular throughout his tenure, saw his approval rating improve to 49% in the final Gallup poll before the midterm. This was after he had been mired in the low-40s from about mid-April to mid-September. One contributor may have been the Camp David Accords, the Sept. 17, 1978 peace agreement between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin that Carter helped broker. Regardless, the timing of Carter's improved approval may have helped limit Democrats' losses that year. We see something similar this year with Biden, although his approval improvement has still only put him in the low 40s in approval averages (he was in the 30s a couple of months ago).

Perhaps more impactful to the results in 1978 was the campaign that was actually run, in which observers at the time and also in hindsight felt that Democrats out-flanked Republican messaging on economic and government spending issues. Republicans ran that year on a tax cut proposal from then-Rep. Jack Kemp (R-NY) and then-Sen. William Roth (R-DE). But Democrats responded by arguing that the tax cuts would be inflationary (in a time when inflation was a major issue). They pushed instead for spending cuts, "co-opting normal Republican rhetoric," Congressional Quarterly's summary of that election year noted. It may have been easier for Democrats to get away with that back in the 1970s, when the ideological makeup of the Democratic congressional majorities was much more mixed than it is today.

"House Republican candidates blew it," wrote William Safire, a former Nixon aide who at the time was on the front end of what would be a long stint as a New York Times opinion columnist. In the opening paragraph of his post-election column, headlined "Dishing the Whigs," Safire used a long-ago quip from British politics as a way of arguing that Democrats had stolen Republican messaging: "'Don't you see we have dished the Whigs?' That was the delighted observation of England's Lord Derby a century ago, when his conservatives stole the opposition platform and rode the Whig reforms to a Tory victory."

Democrats have yet to, in our eyes, find an effective answer to Republicans' messaging in this election on inflation, although it is possible that the drop in gas prices has taken a bit of the air out of the inflation issue more broadly. Democrats may also be able to basically change

the subject in their own way, through the abortion issue. It is an interesting side note to 1978 that some observers, like the authors of the Almanac of American Politics, saw the rise of "single-issue" politics in some races. Abortion was one: Republican Roger Jepsen defeated Sen. Dick Clark (D-IA) in part by hurting Clark's margins with traditionally Democratic Catholics by focusing on the incumbent's record of supporting the right of federal benefit recipients to use those benefits for abortions.

Jepsen was "generally considered a lightweight," according to the Almanac authors, but he beat the Democratic incumbent anyway. As we and others have noted, the GOP is trying to beat Democratic incumbents this year with what appears to be a lackluster stable of candidates. But candidates regarded as weak sometimes win, particularly if they can find salient issues over which they can attack an incumbent.

As it was, 1978 is also remembered as a year in which the Democrats' relatively mild losses obscured what was actually going on in American politics – a turn to the right that was much more fully realized when Reagan beat Carter and Republicans flipped the Senate in 1980.

In Reagan's first midterm, inflation, as well as Volcker's recession-inducing interest rate spikes designed to combat it, contributed to a sour economic environment. Reagan's approval rating had sunk to the low 40s in Gallup's polling by July, and it stayed there through the election. Yet the results were not all bad for Republicans.

Democrats picked up 26 House seats, but Crystal Ball Senior Columnist Alan Abramowitz found that redistricting was a major factor in these gains. Roughly half of the Democratic gains came in the 17 states where Democrats had complete control of redistricting. This was not a repudiation along the lines of what Republicans had endured during the most recent midterm held during their control of the presidency: In both 1972 and 1980, Republican presidential victories, Republicans won 192 House seats. In 1974, their total was reduced to just a paltry 144. But in 1982, they held onto 166 seats – still a small number, but representative of a higher floor for the party than in the 1970s (since 1982, the Republicans have never dipped below that number of seats). So part of what may have been going on is that the Republicans, for so long a minority in the House – they would only win House majorities two times in the six decades between the early 1930s and early 1990s – were starting to come out of the wilderness a little bit. For the purposes of 2022, remember that Republicans already won 213 House seats in 2020, which was always going to limit their ability to score a huge numerical gain this year, just because they are starting from such a high floor.

