



## Chairman Hupfer's era was historic

Current GOP dominance eclipsed the Durnil years; Holcomb tabs Hathaway

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Kyle Hupfer is, arguably, the most successful major party chairman in Indiana history.

When it comes to straight tenure, the late Indiana Republican Chairman Gordon Durnil had the helm for eight years under Gov. Robert D. Orr. The Indiana congressional delegation was held by the Democrats during four of those years.

Compare that to out-going Indiana Republican Chairman Hupfer, who announced last week he will be stepping down to join the Brad Chambers gubernatorial campaign.

During Hupfer's tenure, Hoosier Republicans never lost a constitutional Statehouse office. There were



four consecutive General Assembly supermajorities (and six overall), while under Durnil the GOP House majority topped out at 63 seats twice. And in his final election as chair, Democrat Evan Bayh was elected and the Indiana House split 50/50.

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## Wither the Hoosier press

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Wither the press.

It used to be the roar of the presses, and the whine of the newsroom. These days, silence is coming across the Fourth Estate like a midnight frost.

Look no further than the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association (IDEA). Founded in 1881, it was a network of mostly weekly newspapers that would gather at the French Lick Springs Hotel the last weekend in August to discuss the issues of the day facing the industry and the republic, along with some traditionally heavy drinkin'. It counted as presidents State Sen. Robert Presley O'Bannon and his son, Gov. Frank O'Bannon, both publishers of the Corydon Democrat.



**“I don’t know why you assume Donald Trump will be convicted of these crimes. That is the difference between you and me. If I am president, we’ll give fair consideration to any pardon request.”**

- Mike Pence, at the Fox News GOP debate, on whether he would pardon Donald Trump

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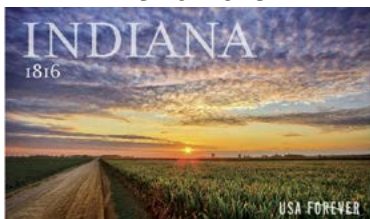
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**Jack E. Howey**  
editor emeritus  
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Last weekend, Hoosier Democrats gathered at the venerable hotel, as did the IDEA. Its membership, according to Crothersville Times Publisher Curt Kovener, is down to a dozen members and just two newspapers.

**"As best I can tell** there had been around 60," Kovener said of the number of weekly newspapers which are members. He met with The Shoals News publisher Steve Deckard on the hotel veranda, two of a vanishing breed. "A few are local mom and pops like Deckard and I. Others are owned by out-of-state chains like Active Interest Media, CNHI, Gannett and Paxon Media."

More than 1,400 cities and towns across the U.S. have lost a newspaper over the past 15 years, according to an Associated Press analysis of data compiled by the University of North Carolina. The total estimated weekday circulation of U.S. daily newspapers was 55.8 million in 2000 and dropped to 24.2 million by 2020, according to Editor & Publisher and the Pew Research Center.

The total estimated advertising revenue for the newspaper industry in 2020 was \$9.6 billion, based on the Pew Center's analysis of financial statements for publicly traded newspaper companies. This is down 25% from 2019. Total estimated circulation revenue was \$11.1 billion, compared with \$11 billion in 2019. According to Pew, 2020 was the first year in its collection data that circulation revenue were higher than advertising revenue.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 30,820 people worked as reporters, editors, photographers or film and video editors and operators in the newspaper industry in 2020. That is down 12% from 2019 and 57% from 2004. Median wages for editors in 2020 were about \$50,000, while for reporters, the figure was about \$36,000.

The United States continues to lose newspapers at a rate of two per week, further dividing the nation into wealthier, faster-growing commu-

nities with access to local news, and struggling areas without access, according to Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media and Integrated Marketing Communications. Between the pre-pandemic months of late-2019 and the end of May 2022, more than 360 newspapers closed, the report by Medill's Local News Initiative found. Since 2005, the country has lost more than one-fourth of its newspapers and is on track to lose a third by 2025.

"Losing a newspaper," Keith



**Crothersville Times Publisher Curt Kovener with Steve Deckard, publisher of the Shoals News, on the veranda at the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association event at French Lick last Friday. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**

Pritchard, 63, chairman of the board at the Security Bank of Pulaski County, Mich., told The Detroit News, "is like losing the heartbeat of a town."

