



More mayoral races uncompetitive

Close to 50 seats are uncontested in 2023

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Democrat Greg Goodnight won the Kokomo mayoral election in 2007 and held the post for three terms. In 2019, Republican Tyler Moore defeated Democrat Abbie Smith with just under 70% of the vote. With the 2023 election filing deadline last Friday,

there are only two Democrat council candidates, and none for Kokomo mayor or city clerk.

What jumps out after the filing deadline is how many uncontested mayoral races there are during this 2023 cycle, including cities like Kokomo and Elkhart that have had competitive races in recent cycles. There are at least 37 cities where only Republican candidates have filed, including Jeffersonville, Noblesville, Bedford and



Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore and his wife Ann celebrate his 2019 win. He is running unopposed in 2023. (Kokomo Tribune Photo)

Columbus. There are 10 cities where only Democrats have filed for mayor, including Hammond, Elkhart, Lafayette, West Lafayette.

Unless a party slates a candidate by noon July 3,

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McCarthy test in 5th CD

By **LISA KOBE**

INDIANAPOLIS – Just over a month ago U.S. Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) was sweating out the race to lead the U.S. House of Representatives. After 15 CSPAN and cable TV televised ballots, McCarthy broke through. He secured enough votes to be elected speaker of the new Congress. One of pivotal moments was the agreement the McCarthy made with the Club for Growth.

There are Indiana connections.

Club for Growth is led by former Indiana Congressman David McIntosh. He represented the 6th CD from 1994 to 2000. In 2000, McIntosh was soundly defeated in his bid to defeat incumbent Demo-



“I’ve had a few people encourage me to run. Probably unlikely for a number of good reasons, but I’ve long thought that I should never say never in politics.”

- Former Fort Wayne mayor Paul Helmke on a potential 3rd CD candidacy.

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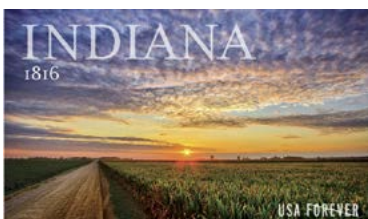
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Club for Growth President David McIntosh (right) on primary election night in 2012 when he lost to Susan Brooks. In 2020, McIntosh decisively backed Victoria Spartz. (Anderson Herald Bulletin Photo).

crat Gov. Frank O'Bannon. In 2012, McIntosh ran for the GOP nomination for the open 5th CD in a very crowded field. He narrowly lost to Republican Susan Brooks who held the seat for four terms, retiring in 2020.

Club for Growth has been very active in Republican primaries. Its won some (for example, Ohio U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance) and lost some (like Arizona Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, Blake McMaster). The Club is supporting U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., in the 2024 race for Sen. Mike Braun's seat after he announced plans to run for Indiana governor. The Club recently ran negative ads against former governor and Purdue University President Mitch Daniels, who was considering a bid but decided against it. Daniels remains popular, especially in Republican and Boilermaker circles and the ads were not well received by many Hoosiers.

Back to the agreement.

Without mentioning McCarthy by name, Club for Growth said the vote for speaker would be included on their legislative score card and the next House speaker must "provide transformational reforms to

the House, build a bold pro-growth legislative agenda, and restore the individual rights and powers of the rank-and-file membership." The Fox News' headline was not so subtle. It said, "Club for Growth urges no vote on McCarthy for House speaker unless conditions are met."

The Club leveraged its opposition to eventually reach a deal where McCarthy agreed that the Congressional Leadership Fund would not spend money in any open-seat primaries in safe Republican districts and the Leadership PAC would not provide resources to other super PACs to circumvent the agreement. McCarthy's election as speaker followed.

Indiana's 5th CD screams "Safe, Republican, Open," making it the test case for the McCarthy-Club for Growth deal.

U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz's announcement that she would not run for Congress in 2024 took people by surprise. It's too early to say what the 2024 lineup will be but, like in 2012, the field is expected to be very crowded. Legislators like Sen. Scott Baldwin and Reps. Chuck Goodrich

and Chris Jeter are reported to be eyeing the seat. Add former state senator John Ruckelshaus to the list.

Unsuccessful 2020 candidates Micah Beckwith and Beth Henderson will likely consider a rebid. Boone County Council President Elise Nieshalla, an unsuccessful Republican candidate for state treasurer in 2022 and is likely to consider a run.

There will be others.

One thing is for sure: The DC-based PAC for Club for Growth and David McIntosh are going to be very involved in this Republican primary. ❖

Kobe is a periodic contributor to HPI.

Mayors, from page 1

this means that Republican incumbent mayors Mike Moore in Jeffersonville, Dave Wood in Mishawaka and Democrat incumbents Tony Roswarski in Lafayette, Rod Roberson in Elkhart and Tom McDermott in Hammond will have no challengers.

The situation in West Lafayette is intriguing. Four-term incumbent Republican Mayor John Dennis is not seeking reelection and has endorsed Democrat Erin Easter.

The secretary of state's candidate filing list is currently time stamped at 1:28 p.m. Feb. 3, or about 23 hours before filing deadline. It does not list candidates in Michigan City, West Lafayette and Kokomo. This list will be updated in future editions.

Heading into the May primary, intense races are unfolding in Gary, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Michigan City and Evansville.

Here is Howey Politics Indiana's preliminary May primary setup.

Anderson: Democrats Mayor Thomas Broderick Jr., Rodney Chamberlain and Tony Watters. Republicans City Councilman Jon K. Bell, Robert Jozwiak and Carol Miller. If Broderick is elected next year he would become the second mayor in the city's history to serve three terms. Democrat J. Mark Lawler was elected mayor for four terms starting in 1987. Broderick was first elected in 2015, beating incumbent Republican Kevin Smith. In the 2015 primary election Broderick defeated Kris Ockomon, seeking a second term as mayor, and Rodney Chamberlain. Broderick defeated Terry May in the 2019 Democrat Party primary and won reelection as mayor in the general election by 1,990 votes over Republican Rick Gardner. Miller becomes the second woman to seek the GOP nomination for Anderson mayor. Joanna Collette sought the nomination in 2019, losing to Rick Gardner in the primary. "I know it will be a big battle," Bell said Wednesday of being elected mayor. "I have a different sight of things for the direction of the city." Bell, a retired Anderson policeman, said the changes in the city's direction he envisions can't be done as a member of the



City Council (Anderson Herald Bulletin). "Changes come through the mayor's office."

Angola: Republicans Councilman Dave Martin and Colleen Everage. Five-term Republican Mayor Dick Hickman is not seeking reelection. Martin had announced his candidacy for mayor in 2018 then dropped out of the race before 2019 when Mayor Hickman changed his mind and decided to run again after having said he would not seek a fifth term. Hickman went on to handily win in 2019, defeating Angola Councilman Joe Hysong (KPC News). "I have spent more than 30 years serving the city in various government capacities, including the Angola city zoning board, Angola plan commission; founding member of the budget and services committee; board of works; council member and mayor pro tem," Martin said. Should Martin or another Republican win in 2023, it would be the first time since 1991 that a Republican has held the office.

Auburn: Republicans Mayor Michael D. Ley and David Clark. Mayor Ley is seeking a second term. Ley points to two statistics that confirm the positive direction of the city. One is the increased growth of the city's assessed valuation from \$556,000,000 in 2018 to \$711,000,000 in tax year 2022. Second is the decrease of the city's tax rate from \$1.0687/per hundred in 2018 to \$0.9564/per hundred in tax year 2023. The result of all the economic investment is a lower tax rate for all. Clark is a real estate agent running on a platform of affordable housing, better infrastructure and more cooperative government.

Boonville: Republicans Bradley Downing and Deborah K. Steven. Democrat Mayor Charles R Wyatt. Wyatt said in a release, "We have had the opportunity to be able to start and finish many projects as well as watching the residents cleaning up, improving and building new homes and business offices the past seven years."

Bloomington: Democrats Deputy Mayor Don Griffin Jr., Susan Sandberg and Kerry Thomson. Two-term Democrat Mayor John Hamilton is not seeking reelection. Thomson is the executive director of the Center for Rural Engagement at IU and CEO of Monroe County's Habitat for Humanity. She said she has been a lifelong community builder and community leader (Indiana Daily Student).

She believes there is a lack of housing at all levels, so it's important to create an implementable plan to make housing attainable at all levels from students to executives. The cause is one of her top priorities. "Diversity to me means ethnic diversity," Thomson said. "It means thought diversity, religious diversity, there are all kinds of different diversity. And part of what we need to do is invite all those voices to the table and welcome them into leadership." Sandberg, the former Bloomington City Council president, was a member of the council for 16 years. She said her key issues will be community safety, affordability and being much more collaborative with all the different systems within the City of Bloomington. "My top priorities are clearly a Bloomington that works for you and a Bloomington that works for all," she said. "We owe it to the community to provide the best services that we possibly can within our budgetary restraints." Griffin is currently the deputy mayor of Bloomington and owns his own realty company. He was also a founder of Clearpath Maintenance Free Living. "I think outside of the box when it comes to housing, and I can use my resources to find ways to create more affordable housing and housing in general," Griffin said. "For 30 years that's been my thing." Thomson welcomed the support of former state senator Vi Simpson to the campaign as its co-chair.