Andrew Busch, author of a history of midterm elections (*Horses in Midstream*), argued that Democrats did not do quite as well as they could have in 1982 in part because Republicans were able to pin some of the blame for economic problems on Democrats. ❖

Thomas L. Friedman, New York Times: Last week was an interesting week to be in Europe talking to national security experts, officials and business executives about Ukraine. Ukraine and its allies had just forced Russian invaders into a chaotic retreat from a big chunk of territory, while the presidents of China and India had seemed to make clear to Vladimir Putin that the food and energy inflation his war has stoked was hurting their 2.7 billion people. On top of all that, one of Russia's iconic pop stars told her 3.4 million followers on Instagram that the war was "turning our country into a pariah and worsening the lives of our citizens." In short, it was Putin's worst week since he invaded Ukraine – without wisdom, justice, mercy or a Plan B. And yet ... maybe I was just hanging around the wrong people, but I detected a certain undertow of anxiety in many of my conversations with Ukraine's European allies. I learned long ago as a foreign correspondent that sometimes the news is in the noise, in what is being said and shouted, and sometimes the news is in the silence, in what isn't being said at all. And my interpretation of what wasn't being said last week went like this: Yes, it is great that Ukraine is pushing the Russians back some, but can you answer me the question that has been hanging out there since the fighting started: How does this war end with a stable result? We still don't know. As I probed that question in my conversations, I discerned three possible outcomes, some totally new, some familiar, but all coming with complicated and unpredictable side effects: Outcome 1 is a total Ukrainian victory, which risks Putin doing something crazy as defeat and humiliation stare him in the face. Outcome 2 is a dirty deal with Putin that secures a cease-fire and stops the destruction, but it risks splintering the Western allies and enraging many Ukrainians. Outcome 3 is a less dirty deal – we go back to the lines where everyone was before Putin invaded in February. Ukraine might be ready to live with that, and maybe even the Russian people would, too, but Putin would have to be ousted first, because he would never abide the undeniable implication that his war was completely for naught. The variance among these outcomes is profound, and few of us will not be affected by which way it goes. You may not be interested in the Ukraine war, but the Ukraine war will be interested in you, in your energy and food prices, and, most important, in your humanity, as even the "neutrals" – China and India – have discovered. ❖



Niki Kelly, Capital Chronicle: It is the height of irony that the new GOP-backed abortion restrictions could be undone by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. RFRA caused massive controversy in 2015 because conservative groups and some Hoosiers wanted to use it to justify discrimination, specifically against gay and lesbian Hoosiers who they disagreed with based on religious beliefs. Think of the bakery that refuses to make a wedding cake for two men getting married. Some cities have anti-discrimination protections that make that refusal illegal.

And RFRA was seen as a way to defeat those ordinances. In essence, RFRA simply sets a higher level of scrutiny a court must use when examining laws that substantially affect religious freedom. The exact wording is that "a governmental entity may not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion, even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability." It gives an out by saying "A governmental entity may substantially burden a person's exercise of religion only if the governmental entity demonstrates that application of the burden to the person: (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest." So now we come to abortion. Republicans will clearly argue that saving a life is a compelling governmental interest. But it is the word life that is up for debate. The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana is challenging the near-total abortion ban under RFRA, alleging that some faiths don't believe that life begins at conception as the law provides. Indeed, numerous Jewish Hoosiers testified during the special session hearings that the new law would take away their right to health care unless they are raped or in danger of dying. They noted that the Christian belief on life was overriding the Jewish belief (of some) that life begins with the first breath outside the womb. The National Council of Jewish Women says sources in the Talmud note the fetus is "mere water" before 40 days of gestation. Following this period, the fetus is considered a physical part of the pregnant individual's body, not yet having life of its own or independent rights. The fetus is not viewed as separate from the parent's body until birth begins and the first breath of oxygen into the lungs allows the soul to enter the body. ❖

Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star: If word of mouth is truly the best advertising, Terre Haute faces an uphill battle. A community census conducted last April by the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce included 683 residents of Terre Haute and Vigo County, plus 470 high school students, 115 college students, 51 visitors and 179 folks from elsewhere in west-central Indiana. Of the 1,498 total respondents, 69% were women. All gave their views of life in and around the Queen City of the Wabash in the community census unveiled this month at the Chamber's mid-year status update of its "See You in Terre Haute 2025 Community Plan." The residents surveyed mostly like living here ... sort of. A majority of the Terre Haute residents somewhat or completely agreed that the community is improving, diverse, an affordable place to buy a home and safe. When asked to rank on a 1-to-10 scale how satisfied they are living here, residents gave an average assessment of 6.3, fairly positive. But when asked how likely they were to recommend a friend or relative move here, just 9% said they would. Wow. That's not even half-a-star on Yelp. Even 30% of the visitors said they'd recommend Terre Haute as a place to live for a friend or family member. ❖