**Most of the** communities that have lost newspapers do not get a print or digital replacement, leaving 70 million residents — or a fifth of the country's population — either living in an area with no local news organizations or one at risk, with only one local news outlet and very limited access to critical news

and information that can inform their everyday decisions and sustain grassroots democracy, the Medill study found. About 7% of the nation's counties, or 211, now have no local newspaper.

"This is a crisis for our democracy and our society," said Penelope Muse Abernathy, visiting professor at Medill and the principal author of the report. "Invariably, the economically struggling, traditionally underserved communities that need local journalism the most are the very places where it is most difficult to sustain print or digital news organizations."

**Recent research shows that**, in communities without a strong print or digital news organization, voter participation declines and corruption increases," Abernathy said, "contributing to the spread of misinformation, political polarization and reduced trust in media."

The Indiana Republican Editorial Association (IREA) was founded in 1887, but apparently has ceased to exist. Former Indiana Republican Chairman Mike McDaniel said the IREA faded away in the 1990s. During its heyday, President Herbert Hoover showed up to address the editors.

What is the future of IDEA?

"As locally owned mom and pop community

newspapers are purchased (if they are lucky) by corporate chains or simply go out of business because [of] increased costs, increased postage and decreased subscriber and advertiser support, the local news coverage diminishes," Kovener said. "The Indiana Legislature continues to attack newspapers by decreasing and eliminating the publishing of financial reports for schools, town, cities, counties and townships. They are inflicting death by a thousand paper cuts to local journalism.

"The legislators take aim at the corporate-owned newspapers, but the major financial penalty is paid by the state's micro newspaper, the local mom and pops," he continued. "The irony is that while legislators vote to cut newspaper income to save pennies of local government expense, they continue to send us their columns and opinion pieces to publish. So after the Legislature successfully kills off Indiana newspapers, who will publish their press releases?"

Kovener added, "And so it goes for IDEA as well as the Indiana Republican Editorial Association." ❖

**Brian Howey is senior writer and columnist for Howey Politics Indiana/State Affairs. Find Howey on Facebook and Twitter @hwypol.**

## Hupfer, from page 1

During Hupfer's reign, the GOP held the Indiana House congressional delegation 7-2; and in 2018, Republican Mike Braun upset Democratic U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly.

Gov. Eric Holcomb was reelected with 56.5% of the vote and a record 1,706,727 votes (that compares to Bayh's 62% reelection victory in 1992 with 1,382,151 votes). Under Durnil, Orr was reelected with 52% and Lt. Gov. John Mutz was defeated by Bayh in 1988.

Under Hupfer, Hoosier Republicans hold more than 90% of county offices, and won a record 70 mayoral races in 2019.

During his tenure, Hupfer raised \$34.75 million for the Eric Holcomb For Indiana as treasurer, and \$21.80 million for the Indiana GOP.

"Kyle Hupfer's tenure as chairman of the Indiana Republican Party has proudly been one for the record books," Holcomb said last week. "When he assumed the role in 2017, many believed the Indiana Republican Party had reached its apex. Instead, Kyle pulled together and led a team that was able to defy the annual odds, helping elect and reelect Republicans at every level. I want to



**Modern era Indiana GOP Chairs (from left) Murray Clark, Rex Early, Mike McDaniel, Gov. Mike Pence, Gordon Durnil, Jeff Cardwell and Gov. Eric Holcomb. (Indiana Republican Party Photo).**

thank Chairman Hupfer for his Next Level leadership and for setting new standards for the Indiana GOP."

In the wake of Hupfer's resignation, Holcomb said in a letter to the Indiana Republican Central Committee that he is endorsing RNC Committeewoman Anne Hathaway. If she is confirmed by the Central Committee, she becomes the first female to head the GOP and only the second woman to head a major party (Ann DeLaney, selected by Bayh, was the first).

"Here are several key reasons I believe Anne is the right person at the right time for this role," Holcomb said. "Anne's resume of service to the Republican Party is as extensive as just about anyone's in the country, having

served with distinction at the local, state and national levels throughout her entire career. Furthermore, with experience in running campaigns at every level of government, she has the knowledge and relationships to not only keep our party moving forward, but to continue to take it to the Next Level.

"Anne is committed to staying neutral in the upcoming gubernatorial and presidential primaries, which is vital to ensuring success at the ballot box next November," Holcomb added. "Lastly, Anne is committing to serve only through the May primary. At that time, she will work together with the gubernatorial nominee and you all to decide who is best to finish out the remainder of the term."