Carmel: Republicans City Councilwoman Sue Finkam, Fred Glynn and Councilman Kevin Woody Rider. Democrat: Miles Nelson. Finkham has served on the council since 2012 and served as president. Former Hamilton County Councilman Glynn ran unsuccessfully for state representative in 2022 and was defeated by Mayor Jim Brainard in the 2019 primary. Rider led all three in fundraising in 2022 with more than \$506,000 in cash on hand (IndyStar). Rider's committee brought in more than \$365,000 in contributions in 2022. Finkam ended 2022 with nearly \$42,000 in cash on hand. Her committee brought in around \$25,000. Nelson ended the year with about \$43,000. His committee brought in around \$44,000 in contributions in 2022.



Columbus: Republicans Mary Ferdon and Milo Smith. Smith served in the Indiana General Assembly rep-



resenting HD59 from 2006 to 2018. Mayor Jim Lienhoop is not seeking a third term. Smith's entry into this race in early January prompted former Bartholomew County sheriff Matt Myers to withdraw. Smith's priorities include limiting government, fostering a pro-business environment, and public safety. He also said he would cut regulations and advocate for civility (Local News Digital). "If elected, I will continue to listen to all residents of Columbus while making it easier for each of you to get a prompt response from the appropriate person in city government," Smith stated. Mary Ferdon, executive director of administration and community development for the city, is also running.

Connersville: Republicans Mayor Chad A. Frank and City Councilman Clarence Werner. Democrat Lawrence "Brady" Lattimer. Mayor Frank is seeking reelection, saying, "Together, we can and will accomplish great things and last night solidified in my heart the support from everyone to start the process of making the changes we need as a city! It is time to move Connersville forward and set a positive example leading the charge instead of being last on every list and study!" Werner represents the 1st District on the council.

Delphi: Republicans Gayle Conner, Dale R. Seward and Kamron Yates. Mayor Shane Evans was elected as an independent in 2019, but is not seeking another term. "I ran for City Council to give the people a voice on the city council," Conner told the Carroll County Comet after she resigned from the city council. "I am leaving because I am unable to give my constituents a voice on the current council. I am not going to be a part of a group that puts the wants of the mayor before the needs of the people, which is what has been happening," she added. "All of the projects on the mayor's current agenda seem to be for the benefit of those who may come to Delphi while neglecting the needs of the residents and current taxpayers." Yates is executive director of the Carroll County Area Plan Commission.

East Chicago: Democrat Mayor Anthony Copeland and Adrian Santos. Republicans Travis A. Francis and Arthur Santos Sr. Informed and reliable sources tell HPI they believe Mayor Copeland is in good shape for reelection. Santos is the North Township trustee.

Evansville: Democrats Brian T. Alexander and Vanderburgh County Councilwoman Stephanie Terry. Republicans Caine Helmer, Vanderburgh County Commissioner Cheryl Musgrave and Natalie Rascher. Musgrave announced her candidacy before Mayor Lloyd Winnecke announced he would retire. Winnecke is backing Natalie Rascher, who

has raised \$100,000 since announcing last fall. "Since declaring Dec. 3, Natalie is enjoying a groundswell of support," Winneke said. "She has my backing." But Musgrave, a former director of local government during the Daniels administration, is too skilled and respected by most of the electorate for the challenger to beat her. Councilwoman Stephanie Terry filed Tuesday at the Election Office (WFIE-TV). Terry says her main focuses are improving education, working on public safety by addressing poverty and mental illness, providing support to small business, and improving equity and diversity throughout the city. She also wants to improve the sidewalks. Terry is the first Democratic candidate to run for mayor since 2015. "Number one I think the opportunity has presented itself," says Terry. "I definitely think this year a woman is going to take that office. I think that's going to be something that's historic and an opportunity again for fresh perspective to lead the city." Terry's early endorsers include former Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel.

Fort Wayne: Democrat Mayor Tom C. Henry and Jorge Fernandez. Republican Councilman Jason Arp and Councilman Tom Didier. Mayor Henry reversed course and is seeking an unprecedented fifth term. He faces Fernandez, a substitute teacher, in the primary, who filed after Mayor Henry was arrested on a DUI last October, pled guilty in November and has repeatedly apologized. "I'm proud of the progress we've made to showcase Fort Wayne as the country's best mid-sized city by nearly every measure," Henry said. "And now is not the time to make a change. We can be proud of what together we have accomplished, but we still have work to do. I'm energized by the momentum felt throughout every part of our city and want to see through completion the exciting initiatives we've begun and those we will announce this year. The pandemic and economic uncertainties have shown us the importance of steady leadership and direction," the Democrat mayor said. "What we need now, more than ever, is executive experience



and an administration that knows how to get things done. I'm motivated and committed to continuing to lead this great city." Republican Councilmen Tom Didier, who defeated Henry for city council in 2003, and Jason Arp have filed. Last June, Allen County Republican Chairman Steve Shine told WANE 15 that Didier is the presumptive nominee for mayor in the Republican party. "He has a deep, deep knowledge of city affairs, he has great connections with the neighborhoods, not just the third district, but all neighborhoods," Shine said. "He knows how city govern-

ment runs. And because he has a record, he will be judged by his record, and it's one that he and citizens around Fort Wayne can be very proud of." Arp comes from the more conservative Indiana Policy Review wing of the GOP.

Gary: Democrat Mayor Jerome Prince, State Sen. Eddie Melton and Danien J. Walls, Republican Andrew Delano. Prince upset Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson in 2019. Since taking the helm, the former mayor's clout on the city council has worked against him. Sen. Melton is a formidable candidate who has assembled a potent campaign. He is well-known and liked by many Gary residents. Sen. Melton's problem is he's stuck in the General Assembly in Indianapolis until the final days of the primary campaign. This gives Mayor Prince an opening to fend off the upset. We see this as a tossup race.



Goshen: Democrat Mayor Jeremy P. Stutsman, Republicans William L. Gard Jr. and William "Bill" Malone. Stutsman is heading into his eighth year as mayor, and he's focused on a new community vision (ABC57). "In partnership with residents, businesses, educators, non-profit organizations, local and state elected officials and hardworking city employees, we have made great strides in growing and improving Goshen," said Stutsman.

Greenwood: Republican Mayor Mark W. Myers and Joe Hubbard. Former Center Grove School Board president Joe Hubbard officially threw his hat into the ring for Greenwood mayor, challenging incumbent Mark Myers (Daily Journal). Hubbard previously served on the Center Grove Community School Board from 2019-2022, where he was board president, and on the Central Nine Career Center Board of Trustees. Hubbard, a small business owner and U.S. Air Force veteran, is the owner of ATMs for Veterans and previously worked for Eli Lilly and Co. In a statement, Hubbard said he looked forward to meeting residents and community leaders to understand different viewpoints that could be developed into "common sense solutions. Greenwood residents are ready for new leadership in the mayor's office," Hubbard said in a statement. "I will be the strong leader that Greenwood needs at this very pivotal period for our city." Hubbard's filing was expected as he announced his intent to run against Myers last year. Myers, a former police officer, is seeking his fourth term as mayor.

Hobart: Democrat Jerry Allen Herzog and City Councilman Josh Huddlestun. Republican Gary (The Polock) France. After switching from the Democrat to the

Republican party, Mayor Brian Snedecor is not seeking reelection, saying, "I'm retiring ... four terms is enough." Huddlestun, a lifelong Hobart resident, said he wants to play a large role in determining the city's future (NWI Times). Public safety, fiscal responsibility and quality of life are his main objectives. "We need that person that's young and aggressive and ready to lead us and take us to the next level," he said.

Huntingburg: Republican Mayor Steven Schwinghamer and James J. Hopf. Mayor Schwinghamer took office in November 2020 after Mayor Denny Spinner resigned to take a job with U.S. Sen. Mike Braun. "Huntingburg is an unbelievable place to call home. Over the last several years, our city has experienced steady growth, and I have been honored to help lead that progress," Schwinghamer said on declaring for a full term. "In less than two years, we have achieved a tremendous amount – all without raising the tax rate," Schwinghamer attested. "With the support of our great community, I promise to continue taking care of the citizens I serve and ensure you are proud to call Huntingburg home."

Indianapolis: Democrat Mayor Joe Hogsett, State Rep. Robin Shackelford, Bob Kern, Clif Marasglio, Gregory Meriweather, Larry Vaughn. Republicans Abdul-Hakim Shabazz, Jefferson Scott Shreve. Mayor Hogsett is seeking to fend off a challenge from Rep. Shackelford, coming on the heels of a 2022 showdown over control of the Marion County Democrat Party, elevating Myla Eldridge to the chair. On the GOP side, former councilman Shreve filed late and faces attorney and radio personality Shabazz.



Lebanon: Republican Mayor Matthew T. Gentry and Boone County Councilman Kevin Van Horn. Van Horn declared his candidacy for mayor just three days into his new council term (Lebanon Reporter). That pits him against Mayor Gentry who has overseen extraordinary growth in the city during his two terms. Gentry announced in a statement that he will seek a third and final term as mayor. Lebanon's next mayor will face unequalled challenges as the Indiana Economic Development Corporation develops the state's largest high-tech industrial site, LEAP Lebanon, on about 6,000 acres north and northwest of Lebanon. The city council annexed 6,621 acres for the project in 2022, increasing the city's size by 59% in six months.