Zelensky, Biden address U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Ukraine's president laid out a detailed case against Russia's invasion at the United Nations and demanded punishment from world leaders in a speech delivered just hours after Moscow made an extraordinary announcement that it would mobilize some reservists for the war effort (AP). Buoyed by a counteroffensive that has retaken swaths of territory that the Russians seized, Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed in a video address Wednesday that his forces would not stop until they had reclaimed all of Ukraine. "We can return the Ukrainian flag to our entire territory. We can do it with the force of arms," the president said in a speech delivered in English. "But we need time." Video speeches by Zelenskyy in an olive green T-shirt have become almost commonplace. But this speech was one of the most keenly anticipated at the U.N. General Assembly, where the war has dominated. "It's an attack on this very institution where we find ourselves today," said Moldovan President President Maia Sandu, whose country borders Ukraine. U.S. President Joe Biden's address, too, focused heavily on the war in Ukraine. "This war is about extinguishing Ukraine's right to exist as a state, plain and simple, and Ukraine's right to exist as a people. Whoever you are, wherever you live, whatever you believe, that should make your blood run cold," he said. "If nations can pursue their imperial ambitions without consequences, then we put at risk everything this very institution stands for. Everything."



Man convicted of shooting 2 judges

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A man who shot and wounded two southern Indiana judges outside an Indianapolis

fast food restaurant in 2019 was convicted Wednesday on seven of eight felonies and one misdemeanor after a three-day trial. A jury convicted Brandon Kaiser of aggravated battery, multiple battery-related charges and carrying a handgun without a license. He was acquitted on one count of battery resulting in moderate bodily injury. Clark County Circuit judges Brad Jacobs and Andrew Adams were shot during the early morning hours of May 1, 2019 in the parking lot of a downtown White Castle restaurant. Another judge, Sabrina Bell of Crawford County, was with Jacobs and Adams at the time.

Monday funeral for Officer Burton

RICHMOND, Ind. (AP) — The public funeral for an eastern Indiana police officer who died Sunday night after being shot in the head during a traffic stop will be held next week at a high school, her department said. The funeral for Officer Seara Burton, 28, will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at Richmond High School. Following the funeral, a procession will carry her body to Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, where she will be interred in a section dedicated to public safety heroes.

House passes Electoral Reform

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House passed on Wednesday a bill updating a 19th-century law in an attempt to prevent the subversion of future presidential elections (Capital Chronicle). The Presidential Election Reform Act, which passed 229-203, is meant to deter a repeat of the insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021, in which the U.S. Capitol was attacked by a mob of pro-Trump supporters trying to stop Congress from certifying the presidential electoral votes. Nine House Republicans joined Democrats in voting for the measure, H.R. 8873, which would revamp the Electoral Count Act.

"If your aim is to prevent future efforts to steal elections, I would respectfully suggest that conservatives should support this bill," Rep. Liz Cheney, a Wyoming Republican, said on the House floor. "If instead your aim is to leave open the door for elections to be stolen in the future, you might decide not to support this or any other bill to address the electoral count."

850k Hoosiers eligible for program

INDIANAPOLIS — More than 850,000 Hoosiers could see at least some of their federal student loan debt forgiven through President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness program (Capital Chronicle). Roughly 856,400 Hoosiers are eligible to have at least \$10,000 in student loan debt canceled, the White House announced Tuesday. Most of those recipients — about 555,500 — could have up to \$20,000 forgiven because they received Pell Grants, which are provided to students whose families can't help them pay for college. The Biden administration's student loan forgiveness initiative that was announced last month applies to borrowers with incomes less than \$125,000 and from households earning \$250,000 or less.

Trump sued for fraud in New York

NEW YORK (AP) — New York's attorney general sued former President Donald Trump and his company for fraud on Wednesday, alleging they padded his net worth by billions of dollars by lying about the value of prized assets including golf courses, hotels and his homes at Trump Tower and Mar-a-Lago. Attorney General Letitia James dubbed it: "The art of the steal." James' lawsuit, filed in state court in New York, is the culmination of a three-year civil investigation of Trump and the Trump Organization. Trump's three eldest children, Donald Jr., Ivanka and Eric Trump, were also named as defendants/