Howey Politics/State Affairs Indiana conducted a Zoom interview with Hupfer on Monday morning. Hupfer attributed his success to "locking hands" between the state party and gubernatorial, senatorial and General Assembly campaigns and organizations.

"We recreated how the state party operated on a statewide basis in those general elections," Hupfer explained. "We started early and got buy-ins from the state-wides, from the congressionals, buy-in from the federal side of things and then ran one campaign."

This meant sharing rapidly evolving get-out-the-vote technology. "We've had really, really good data so when we're running this cohesive, one statewide plan, that data gets to everyone," Hupfer said.

Here is our HPI Interview with Kyle Hupfer: It has been edited for brevity and clarity.

**HPI:** So congratulations on your, what, six years as state chair?

**Hupfer:** I was closing in on seven. I started in January of '17, so it's been a while.

**HPI:** Mike McDaniel was in seven years, right?

**Hupfer:** I know that Gordon Durnil was in all eight years for Gov. Orr.

**HPI:** Over the years we've talked about the money you've raised and the proliferation of Republican officeholders at all levels. Write your obit!

**Hupfer:** (Laughs) We've done some unique things that I hope last. The first impactful thing we did was really locking hands with a governor, which had never been done before. We expanded that in '18 knowing that we had an incumbent U.S. senator on the Democratic side we were going to try and beat. We recreated how the state party operated on a statewide basis in those general elections. We started early and got buy-ins from the state-wides, from the congressionals; buy-in from the federal side of things and then ran one campaign. All the grassroots folks



**Gov. Eric Holcomb with Anne Hathaway (center) and First Lady Janet Holcomb on Inauguration Day in January 2017. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**

were state party employees. We did GOTV, we were recruiting, making calls, knocking on doors, distributing signs, pushing absentees, mail; we were doing all of those nuts and bolts GOTV and we won. We were only ... you can check this ... but since I became chair that's one of only four or five incumbent U.S. senators to lose. That doesn't happen very often. And we continued that in 2020 and 2022 as well, each with a different partner. In '20 it was Gov. Holcomb at the top of the ticket. In 2022 it was Todd Young. You have seen in every cycle we're picking up more locally elected officials. I don't know how

much that can grow. We're now at over 90% of county officials that are Republican in Indiana.

**HPI:** That's incredible.

**Hupfer:** So we're getting pretty close. That shows the width and depth the party has put in and the support from the top ... the impacts in every election that's on the ballot.

**HPI:** Talk about how the technology has evolved over the past seven years and the impact it's had, how you employed it, and the advantage that gave you over Indiana Democrats.

**Hupfer:** Part of it starts with that complete and total buy-in so that you have the resources. You don't get to go to the data side of things if you don't have the resources to support it. We've had really, really good data so when we're running these cohesive, one statewide plan, that data gets to everyone. If it's not in their hands it's impacting them by the way we're using it and so we're deep into polling, deep into modeling. It will be interesting to see how and where artificial intelligence takes it the next step forward.

**HPI:** That was my next question, how artificial intelligence could change our organizational politics?

**Hupfer:** We're already seeing it a little bit, but there's probably a lot more room to grow there. It allows you to be very targeted in messaging and really connect with voters where you find them. Those investments have paid off in substantial ways. I don't know what our opposition does but I'm willing to bet our data sets and impact they've had are larger.

**HPI:** The other aspect that floors me beyond the 90% of county officials being Republican is the fact that there have been six consecutive supermajority general as-

semblies, four forged while you were chair. That is unprecedented in state history.

**Hupfer:** I would add in the other piece we did in the 2019 mayoral races. We were much more focused on mayoral races in 2019, raised dollars, put dollars in and set an all-time high of 70 mayors won in that election and have picked up one since then [Hobart Mayor Brian Snedecor switched to the GOP]. We were very targeted, used our data, used the party in those races. Municipalities were the last place the Democrats had, and have, some representation. It shows we never stopped playing offense. It goes to the supermajorities in both houses as well. We've not rested on our laurels either from a political standpoint, but I would argue more importantly from a policy standpoint that we have continued to engender the trust of Hoosiers.