Lake Station: Democrat Mayor Bill Carroll and Councilman Neil Anderson. Republican Benjamin Fontanez Jr. Mayor Carroll is seeking reelection. City Councilman Anderson is fighting threats to remove him from public office (Dolan, NWI Times). Anderson, who has served on

the council six years, said his political career has come under attack since May when he announced he will run for Lake Station mayor in 2023. Lake Station's city administration demanded this week that county election officials investigate whether Anderson has forfeited his council seat by moving out of the city's 1st District, according to Michelle Fajman, county elections director. Anderson said he also received a letter earlier this month from Lake County Democratic Chairman Jim Wieser asking Anderson to resign or be summarily replaced on the council. "I've hired a lawyer and I intend to remain on the job," Anderson said. Voters first elected Anderson, a brother of former Mayor Christopher Anderson, to a city council at-large seat in 2015. Anderson has been critical of Mayor Bill Carroll's administration for using a contractor located outside the city to make improvement to its Riverview Park. He stated in a recent Facebook post, "When I'm the mayor of Lake Station we will have a 'Lake Station First' business plan."

Logansport: Republican Mayor Chris Martin, James McKeever, Johnny "Q"uinones, Berney (Willie) Sadler, Rich Voorhees. Democrats Terry Doran, Larry B. Hood, Dave Kitchell, and Jacob LeDonne. Davis upset Mayor Kitchell in 2019 but now faces a five-way primary. Kitchell, who is an HPI columnist, is seeking a comeback.

Loogootee: Democrat Mayor Noel Harty and City Councilwoman Teresa M. Nolley. Republican Brian Ader. Mayor Harty will face city Councilwoman Teresa Nolley in the Democrat primary May 2 (Washington Times Herald). The winner of that race will meet former mayor Ader. Loogootee has never elected a female mayor This is the second time Harty has faced a former council member in his effort to win reelection. Four years ago Harty soundly defeated Roger Downey, who was then city council president.

Martinsville: Republican Kenneth W. Costin, Shannon E. Kohl and Scotty Manley. Former mayor Kohl is seeking to return to office.

Michigan City: Republican Mayor Duane Parry. Democrats Councilwoman Angie Deutsch, LaPorte County Councilman Mark Yagelski, City Councilman Michael Mack, former city councilman Johnny Stimley and former mayor Ron Meer. The Democratic primary is being hotly contested, and includes a comeback attempt by Ron Meer, who faced charges before his reelection and lost to Parry by 76 votes. Parry announced his reelection bid, saying, "Four years ago, I pledged I believed in accountability entering into the position as mayor with a deficit of over 3 million dollars. I entered my term 'tightening the purse strings' and bringing our city out of this hole. I can proudly say the deficit is gone and the city budget is now more efficient and streamlined." Mayor Parry's first term wasn't without scandal. In 2021, he came under fire for racially insensitive comments, and again in 2022, when he was charged with

leaving the scene of an accident in a city-owned vehicle.

Muncie: Republican Mayor Dan Ridenour and Tony Cox. Democrat: Council President Jeffrey L. Robinson. Mayor Ridenour is seeking a second term and this primary race against Cox will be a rematch from 2019. Ridenour cited his administration's accomplishments, including balancing city financial accounts, which he said were overspent by over \$3.3 million, while also paying off over \$4.4 million in city debt, "without increasing taxes" (Muncie Star Press). Ridenour's campaign noted he partnered with neighborhoods to clean up dilapidated sites that had impeded growth and cleared the way for new investment. "Over the last three years, we have seen what can happen when things are done the right way," Ridenour said. "We will continue to attract business and make generational investments in infrastructure and housing that benefit our neighbors today and will bring new families to our city."



New Albany: Democrat Mayor Jeff Gahan and Dylan Rash. Republican State Rep. Ed Clere. Democratic incumbent Mayor Jeff Gahan is seeking reelection for his fourth term. Mayor Gahan said he aims to keep up the "momentum," at his reelection announcement at Bella Roma in downtown New Albany (News & Tribune). "It's about momentum, about keeping it going," Gahan said. "And I'm really amazed at the momentum that this river city has been able to sustain for a number of years. These past three years have sailed by, and I am happy to report that with each passing year, our city's future gets brighter and brighter. In a very short period of time, despite a worldwide pandemic and other barriers, we have seen a surge of improvements throughout the city." In response to Gahan's reelection announcement, Floyd County's GOP vice chair released a statement describing the incumbent's tenure in office as "failed leadership." "On Gahan's watch, crime is on the rise and our police department is depleted, downtown businesses on Main Street are being suffocated by poorly planned construction, and citizens lack affordable housing options as the current administration tears down housing," Nick Vaughn said. "State Rep. Ed Clere will offer new leadership that will be tough on violent crime, open and transparent with the community, and help businesses succeed."

Peru: Republicans Wayne A. Bunker, Sherry Raber, Terry B. Smith, and Don Sturch. Democrat Stephanie Graf. This is a race to replace Mayor Miles Hewitt, who suffered a heart attack during his first term and was temporarily removed from office by a judge. He was restored to power a few months later, but is not seeking reelection.

Plymouth: Republicans Greg Compton, Rick Cooper Jr., Nick Fisher, and John R Grolich. Democrat Robert W. Listenberger. Four-term Mayor Mark Senter announced last week he would not seek reelection.

Portage: Democrat Mayor Sue I. Lynch. Republicans Austin Bonta and John M. Cannon. Lynch has announced her intention to seek reelection this year. "We

have achieved many significant accomplishments over the past three years including modernizing our emergency services, improving our park amenities, partnering with the county library system to build an outdoor reading garden and moving forward with plans for

downtown development to grow what has already been built around Founders Square," the first-term Democrat said (NWI Times). At least two Republicans also have their sights set on the mayor's office. Austin Bonta and John Cannon have both announced plans to seek the GOP nomination. Lynch had initially served as mayor for a couple of weeks in 2019 following former Republican Mayor James Snyder's federal conviction in February of that year on bribery and tax obstruction charges. She took over the city's top job by virtue of her position as city council president. Lynch was replaced at the start of March 2019 by Cannon, who was voted in by Republican precinct officials to finish Snyder's term. Lynch then unseated Cannon during the 2019 election.

Richmond: Democrat Mayor Dave Snow. Republicans David A. Flannery, Shawn C. O'Conner, and City Councilman Ron Oler. Mayor Snow is seeking a third term. "I wholeheartedly believe that Richmond is America's next great city," said Snow. "I want this momentum to continue," Snow said, describing a "tremendous" team of city government professionals that has been built and great investments in city departments. Richmond voters have chosen Oler for three at-large terms on common council (Western Wayne News). He said he knows the obstacles the city is experiencing, and the community has remained on its feet and resilient "despite having every reason to falter" like a prizefighter reeling from multiple blows. "The time has come for our city to stop being a punching bag and fight our way back into a position that even the Richmond of old would be proud of," Oler said.

Rensselaer: Republican Scott Barton and Jeff Phillips. Democrat Mayor Steve Wood. Mayor Wood is seeking reelection. Wood has served 16 years as Rensselaer's mayor, including a four-year term in the late 1990s. He has served the community for three more terms since, with the first coming in 2012 (Newsbug). "I've tried to do the right things and I find these things out by talking to people on the street," Wood said. "I try to explain what the projects involve and why we have to do them. My door is always open." Phillips is the former police chief.

Salem: Republicans Mayor Justin Green and J. Davisson. Davisson, who served out the term of his late father in the Indiana House, announced for mayor on Feb. 4. It comes on the heels of an unsuccessful bid for the 9th CD in 2020. "I grew up in this town, I have raised my family in this town, and I am a small business owner in this town. I understand its challenges and I have the right prescription for this town," Davisson said. "It's no secret, local tax rates are maxed out, our utilities have seen astronomical increases in the past year, our debts continue to pile up, there are few good paying jobs, business owners can't catch a break, and there are few choices for our youth. They call this progress, but our residents are hurting." Mayor Green said the City of Salem is making great strides when it comes to water utilities with the completion in recent years of both a new water treatment plant and upgrades to the wastewater treatment facility. Both are highly efficient, state of the art plants with enhanced capacity and reliability that replaced decades-old facilities. "Utility upgrades are important for our residents," noted Mayor Green. "These new facilities have enhanced safety and ensure the city is in complete compliance with new wastewater treatment mandates, specifically involving phosphorus."

Seymour: Republican Mayor Matthew Nicholson and Dan Robison. First-term Mayor Nicholson is facing a challenge from Robison, director of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. "In 2018, I announced my candidacy for mayor so that I could focus on serving our community full time and laying the foundation for future generations to enjoy," Nicholson said in announcing his candidacy (Seymour Tribune). "Even with all we have done already, we still have plenty to accomplish," he said. "With millions in sewer projects on the horizon, the O'Brien Street corridor taking shape and recovery becoming a more natural conversation, I look forward to continuing my positive, consistent leadership for another term." In early May, Seymour native Dan Robison, a Republican, announced his candidacy. At the time, Robison said Seymour was a growing city and there are a lot of positive things going on in the city. He said the city needed a strong, strategic leader in city hall who can build partnerships and help plot a clear path forward.