We're pretty clear on what we're running on, what we stand for, and that's allowed us to continue to earn their votes at the ballot box. As long as we continue to do that, to have a positive, forward-looking, upward-lifting message to voters, then we deliver on that and they see it. Look at the trajectory of this state from 2004 to today. Where we were fiscally, where we were from a competitive standpoint with our neighbors and across the country, and where we are today, I mean, it's night and day. I don't think voters will ever want to go back to that.

**HPI:** So it looks like you'll be passing the baton to Anne Hathaway. Talk about her.

**Hupfer:** The governor has weighed in on that. We'll see what the Central Committee says about that. That's their vote, not mine. I'm not trying to overly influence who my successor is. I will say we're going to have a contested governor primary in 2024. We're gonna have someone win that and at that time become the titular head of the Republican Party. You'll see additional change based on that once you have a Republican nominee. No one could do a better job of leading the party than Anne. She's got a resume like no one else in the state with connections deep here and nationally. There's the tremendous work she's done with the Lugar Series. She'll do a tremendous job.

**HPI:** Talk to me about Brad Chambers and why you are joining his campaign. What does he bring that others in the



field don't?

**Hupfer:** I am not commenting on what I'm going to do next until I'm officially out. I came into this saying we were going to be neutral as long as I was chair. That's been the strength of us as a team and I'm going to see that through.

**HPI:** On the national front, we've never seen a presidential frontrunner face 91 criminal charges like Donald Trump. The other component is we have Mike Pence running. What's your message to Hoosier Republicans on that?

**Hupfer:** Obviously it's going to be a contested race. One of the strengths of the party we have in Indiana, and it's such a great brand, is we focused on Indiana. We've focused on what impact we can have here, regardless of where you are on the political spectrum. This isn't a reflection of any individual candidate, but Washington, D.C., is broken. I don't know what the fix is. I don't know if anybody knows what the fix is. We continue to run up debts that our grandchildren's grandchildren are not going to be able to pay. At some point that is going to come home to roost.

We've got serious issues facing this country and threats from China and other world players. China is a problem. We have real immigration issues in this country that need addressing. We've got serious debt problems that need to be addressed. We've got to quit just pointing at the other person and saying, "They're the problem." At some point, someone has got to stand forth and say, "Here are some real solutions." That's why Indiana, and some other states,



too, are rising above that and saying, "Here's how we're going to fix that at home." We're just not going to be combative. That reflects well on our state.

**HPI:** Talk about the attacks on diversity programs here in the state.

**Hupfer:** Our diversity series is the first of its kind in the country. We just had our third graduation at our state dinner. We have several candidates on the ballot. We could potentially get our first diverse Republican mayor in the history of our party. This will have some long-lasting impacts for our party going forward.

**HPI:** The diversity issue has attracted some atten-

tion in the gubernatorial race.

**Hupfer:** I haven't followed it that much. You have to draw a distinction between what we have done with the diversity series and what has been done with the Lugar Series, and that our DEI efforts are completely separate. Those are two different approaches. What we have with our series is [to] allow our folks to be empowered and then choose their own course in life; give them the opportunity to learn, build relationships and decide what their own personal path is going to be within the Republican Party. ❖

## Chairman Schmuhl surveys Dem prospects

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

FRENCH LICK – Howey Politics/State Affairs Indiana sat down with Indiana Democratic Chairman Mike Schmuhl on Friday evening on the veranda of the French Lick Springs Resort in southern Indiana.

Schmuhl and Indiana Democrats were gathered at the annual Indiana Democratic Editorial Association.

The interview has been edited for

brevity and clarity.

**HPI:** Let's set the record straight on fundraising. Where does the party stand as far as money goes, and are you satisfied with where the party is?

**Schmuhl:** I don't know if I'll ever be satisfied with raising money. You've got to raise a lot of money to be successful in politics and with campaigns. I'm very happy to report we've nearly doubled our budget year after year. We had an operating budget of about \$1 million a year and we've doubled that. That's allowed us to hire more people, hire more organizers around the state, make some investments in technology for different tools to reach more voters. I do feel real good about that. It's putting our party on a good track for our future.

**HPI:** Let's talk about mayoral races. Are you confident that Mayor [Joe] Hogsett will win in Indianapolis and Mayor [Tom] Henry in Fort

Wayne?

**Schmuhl:** I think so. We have 47 Democratic mayors. We're playing defense in a number of places but we're also playing offense in a number of places.