South Bend: Democrat Mayor James Mueller and City Councilman Henry Davis Jr. Republican Desmond Upchurch. Mueller is expected to survive his primary challenge. Mueller, while lacking the robust activity and charisma of former Mayor Pete Buttigieg, has presided over continued South Bend developments. Davis, who was trounced by Buttigieg in the 2015 Democratic primary, getting only 22% of the vote, could do somewhat better but not enough to endanger Mueller's nomination. Many voters still will recall past difficulties of Davis, including driving the wrong way for a lengthy time on the South Bend bypass.

Terre Haute: Republican Mayor Duke Bennett. Democrats Pat Goodwin and Brandon C. Sakbun. Mayor Bennett proclaimed during his city update last week that his city is poised for "explosive" growth. He is expected to face Democrat Pat Goodwin, who challenged Bennett as an independent in 2019, with the Republican winning a three-way race by a little more than 100 votes. Terre Haute has moved from a city with significant financial woes to one that operates on a balanced budget and has healthy cash reserves. It enters 2023 in much healthier shape than it was in 2015, which Bennett called "our toughest year." "The challenges are behind us now," he said. "The revenues are coming in. I want to take advantage of that and do the things we've committed to doing. This is the best position we've been in and I want to continue that momentum."

Tipton: Republicans City Councilman Rick Chandler and Kegan Schmicker. "I understand that real change doesn't happen by sitting behind a desk and pushing a pencil," Chandler said at the downtown family restaurant (Kokomo Tribune). "Real change happens by going into the community, rolling up your sleeves, getting your hands a little dirty and going to work. I've never shied away from hard work, and I never will." Schmicker, the executive director of the Tipton County Chamber of Commerce, announced his campaign for the Republican nomination for mayor in May.

Valparaiso: Democrats Pamela Schroeder and Hannah Trueblood. Republicans Jon Costas and Art Elwood. Costas, who was Valparaiso's chief executive for 16 years, threw his hat in the ring shortly after Mayor Matt Murphy announced that he would not be seeking another term (NWI Times). During his December launch, Costas



said the city "cannot afford to miss a beat. This is not a time to change horses in the middle of a fast-moving

stream ... proven leadership is necessary now more than ever." Trueblood said she's seen residents and businesses leave the city because they can no longer afford rent. "We're at a tipping point here," Trueblood said, and the city is going in a "direction that's benefiting only a certain number of people and kind of turning a blind eye to everybody else." Hannah Trueblood, who has filed to run as a Democrat, and Art Elwood, who filed as a Republican, said all the new projects coming to Valparaiso are pricing residents out. "We're not even taking care of our own people," Elwood, 67, said. "I didn't think I lived in a rich community." Elwood, who retired from the Valparaiso Fire Department three years ago, said city leaders are not transparent enough. "About a year ago I attended a City Council meeting and I was told I couldn't ask any questions, that we could write a question down and they would get back to us," he recalled. "They (council members) are not accountable to the residents."



West Lafayette:

Democrat Erin Easter. According to Dave Bangert of Based in Lafayette, Republican Mayor John Dennis pushed Easter to run and introduced her at her campaign announcement. There are rumblings about Republicans slating someone after the primary. West Lafayette has been a hard blue since 2016, outside of Dennis, who is Republican in name only. Consider this passage from today's edition of Based in Lafayette, just before Gov. Eric Holcomb gave Dennis a Sagamore:

"Leave us alone," Dennis deadpanned, before launching into a discussion about cooperation and faith in each other in ways that didn't lean on party affiliation. Dennis later said he didn't "understand that horse and elephant thing very much." Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski, a Democrat, reminded him it was donkey for Democrats, not a horse. "Really? It is an elephant, though, right?" Dennis said.

Vincennes: Democrat Mayor Joe Yochum and Michael S Devine. Republican Councilman Timothy Salters and Jack Boger. Mayor Yochum is seeking a fourth term.

Warsaw: Republican Jeff S. Grose. Republican Mayor Joe Thallemer is not seeking a fourth term. City Councilman Grose led Warsaw to the 1984 boys basketball title and was named Mr. Basketball in 1985. He played college basketball at Northwestern University. In announcing his candidacy, Grose said, "If elected, my priorities will include continued infrastructure improvements, excellent service from our public works, police and fire departments, and short- and long-term community planning efforts. I will also strive to encourage



other leaders in our county to work together, establishing a common vision, in order to be more efficient with our tax dollars."

Westfield: Republican Kristen Burkman, Jake Gilbert and Scott Willis. Republican Mayor Andy Cook, who is in his 16th year in office, has announced he won't seek a fifth term (Current in Carmel). Cook said, "I'm in my 16th year as mayor of the city that I love. I've been Westfield's first and only mayor as we have grown from a small farming community into a city of over 50,000, listed by national publications as one of the safest and most desirable places to live in America. I'm very proud of the progress that we've made, but we've got a good field of younger people, and it's time for the next generation to lead Westfield into the future."

Zionsville: Republicans John Stehr and Jane Burgess.

Democrat Mayor Emily Styron, who won by just 88 votes in 2019, is not seeking a second term. Stehr is a former news anchor for WTHR-TV. Burgess is a former Zionsville School Board trustee. Burgess has raised \$70,000 and had a \$52,075 to \$19,614 cash on hand advantage. Stehr shared a three-part comprehensive plan for the next 15 years for the town of Zionsville. "When I set out to run for mayor, I did it with a purpose – I want to make Zionsville more competitive with nearby Central Indiana towns when it comes to economic growth while preserving the charm that is uniquely 'Zionsville,'" Stehr said. "The goals and priorities outlined in my 'Zionsville 2040' plan are how my administration will achieve that purpose" "Each of these priority areas: Public Safety, Growth and Economic Development, and Marketing and Communication, are a reflection of the conversations that I have had with literally thousands of people throughout my campaign so far," Stehr said. "As the campaign continues to progress, I look forward to continuing to share my vision for Zionsville's future and hearing more from my neighbors about the Zionsville they imagine for the next generation."

Uncontested primary races

Batesville: Republican John Irrgang.

Bedford: Republican Sam Craig.

Bluffton: Republican John S. Whicker.

Brazil: Democrat Brian L. Wyndham.

Charlestown: Democrat Mayor Treva Hodges. Republican Ruthie Jackson.

Columbia City: Republican Mayor Ryan L. Daniel.

Crawfordsville: Republican Todd D. Barton.
Crown Point: Democrat Mayor Pete Land. Republican Shirlene C. Olson.

Decatur: Democrat Daniel L. Rickord.

Elkhart: Democrat Mayor Rod Roberson.

Elwood: Democrat Mayor Todd Jones. Republican Ricky Payne.

Frankfort: Republican Mayor Judy Sheets and John Kirby.

Franklin: Republicans Mayor Steve Barnett.

Fishers: Republican Mayor Scott Fadness.

Greencastle: Democrat Brian Cox. Republican Lynda R. Dunbar.

Greenfield: Democrat Nate Anderson. Republicans Tyler Rankins and Guy Titus.

Hammond: Democrat Mayor Thomas M. McDermott, Jr.

Hartford City: Democrat Dustin M. George. Republican Dan Eckstein.

Huntington: Republican Rob Hollinger.

Jasper: Republican Dean M. Vonderheide.

Jeffersonville: Republican Mayor Mike Moore.

Lafayette: Mayor Tony M. Roswarski.

Kokomo: Republican Mayor Tyler C. Moore.

Madison: Republican Mayor Bob G. Courtney. Democrat: Dan Dattilo.

Mishawaka: Republican Mayor Dave Wood.

Monticello: Republican Aaron Sims.

Mount Vernon: Republican Steve Loehr.

Nappanee: Republican Mayor Phil Jenkins.

New Castle: Republican Clay Morgan. Democrat Mayor Greg York.

New Haven: Republican Mayor Steve McMichael.

Noblesville: Republican Mayor Chris Jensen.
North Vernon: Republican Mayor Daniel William Smith, Jr.

Petersburg: Republican R.C. Klipsch.

Princeton: Republican Greg Wright.

Scottsburg: Republican Bill Graham. Democrat Terry Amick.

Sullivan: Democrat J.D. Wilson.

Tell City: Democrat Chris Cail.

Whiting: Democrat Steve Spebar.

Wabash: Republican Mayor Scott Long.

Washington: Democrat David E. Rhoads. Republican Jerry R. Sidebottom. ❖



InDems tout candidates

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Democratic Party touted its slate of mayoral candidates. “We are thrilled to have such a dynamic group of candidates running for mayoral offices across Indiana,” said Mike Schmuhl, Chairman of the Indiana Democratic Party. “These individuals bring a unique set of skills and experiences to their races, and these leaders — among many others as well — are ready to tackle the challenges facing their cities and our state.”

In Carmel, Miles Nelson, a small business owner and the first Democratic city councilor in city history, is running for mayor in the open seat left by the retirement of longtime Mayor Jim Brainard. Democrats have made major inroads in the Indianapolis suburb with Democratic candidates winning the city in 2022 and President Joe Biden winning the “roundabout capital of the world” in 2020.

In Evansville, Stephanie Terry, a current county councilor and executive director of the Children’s Museum of Evansville, announced her campaign for mayor. Incumbent Republican Lloyd Winnecke announced he would not seek a fourth term and has already endorsed a candidate in what will likely be a contentious primary for the Republican nomination.

In West Lafayette, Development Director Erin Easter is running for mayor. At her announcement, Easter was endorsed by current West Lafayette mayor John Dennis, a Republican. ❖

Candidate stampedes coming in 3rd, 5th CDs

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Recent open seat congressional races in Indiana in the 4th and 5th CDs have drawn a stampede of candidates in the dozen range. Expect similar crowds in the seats being vacated by U.S. Reps. Jim Banks and Victoria Spartz.



Spartz stunned the Hoosier political establishment last Friday when she announced she would not seek reelection in the 5th CD or run for the open U.S. Senate seat, appearing to clear the way for Banks to ascend to the nomination now that Mitch Daniels is out of the

picture.

For Spartz, it was another instance of erratic behavior, ranging from an IndyStar interview shortly after she was elected in 2020 in which she suggested she might go to grad school, to Politico reporting she was the worst boss in Capitol Hill, to her crashing Ukraine Codels while feuding with the staff of Ukraine President Zelensky.

Spartz said in a statement, "It's been my honor representing Hoosiers in the Indiana State Senate and U.S. Congress and I appreciate the strong support on the ground. 2024 will mark seven years of holding elected office and over a decade in Republican politics. I won a lot of tough battles for the people and will work hard to win a few more in the next two years. However, being a working mom is tough and I need to spend more time with my two high school girls back home, so I will not run for any office in 2024."

At a Saturday town hall in Kokomo, Spartz added, "I've prioritized politics for such a long time, and I have two girls, two very independent ladies in high school, and I just want to spend a little more time with them. It's an important time for them ... and sometimes it's good to pull back from politics."

According to informed and reliable 5th CD sources those putting feelers out include State Sen. Scott Baldwin, State Reps. Chuck Goodrich and Chris Jeter, former state senators John Ruckelshaus and Mike Delph, Madison County Prosecutor Rodney Cummings, Hamilton County



Republican Chairman Mario Massillamany, Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen, 2020 candidate Beth Henderson, Danny Lopez, Gurinder Singh, Micah Beckwith, Boone County Council President Elise Nieshalla and Megan Savage, a former aide to U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks.

Ruckelshaus told HPI that he is considering a political comeback in the now-open 5th CD. "We are taking a long, very serious look at CD5," Ruckelshaus said on Sunday. The Anderson Herald Bulletin's Ken de la Bastide reports that Madison County Prosecutor Rodney Cummings is strongly considering a campaign for the Congressional nomination. Ruckelshaus told HPI, "I am very concerned about the fiscal shape of American and the tenor (or lack thereof) and tone of the public discourse. If America is to survive, we all have to work together against our common threats. Apologies for the perceived talking points, but I believe this to my core."

Ruckelshaus was defeated for reelection in 2020 by now Sen. Fady Qaddoura.

Massillamany told HPI that he is being encouraged by conservatives to consider a bid. "You're going to need between \$1 million and \$1.5 million to run," he said. "The real question is who is not running. Club for Growth will be an important factor.

Club for Growth President David McIntosh ran and lost to Susan Brooks in 2012. He then openly backed Spartz in 2020, spending more than \$1 million for polling and TV ads, helping her forge a 40% plurality to win.

In the 3rd CD, names that are surfacing include former congressman Marlin Stutzman, who vacated the seat to unsuccessfully run for the U.S. Senate in 2016, State Sens. Andy Zay and Liz Brown, Mike Felker of Warsaw, 2011 Fort Wayne mayoral nominee Matt Kelty, 2019 Fort Wayne mayoral nominee Tim Smith, and former three-term Fort Wayne mayor Paul Helmke. Others mention Kosciusko farmer Kip Tom as a potential candidate.

Helmke told HPI on Wednesday, "I've had a few people encourage me to run. Probably unlikely for a number of good reasons, but I've long thought that I should never say never in politics. I've always disliked looking past municipal elections (when I ran for this Congressional seat in 1980, I waited till after the city elections to announce) but I'll keep an eye on things for now and consider my options as things move forward."

Helmke lost a U.S. Senate race to Evan Bayh in 1998 and a 2002 primary challenge to U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. He later headed the Brady Organization and now heads a civics program at Indiana University at Bloomington.

Kelty, a former aide to U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, was a fiasco candidate in 2011, while Smith lost to Mayor Tom Henry in landslide fashion in 2019.

Felker said he has established his committee,

Felker for Congress. A native Hoosier who lives and works in Warsaw, Felker has been employed as a maintenance technician for 17 years in the orthopedic industry. He retired from the U.S. Army National Guard after 20 years with two combat deployments in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

U.S. Senate

Banks picks up more endorsements

U.S. Rep. Banks appears to be consolidating his efforts to win the GOP nomination. U.S. Rep. Greg Pence endorsed him, saying, "Jim Banks is a fellow veteran and champion in the House for our shared conservative values. Throughout our time in Congress Jim has always voted to protect the unborn and earned his reputation as one of the most consistent pro-life voices in our delegation. Jim can help give Indiana's service members what they need to succeed on the battlefield and the support they need when they come home. I know Jim will always be a conservative voice for Indiana in the Senate, and I'm proud to endorse him."

U.S. Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) also endorsed Banks. "Jim Banks is a conservative's conservative," Barrasso said. "He volunteered to serve our country in war. As a Congressman, he took on China. Now, he's raising his hand to serve Indiana and our country in the U.S. Senate. Jim Banks will help build a conservative firewall in the Senate that will put the brakes on far-left policies that are hurting Americans. I'm supporting Jim Banks for U.S. Senate."

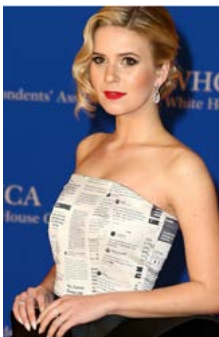
Governor

Braun speaks at Evansville meeting

Evansville Regional Economic Partnership held a chamber round-table on Monday (WFIE-TV). U.S. Sen. Mike Braun of Indiana attended the event and spoke on the state's infrastructure and ongoing initiatives, such as the I-69 Ohio River Crossing Project connecting Henderson and Evansville through I-69. Braun says infrastructure is vital, because the economy can't move forward without it. Part of the project calls for one of the twin bridges to be closed, but Braun says he's pushing for both to remain open. "If our existing bridges aren't ready for demolition, which they're not, we need to keep both of them open, in addition to the new bridge," says Braun. "If we don't do that, we're going to be short-sighted."

Doden comms director was a Disney star

Fort Wayne governor candidate Eric Doden announced the hiring of Caroline Sunshine — a former Disney Channel star — as his press secretary and communications director (Capital Chronicle). He



is one of three Republicans in the 2024 race for governor. Sunshine is best known for her role as Tinka Hessenheffer opposite Zendaya and Bella Thorne on the Disney Channel dancing show "Shake it Up," which ran from 2010-2013, according to The Wrap. She previously worked as a press assistant at the White House under former President Donald Trump, and also completed an internship there.

Local

House panel approves partisan school boards

Indiana Republicans forged ahead Wednesday with a proposal that would upend the current nonpartisan school board elections across the state despite opponents arguing the change would further inject politics into local schools (AP). The Indiana House elections committee voted 6-4 along party lines to endorse a bill to establish a system allowing a decision by each of the state's nearly 300 school districts on whether to require candidates to declare a political party. Each district's decision would be made through either a voter referendum or school board vote. It would be up to those votes whether candidates would be required to win a party's May primary in order to appear on the November general election ballot.

2024 presidential

Jill Biden coming to Valpo next week

The White House announced Wednesday that Jill Biden, first lady of the United States, is scheduled to travel to Valparaiso Feb. 17 ([NWI Times](#)). The lifelong educator is expected during her visit to highlight the Biden administration's commitment to strengthening the economy and building pathways to good-paying jobs through career-connected learning. Additional details about the time, location and public access to the first lady's Valparaiso event were not immediately released by the White House.

Biden seeks Florida opening

With an eye toward the 2024 campaign, President Joe Biden on Thursday ventures to Florida, a state defined by its growing retiree population and status as the unofficial headquarters of the modern-day Republican Party (AP). The president sees a chance to use Social Security and Medicare to drive a wedge between GOP lawmakers and their base of older voters who rely on these government programs for income and health insurance. Biden is trying to lay the groundwork for an expected reelection campaign announcement this spring. After delivering his State of the Union address on Tuesday, Biden on Wednesday went to Wisconsin. "All of you have been paying into the system every single paycheck you've had since you started working," Biden said. "These benefits belong to you, the American worker. You earned it. And I will not allow anyone to cut them. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever, period." ❖

Daniels would have governed, not fought

By JACK COLWELL
South Bend Tribune

SOUTH BEND – Mitch Daniels would have gone to the Senate to govern, not to fight. And that’s why Daniels isn’t going to the Senate.



We know now that the former two-term governor, who went on to serve as Purdue president for a decade, with acclaim in both challenging positions, won’t run for an open Senate seat next year.

If Daniels had run in the state where he was so popular, a favorite of Hoosier Republicans for president, would he have won the GOP nomination for the Senate?

Doubtful. But maybe, after a bruising fight in which Daniels would have been unarmed if he continued as he did in his governor races to disdain negative campaigning.

Our man Mitch wouldn’t go to Washington to fight the way Marjorie Taylor Greene did during the State of the Union address.

Since his days of such popularity as governor, of stressing what government should do rather than what he could do to destroy the rival political tribe, Indiana has become Trumpiana. Donald Trump won the state twice. Big. And he still has solid support among the Indiana Republicans who vote in primaries.