**HPI:** Where are you playing offense?

**Schmuhl:** The ones that come to mind are Michigan City, Terre Haute, Lawrence, Evansville, Muncie, and Carmel. Those communities are where we have great candidates who are putting together great bids to become leaders of their communities.

**HPI:** How are General Assembly races for 2024 shaping up? I see Trish Whitcomb announced last night in House District 69 against state Rep. Jim Lucas.

**Schmuhl:** Trish is good news. Jim Lucas is who he is (laughs), and I think that folks in that area deserve better representation. Another candidate who is fantastic and came very close last time is Matt McNally, who will challenge [State] Rep. Jerry Torr. Some other folks who are here who are fantastic include Josh Lowry, who ran against State Sen. Jim Buck and he's now running in the Westfield area [v. State Rep. Donna Schaibley]. His wife is running for a city council seat in Westfield. You see the Democratic Party not only in Carmel and Fishers, but now Westfield and more into the metro area of Indianapolis. That's the path for our legislative success in the future.

**HPI:** As far as congressional races go, are you expecting Jennifer-Ruth Green to challenge U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan in the 2024 rematch?

**Schmuhl:** I don't know.

**HPI:** Is Mrvan in good shape in this presidential cycle?



**Schmuhl:** I think he is. If you're going to take a swing at somebody it's best to do it in a president's first mid-term. Remember President Obama's first mid-term in 2010? That was the first campaign that I managed [for Rep. Joe Donnelly]. Oh boy. President Biden's first mid-term was very different from across the country. It didn't play out as usual. If someone was going to take him out, it would have been last year. Frank has shown he's a good fundraiser and a good campaigner. He's building a real strong organization in The Region.

**HPI:** Are there any Republicans you're going to target, or are the congressional districts so lopsided? And why weren't the congressional maps challenged, legally, like they have been in Ohio, New York and Alabama?

**Schmuhl:** We explored those avenues but, ultimately, there wasn't a lot of legal footing there. I think you'll see more candidates filing for Congress in the future. Some of them are here and they are first time candidates. We need to build a bench for the future of our party and that means running for a number of different offices, including Congress.

**HPI:** Let's talk about the gubernatorial race. I'm not hearing any other names this weekend besides Jennifer McCormick. Are you expecting her to be the Democratic nominee?

**Schmuhl:** Right now Jennifer is making the rounds and she's doing everything you need to do to be a serious candidate. She's at every event. She's been to almost every county. When I talk with our county chairs from around the state it seems like she's either coming or she just left, which is great. She's meeting people at the grassroots level, she's working on raising more money. I think she has a strong message and the potential to share that message even more. Every Hoosier community cares about education and she's an expert in public education. Every community wants their kids to be safe in school; she has experience with that. When you talk about abortion, she's pro-choice. She's got a lot of the pieces pulled together, but raising money will be critical.

**HPI:** Has there been a change of perception post-Dobbs this year as opposed to last year? Are you using the repeal of Roe by the U.S. Supreme Court to recruit legislative candidates? And are they raising more money?

**Schmuhl:** It is still a very potent issue, particularly when Hoosiers see the states around us have a ballot referendum mechanism. They're seeing the democratic process go straight to the people. I really, really wish Indiana had that.

**HPI:** The 2022 Ball State Hoosier poll had 56.7% opposing the Roe repeal, the exact same percentage that abortion rights were codified by voters in Michigan last year.

**Schmuhl:** And last year, choice was on the ballot in Kentucky. Kentucky! Democrats lost Statehouse seats, but choice won. It shows you that certain issues can cut through partisanship and can be important to mobilize voters. What happened here, we have to constantly remind voters what the Republican supermajorities are up to. If you have one party in control, this is what you get. We're seeing what you get. It's a narrow-minded, corruptive, negative government. Hoosiers deserve better.