That base wants a real Trumpster for the Senate, not somebody like Daniels, who back in 2010 actually suggested a truce for “a little while” in fighting over social issues in order to focus on the budget. He is a traditional fiscal conservative, something Trump was not as president.

Attacks on Daniels began as soon as he started to ponder a Senate race.

Donald Trump Jr. sent this salvo, replicated all over social media: “The establishment is trying to recruit weak RINO (Republican in name only) Mitch Daniels to run for US Senate in Indiana. The same Mitch Daniels who agreed with Joe Biden that millions of MAGA Republicans are supposedly a danger to the country

& trying to ‘subvert democracy.’ He would be Mitt Romney 2.0.”

The Club for Growth, which allocates large funding for conservative Republican candidates, joined in, calling Daniels an “old guard Republican clinging to the old ways of the bad old days.”

The organization promised to spend whatever it took to keep Daniels from winning the Senate nomination.

The choice of former President Trump and the Club for Growth is Congressman Jim Banks from Indiana’s 3rd District.

As columnist Niki Kelly wrote in the Indiana Capital Chronicle, “You can’t run to the right of Banks.” Impossible to get farther right.

And Banks fits the bill for a fighter, combative in support of the former president and stressing that he would go to the Senate to “fight back against radical Democratic policies.” He told the Associated Press that Republican primary voters want “a conservative fighter, someone to go to Washington and fight for Hoosier family values and against the radical, socialist and woke agenda that Democrats are pushing in Washington.” He does lack the style in the spotlight of Marjorie Taylor Greene.

After meetings with senators in Washington, Daniels told Politico, “I’m not the least bit worried, honestly, about losing an election. I’m worried about winning it and regretting it for six years.”

His career in business, government and academe involved action jobs, he noted, “with at least the chance to do useful things every day.” He worried whether he was well-suited for the Senate, where seniority remains important. And stalemate and fighting top the agenda.

So, he will do something other than engaging in an ugly primary fight for the right to spend six years in Washington, with stalemate and fighting on the agenda.

Banks appears almost certain now to win the Republican nomination and then the Senate seat.

Could Daniels have won? We’ll never know. But Mitch made the right decision for him. He moves on, with a solid place in state history, with integrity intact and with useful service ahead somewhere. ❖



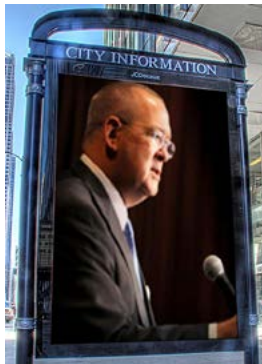
Exhibit A on why Mitch Daniels didn’t run for the U.S. Senate. This is Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance looking for that Chinese spy balloon.

Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.

HB1004 would restrict hospital monopolies

By **MICHAEL J. HICKS**

MUNCIE – Indiana’s hospital industry is among the most monopolized in the United States, with several federal healthcare regions facing no competition. The wholly predictable result is that prices for routine medical procedures are among the highest in the world. Not surprisingly, tax filings with the IRS reveal that Indiana’s



not-for-profit hospitals are among the most profitable businesses in the United States. To be fair, they tell an entirely different story in press releases and to reporters.

I’ll let you judge to whom they are telling the truth.

One result of this monopolization is that Hoosiers pay lot more for most common medical procedures. A whopping 97% of outpatient visits to the six biggest

hospital systems are charged rates that are above the national average. Dozens of studies, from think tanks, universities and consultants have reported these facts. The most recent study, commissioned by the Indiana legislature, was performed by some of the world’s best healthcare economists at UC Berkeley. They report not merely higher prices, but that hospital system mergers caused price increases of almost 20% for local residents.

The monopolization of Indiana’s healthcare industry is so extensive that the six biggest hospital systems are no longer really hospital systems. They are in fact, diverse conglomerates that have acquired so many physician practices, clinics and outpatient services that no new hospital system can enter the market. In the jargon of anti-trust economics, it is one of the most extensive examples of ‘vertical integration’ since the Gilded Age monopolies.

These conglomerates are so lucrative that just last year, one of them made a nearly half-billion-dollar donation to Indiana University to mask its profits and still was more profitable than Walmart. In a typical year, these firms together deliver more than \$2 billion or more to investment funds. These not-for-profit firms are shoveling money to Wall Street and tax havens in the Caribbean. In the last year before COVID, Indiana’s hospital profits alone accounted for a whopping 27% of all the state’s economic growth.

If this decade is as lucrative as the last 10 years, these “hospitals” will generate more money in investment income than they do providing healthcare. This will force them to change their industrial classification from hospitals to financial investment firms. This outflow of income has slowed the Hoosier economy and made access to medical care more difficult for everyone. Indeed, part of the reason

Hoosiers are less healthy than average Americans is that accessing medical care is prohibitively expensive.

Fortunately, the General Assembly has legislation that will go a long way in restoring competitive prices in Indiana healthcare. Though I think Indiana’s large hospital systems should still fear anti-trust litigation, these bills should be an easy vote for legislators. In my reading of the proposed laws, they do two big things to reduce the negative effects of hospital monopolies.

First, HB1004 makes it far more difficult for hospital monopolies to prevent competition from other providers. The legislation ends non-compete clauses that force out physicians from rural communities and make opening a new clinic impossible in most markets. These non-compete clauses are a textbook example of artificial barriers to entry. The legislation also prevents hospitals from charging higher facility fees for doctors’ visits, and they prohibit contracts that force physicians to steer patients to in-network clinics.

These laws also provide a tax incentive for new healthcare providers and ban the practice of hospital systems dictating medical care guidelines to their physicians. Altogether, these laws provide a huge step towards dismantling the monopolies that’ve been built up over the past decade. But, the really important parts are the price benchmarks for the industry.

Hoosiers pay much more for medical care than the average American. In some markets, like Fort Wayne, consumers pay more than 50% more for many procedures than do average Americans. HB1004 would set a benchmark at the average national price for all procedures. Hospitals that charge more than the national average will face a financial penalty.

Faithful readers will know that I am a free market economist. I am deeply uncomfortable with government interfering in free markets. However, Indiana’s hospital monopolies are not remotely free markets. Ignoring these monopolies violates the core principles of free market advocates.

Indiana has six large hospital systems and dozens of smaller independent hospitals. Among the large network systems are plentiful evidence of monopolies. Among the smaller independent hospitals, the reverse is true. The independent hospitals actually charge less for procedures in places with less competition. That’s the intent behind the not-for-profit legislation. So, HB1004 treats system and independent providers differently, as it should.

The legislature has approached this problem deliberately, focusing on developing a good understanding of the many issues surrounding hospital monopolies. They’ve patiently waited for four very detailed think tank studies of individual pricing patterns in hospitals. They have collected studies from other academic research centers, think tanks and advocacy groups on all sides. They kept getting the same answer; the hospital monopolies are the immediate problem.

The General Assembly even asked the industry to

develop its own path towards more competitive pricing. The industry ignored that simple request. One reason they can so easily snub the legislature is that hospital monopolies are the most powerful industry in Indiana. They make billions in profits, hire dozens of lobbyists and flood their local boards with university and not-for-profit leaders. It even turns out that IRS filings on donations by hospitals to local groups reveals an uncomfortable overlap with board members. One might go so far as to speculate that board members find it hard to raise difficult questions about hospital pricing, knowing how much their groups depend on these ill-gotten gains.

The legislature's attempt to address widespread monopolies are too important to fall victim to the power of the hospital lobby. There are other issues that must also be addressed. We can make insurance markets more competitive and do more to make pharmacy pricing more transparent. We consumers need to be more in-

involved in our healthcare, including choosing physicians and hospitals with an eye on price as well as quality. However, without first addressing hospital monopolies, none of these steps are possible.

There's no perfect solution to the problem of hospital monopolies. It took more than a decade for this problem to clobber us, and the legislature has been working hard for several years to come up with this solution. Other states have wrestled with these monopolies. Some used the courts, others used single-payer systems. Indiana's plan is the best, most market-friendly plan I've seen. It needs to pass this year. ❖

Michael J. Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.

Forget the recession

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — It's 2023. The candidates are lined up to become or remain mayors of Indiana cities. There will be primaries where these primates have contests within their respective parties. Some good people and some ridiculous bipeds will be nominated for the November elections.



What's going to happen between now and then? If the incumbent mayor is running for reelection, your favorite pothole will be repaired. Yes, that pothole you dodge eastbound on that very busy street, it will be filled, flush with the surface around it.

If the incumbent is not running, an 8 p.m. candlelight vigil will be held hole-side by the candidate from the "out" party to bemoan the condition allowed to desecrate your neighborhood by the out-going administration.

Likewise, if the incumbent is not running, the candidate of the "in" party will hold a fiesta at the site, complete with a mariachi band to celebrate the placement of that very pothole atop the priority list when said candidate achieves office.

Similar events will take place where street lights have been burned out or gunned into submission by neighborhood juvenile or adult miscreants. Electric service will be interrupted during the hottest days of July and August as the utility clamps down on usage in order to obtain higher rates for "imperative repairs" occasioned by global warming. Your gas stove will be temporarily without fuel

as the gas executives hold a pity-party for their beloved natural product.

In the next few weeks you must get your priorities aligned with the candidates' priorities. Take your cell phone with you. Make sure, when you leave the presence of the sacrificial lamb, you have a selfie with the candidate and a recording of the response to your pleading for action.

Make copies of this documentation. Distribute those copies to like-minded neighbors, the surviving local news media, and put one copy in a bank safe deposit vault, if your bank still offers such service.

Why are Indiana streets still in need of repair? The current administration will tell you the state legislature is ruled by ruralcrats who discriminate against urban areas of all sizes. That is the truth.

In addition, your local public works chief will point out the bureaucratic nightmare of getting approval for all repairs from the Board of Denial, that agency in your town which is in constant dysfunctional disorder because it must interact with private sector contractors.

Where local government employees are the maintenance crews, the problem lies with the dyspeptic union leaders and their psychologically impaired followers who refuse to work for incentive pay. Such pay, they consider, is an insult to the dignity of labor where each worker has such pride of achievement that bribing them is repugnant. Now if we could find companies that reject state and local bribes in site selection. ❖

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

The shocking decline of Senate ticket splitting

By **J. MILES COLEMAN**

CHARLOTTSVILLE, Va. – Last week, when we put out our first look at the 2024 Senate map, we issued a rare rating: We started an incumbent off as an underdog. Specifically, we put the West Virginia contest in the Leans Republican category. Though Sen. Joe Manchin has not officially announced his plans, the reality is that any Democrat, even as one as successful as Manchin, faces a daunting challenge in West Virginia.

Some of Manchin's worries are state-specific. One of the (several) unexpected success stories for national Democrats last year was their showing in state legislative races: They gained governmental trifectas in several states and held their own in the overall state legislative seat count across the nation. But the Democratic floor continued to sink in West Virginia. In the state legislature, Republicans now hold an astonishing 88 seats in the 100-member state House and 31 of 34 state Senate seats. When Manchin first entered office as governor, after the 2004 elections, Republicans only held about a third of the seats in the legislature.

But, as we have discussed in previous articles, there has been a larger trend driving recent elections for Senate: realignment along presidential lines. Between the 2016 and 2020 Senate elections, only one state, Maine, voted for presidential and Senate candidates of opposite parties. Though this trend would obviously imperil Manchin, Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Jon Tester (D-MT), if they seek reelection, also will run in states that Donald Trump or the eventual GOP nominee will likely carry, although neither states has become as ruby red as West Virginia (Brown says he will run again, Tester has not yet announced).

But, if Manchin were to run again -- and win -- how much of an exception to the recent trend would he be? Assuming West Virginia votes for the GOP nominee by roughly 40 points, as it did in 2016 and 2020, a Manchin win would surely be predicated on a high level of crossover support.

We've gone back through the six most recent presidential elections examining that question. The short answer is that in the Senate of the early 2000s, 40-point or more overperformances actually occurred with some regularity. Even in 2012, Manchin himself posted such a showing. But since 2016, no major party senatorial nominee has run more than 25 points ahead of their party's presidential nominee.

So a 40-point overperformance would be a massive outlier in today's electoral environment. But even loosening our criteria somewhat, even a 10-point overper-

formance -- in the ballpark of what Brown or Tester likely will need to win -- would be something of a rarity. Table 1 goes back to 2000 and tracks how many senators performed at least 10 points better than their party's presidential nominee.

In both 2000 and 2004, about 70% of Senate races featured a difference of 10 or more percentage points in margin compared to the top of the ticket. But by the Obama era, that number hovered around 50%. As straight-party a year as 2016 was, Table 1 shows that 2020 was actually more so in some ways: Though no states actually produced a split-ticket outcome, more than a third of the Senate races featured a double-digit difference with the presidential race. But by 2020, just 3 Senate races did -- meaning that more than 90% of the total

Senate races had a 2-party margin within 10 points of their respective state's presidential race.

With that, we'll look at each presidential cycle since 2000 and identify the top overperformers.

2000

2000 saw six incumbent senators, three from each party, run 30 points or more ahead of their presidential nominee. By the late 1990s, New England had emerged as a Democratic-leaning region in presidential politics. Between the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections, most New England states swung to then-President Bill Clinton by double-digits. Many of Clinton's gains stuck in 2000, as his then-Vice President, Al Gore, carried five of the region's six states -- Gore only barely missed out on New Hampshire, making him the most recent Democratic nominee to lose a New England state. But in the 2000 Senate elections, the region's traditional affinity for moderate Republicans was still evident down the ballot. In Vermont, Republican Jim Jeffords won a final term by running 55% ahead of then-candidate George Bush's showing in the Green Mountain State. Citing the GOP's increasingly conservative direction, Jeffords became a Democratic-caucusing independent less than a year into his new term -- Jeffords's switch gave Democrats control of the Senate for much of the 107th Congress.

The top 3 overperformers on the Democratic side were all long-tenured incumbents with popular local brands. Though Bush's 52%-46% victory in West Virginia came as a surprise on Election Night, Mountain State voters remained overwhelmingly loyal to Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd -- a fiddler who was first elected in 1958, he was known for steering resources to his state and was something of a folk hero. Byrd took nearly 80% of the vote. Manchin currently holds Byrd's seat. In North Dakota, a small state that lends itself well to retail politicking, Sen. Kent Conrad (D) first won a Senate seat in 1986 and won comfortably in the pro-GOP 1994 cycle (he had effectively switched seats in 1992). Republicans seemed to feel Conrad was too entrenched to defeat. Finally, Mas-



sachusetts's Ted Kennedy, with his seniority and golden surname, easily dispatched a scandal-plagued Republican.

2004

As the 21st century got underway, voters' ticket-splitting habits began to wane. In 2004, Bush, then an incumbent, ran well in the South and his coattails helped Republicans flip 5 open Senate seats there. Bush's 60%-38% showing in South Dakota also helped topple then-Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D) in a squeaker. But, in 2004, there were still over half a dozen senators who ran 30 points or more ahead of their party's presidential nominees.

In Arizona, the late Sen. John McCain (R) was at the peak of his popularity. After running against Bush for the GOP presidential nomination in 2000, the two Republicans had buried the hatchet. McCain's credentials as a "maverick" on some issues, most notably campaign finance, likely helped his crossover appeal. He took over three-quarters of the vote against weak opposition. In Iowa, Sen. Chuck Grassley's (R) annual 99-county trips around the state had made him a political institution in the state.

For 2004, a North Dakota Democrat again makes the list of top overperformers. Sen. Byron Dorgan had represented North Dakota in Congress since the 1980 election: as the farm crisis hurt Republicans electorally in the region that decade, Dorgan was always reelected with massive margins. He made the jump to the Senate in 1992. Hawaii's Dan Inouye was in much the same category as Byrd in 2000: Though Bush performed well for a Republican in the state, the senator's seniority paid electoral dividends. In Indiana, Sen. Evan Bayh, one of the chamber's key moderate Democrats, comfortably won a second term.

One other notable overperformer in 2004 was not an incumbent – Barack Obama easily won his first and only term in the Senate in Illinois against carpetbagging conservative activist Alan Keyes, who had replaced a previous, scandal-plagued nominee. In fact, Obama turned in the largest overperformance of any non-incumbent during the 2000 to 2020 timespan.

2008

In 2008, Democrats had an undeniably strong cycle – they were aided by then-candidate Obama's voter mobilization efforts and a pervading anti-George W. Bush sentiment.

Though Democrats tried to tie Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins to the outgoing president, New England ticket-splitting was again on display. Democratic Rep. Tom Allen, who represented the Portland-based 1st District, made the Iraq War a central issue of the campaign. But Collins had cultivated an image as a parochial, bipartisan senator. On the campaign trail, she could point to high ratings from usually liberal-leaning groups: in 2007, she had a perfect score with the League of Conservation Voters, for

example. Collins won a third term with over 60% as Obama carried Maine comfortably. In Tennessee and Wyoming, Sens. Lamar Alexander and Mike Enzi were veteran office-holders in overwhelmingly red states. The biggest overperformer in 2008 was Montana's Max Baucus. .

2012

In 2012, with Obama successfully running for reelection, some of the biggest overperformers in the Senate were actually losers. In Hawaii, Republicans ran their strongest candidate, former Gov. Linda Lingle. The Senate contest turned into a rematch of sorts: Rep. Mazie Hirono (D, HI-2) emerged from the Democratic primary -- she had lost the 2002 gubernatorial race to Lingle 52%-47%. But the difference in the outcome was a prime illustration of the differences between state-level and federal races. Obama carried his native state by over 40 points for a second time, helping Hirono to a 25-point win. In Massachusetts, Sen. Scott Brown won a come-from-behind special election victory in 2010 to replace the late Ted Kennedy -- his Democratic opponent ran a lazy campaign and Brown's image as pickup truck-driving everyman fit the moment. In 2012, Brown was initially ahead in polls and cast himself as an independent Republican. But Democrats consolidated behind law professor Elizabeth Warren, who fundraised well. Warren pulled ahead by the end of the campaign to beat Brown 54%-46%. Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker would have won easily in most

The biggest overperformer, from either side, in 2012 was actually Joe Manchin. In 2010, he was initially expected to waltz into Byrd's old seat in a special election but got something of a scare from businessman John Raese, who pulled ahead in some polls. But Manchin took advantage of Raese's gaffes and won by a larger-than-expected 10 points.

Finally, Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill seemed to have a tough race for a second term in her red-trending state. In September, a poll from SurveyUSA showed her trailing the newly-minted GOP nominee, Todd Akin, by a 51%-40% margin. But shortly afterwards, Akin made his infamous "legitimate rape" comment when he was asked about abortion -- Akin's comment was roundly denounced and he became something of a pariah.

2016

When political analysts discuss the types of gains that Donald Trump made in 2016 over Mitt Romney's 2012 showing, much of the attention, rightfully, goes to several marginal states bordering the Great Lakes. But the state that swung hardest to Trump that year was actually just west of that region: North Dakota. Indeed, things were so tough for North Dakota Democrats in 2016 that, in some of the races for lower statewide offices, Libertarians performed better than Democrats. After being elected three times as governor, Republican John Hoeven won Dorgan's open Senate seat in 2010. ❖

John Krull, Statehouse File: Words matter to Mitch Daniels. The just-retired Purdue University president and former Indiana governor took pride in penning his speeches and other pieces of writing that bore his name. He wanted to be able to own what he said and have what he said matter. That's why it would be a mistake to stop reading his statement announcing he would not run for the U.S. Senate in 2024 after the first sentence, which said: "After what I hope was adequate reflection, I've decided not to become a candidate for the U.S. Senate." The reason one should keep reading the announcement is that it offers, in polite language, a searing indictment of Daniels' own Republican Party in particular and the current American political scene in general.



Daniels builds his argument by referring to the leader once considered the secular saint of the GOP. Ronald Reagan. Daniels notes that Reagan observed that two kinds of people run for office – those who want to be somebody and those who want to do something. Daniels makes clear that he sees himself in the latter category – of people who want to get things done. Then, in an eloquent section, he spells out exactly what he would have liked to accomplish. I'm going to quote from it at length because the words matter. The truth always does. "Had I chosen to compete, given my age, I would have done so on an explicitly one-term basis. I would have returned any unspent campaign funds to their donors, closed any political accounts, and devoted six years to causes I think critical to the long-term safety and prosperity of our country.

"These issues include saving the safety net programs, so that we can keep promises we have made to older and vulnerable Americans and avoid a terrible national crisis of confidence and betrayal; in so doing, to avoid crushing our economy and today's younger citizens with the unpayable debts we are on course to leave them; to confront firmly the aggression of a would-be superpower who holds in contempt the values of personal freedom and individual dignity central to our national success and our view of a just society; to secure our borders without depriving the nation of the talent and energy that grateful immigrants can bring.

"And I would have tried to work on these matters in a way that might soften the harshness and personal vitriol that has infected our public square, rendering it not only repulsive to millions of Americans, but also less capable of effective action to meet our threats and seize our opportunities." Several things stand out about these paragraphs. The first is that the issues Daniels prioritizes are ones upon which Americans used to agree. Likely, most of us still do. We want to care for and protect the vulnerable, defend freedom and the human spirit and establish a sane and just path for good people eager to build better lives

for themselves and their families to pursue the American dream. Our disagreements in the past generally have been about how we should reach these goals, not about the goals themselves. We have quarreled about means, not ends. That's no longer the case. The second thing is that Daniels believes the social contract that holds this country together is imperiled. When he talks about keeping promises and avoiding crises of confidence and betrayal, he's making a case – an irrefutable one – that the political games we're playing with the debt ceiling and other fundamental commitments to the American people are undermining the foundations of the nation. The last point is more implied than overtly stated. Daniels isn't running because he doesn't think his political party and this nation's political culture are interested in solving, rather than exploiting, problems. Therefore, serving in the U.S. Senate would be a waste of his time. ❖

Niki Kelly, Capital Chronicle: Indiana appears poised for the unfathomable: an unopposed Republican primary for an open U.S. Senate seat. With current Sen. Mike Braun deciding to run for governor in 2024, a competitive Senate primary was expected to include a host of big-name Hoosier politicians. Instead, Third District Congressman Jim Banks appears to have cleared the field in only a few weeks – reeling in key endorsements including former President Donald Trump and getting crucial donors on board. The (possible) last domino fell on Tuesday when former Gov. Mitch Daniels announced he would not run. Moments later, the powerful National Republican Senatorial Committee – and its formidable coffers – backed Banks. And moderate Republicans around the state – call them Lugar or Daniels Republicans – sighed in frustration. You can't run to the right of Banks. So, the only hope is a candidate more in the middle of the party. But that doesn't seem to be in the cards. To put this in perspective, since 1976 – when direct primaries were implemented – there has never been an uncontested GOP primary for an open Senate seat. In 1998, Paul Helmke defeated John Price; in 2010 Dan Coats bested four GOP opponents; and in 2016 Todd Young beat then-Congressman Marlin Stutzman. The open governor's seat – Gov. Eric Holcomb is term-limited – is attracting more attention than the Senate. For instance, businessman and Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers could occupy a lane that Banks doesn't in a Senate race but has shown interest only in a governor's bid. Holcomb is an interesting possibility. He has been mum on his future. On one hand, we know he had an interest in the Senate because he was originally running for it in 2016 before dropping out and becoming Lt. Governor shortly after. But his COVID-19 measures and veto of the transgender sports bill have cost him Republican support. ❖

Rokita under investigation

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita is being investigated by the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission and is paying a Washington, D.C., law firm to defend him, according to a petition filed Feb. 2 by his office's outside counsel, Schaerr Jaffe ([Indiana Citizen](#)). Gene Schaerr, managing partner of the law firm, filed the petition with the Supreme Court asking for temporary admission so he can represent Indiana in the case Rokita brought before the medical licensing board against Indianapolis OB/GYN Caitlin Bernard. He also acknowledges that he has filed a similar petition to appear before the disciplinary commission in the grievance against Rokita. The Schaerr firm's petition is the first public acknowledgement that grievances filed by several Indiana attorneys stemming from Rokita's critical statements in July 2022 about Bernard — who performs abortions — are being seriously investigated by the disciplinary commission. The petition does not identify the reason for the investigation. However, the citation to the commission's case — In the Matter of the July 27, 2022 Grievance Against Theodore K. Rokita — indicates the investigation is linked to the attorney general's public comments about Bernard.



4 newspapers get reprieve

ELWOOD — CherryRoad Media has agreed to assume the operations of the Elwood Call-Leader, Alexandria Times-Tribune, and Tipton County Tribune from Elwood Publishing Company. The Tribune-Leader Review, a free publication, will also continue to publish. It had been announced last week that all four publications would be shutting down. This

announcement means that subscribers will continue to receive their newspapers and advertising will continue to run as scheduled. Brian Barnes, vice president of Elwood Publishing Company, said, "I am very excited today for the Elwood, Tipton and Alexandria communities. You all are in good hands with CherryRoad Media."

2nd shot Mitchell officer now home

MITCHELL (AP) — The second of two southern Indiana police officers shot during a weekend traffic stop has been released from a hospital, a local sheriff said Wednesday (AP). Mitchell Police Officer Christian Anderson was released from IU Health Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, Lawrence County Sheriff Greg Day said. The other wounded officer, Lawrence County Sheriff's Deputy Joshua Rhoades, left a hospital Sunday.

Teacher firearm training advances

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana lawmakers on Wednesday advanced a bill that seeks to provide state-funded firearms training for school personnel — including teachers (Smith, [Capital Chronicle](#)). Bill author Rep. Jim Lucas, R-Seymour, said the proposal serves as a response to deadly mass shootings at schools across the country. The bill would reallocate funding from the Indiana Safe Schools fund — and others like it — for optional firearms instruction for school employees. It additionally provides state dollars for counseling services for students, teachers, school staff and employees in the event of a school shooting. "What we've seen consistent throughout all of these school shootings is just a massive breakdown. And not just school policy — police tactics, communications, open doors left in schools where shooters can walk through, and of these are all human mistakes," Lucas said. "The purpose of this bill is to train teachers and staff

— that volunteer and want to have the ability to defend themselves — a chance to survive."

House advances police buffer bill

INDIANAPOLIS — House lawmakers on Wednesday easily advanced a bill creating a buffer zone around officers conducting arrests — and making it a crime to breach the zone ([Capital Chronicle](#)). The smooth proceedings contrasted with contentious discussion on the same topic in an interim study committee. House Bill 1186 says that people who "knowingly or intentionally" get within 25 feet of law enforcement officers doing their jobs would commit "unlawful encroachment on an investigation" if the officers have asked them to back off. The new crime would be a Class C misdemeanor. "If there's something that we can do [for] preventing that escalation, preventing the officer from being touched by someone who's not even involved in the situation, I hope that this bill is the one to do it," author Wendy McNamara, R-Evansville, told the House Courts and Criminal Code Committee. Zach Stock of the Indiana Public Defender Council said that Indiana already has laws police officers can use to push bystanders back.

Transgender prison surgery ban passes

INDIANAPOLIS — Transgender people would be banned from getting gender-affirming surgery while they're in state prisons under legislation approved by a House committee Wednesday ([Indiana Public Media](#)). The bill, HB 1569, defines what it calls "sexual reassignment surgery" as procedures meant to alter the appearance of or affirm the patient's "perception" of their gender as being different from their gender assigned at birth. Aaron Craft is the civil appeals section chief with the Indiana attorney general's office. He said legal precedent allows the state to ban such surgeries for people in the prison system.