**HPI:** Talk about the Republican presidential front-runner, Donald J. Trump.

**Schmuhl:** Which record is longer? President Biden's legislative record or Trump's felony count? When you look at what Joe Biden has been able to accomplish



**Indiana Democrat Chairman Mike Schmuhl with Michigan City mayoral nominee Angie Nelson Deutch, Sullivan Mayor Clint Lamb, Evansville nominee Stephanie Terry, and Carmel nominee Miles Nelson. (Indiana Democrat Photo)**

with the slimmest of majorities during his first two years — the American Rescue Plan; the Inflation Reduction Act; the Sacred Communities Act, which addresses gun violence; the Bipartisan Infrastructure deal; the CHIPS Act — these are monumental pieces of legislation that have allowed us to get out of COVID[-19], and get the economy back up and running. People are making more money, saving more money. A lot of the economic indicators are really, really good. I think we need to do a better job of talking about that, directly showing people that things aren't that bad. The other side, Donald Trump, all they want to do is talk 24/7 about the politics of division. They don't have a 21st Century plan for the future. Their agenda is division, culture wars, pitting people against one another, making our dialogue fractured, and limited access to the ballot box. That's their path to success. That's wrong. We should be talking about a united future for this country where everybody is doing well regardless of who you are, regardless of where you live, regardless of who you love, regardless of what you do, that you will have a chance to succeed in this country. ❖

# Braun likes his INGov starting point better than his 2018 Senate race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With former Indiana Commerce Secretary Brad Chambers' entry into the Republican gubernatorial race, expanding the field to six candidates, U.S. Sen. Mike Braun told reporters on Tuesday that he starts his second statewide race in a much better position.



In addition to Braun and Chambers, the current GOP field includes Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Fort Wayne businessman Eric Doden, former attorney

general Curtis Hill and political novice Jamie Reitenour.

Braun said the Federal Election Committee (FEC) mid-year reports are revealing, citing the May and June segments after the General Assembly session ended. "The only direct comparison was what happened in May and June," Braun said. "I resonated with people who wanted to help finance the campaign and we're clearly at 1,400 different contributors. [We] raised twice as much as the Crouch crew did; I think she was in the high 200s. Eric Doden raised in between the two of us from a narrow base of donors including a lot from his family. We're sitting in the best place now," said Braun, who posted \$2.22 million raised and \$4.6 million cash on hand in his mid-year report, putting him at the head of the pack for fundraising.

Doden raised \$1.7 million during the first half of this year and had \$3.8 million cash on hand. Crouch raised \$1.11 million so far this year and had \$3.8 million cash on hand. Hill reported a cash balance of \$20,140.

Since May, Doden reported \$895,000 in large campaign donations, as well as a \$600,000 check from his father, since May. Braun reported \$777,000 in large donations, and Crouch posted \$370,000.

"It's a measurement of who's willing to part with their pocketbook. I think we've had the best response," Braun said. "I think that will be robust through the rest of the year. I'm going to keep visiting all the counties while robustly doing my Senate job. My record has got

high favorables and low unfavorables. That's hard to do in four-and-a-half years in the U.S. Senate. I'll let my record speak for itself and I'll work my tail off."

Braun talked about his 2018 campaign when he not only defeated U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer in the primary, but when he upset U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly that November.

"When I ran for Senate, I had liquidity but I had no name ID and I wasn't going to get to first base," Braun said of his 2018 U.S. Senate race where he started with a 1% name ID and spent more than \$5 million of his own funds to win what became a three-way primary. "I figured that out and it was painful. In this case, I've worked hard to build the resources based upon my record. I think that was on trial and proven in May and June. I'm going to keep on doing what I'm doing, generating the resources."

In that 2018 Senate race, there was also a field of six candidates, but that was winnowed to three after Kokomo attorney Mark Hurt, Terry Henderson and Andrew Takomi dropped out, leaving Braun, Rokita and Messer. Braun would go on to win the primary with 40% of the vote.

"When I explained to them how I thought the race was going to turn out and we were all coming from the

same angle, they quickly supported me because of how you have to marshal the resources to do it," Braun said. "I then took my cue from three others, thinking it was smart for an outsider to come into our politics, running for Senate for a national seat. And that dynamic is identical again here in the primary. It's not the first rodeo, it's the second. I'll

run on my record. I've got a great political team, the same creative team, and I'm going to run mostly on the fact that I've got the best vision for what Hoosiers are interested in [in] the future. But the competition is the same. I'm just not starting at 1%."

Braun reemphasized why he opted for a gubernatorial run rather than a second U.S. Senate term. "When I chose not to run for a second Senate term, it's a reflection of where D.C. is going to go," he said. "That caused me to take a much more difficult journey politically, even though I wasn't going to run for more than two terms. We've got





to have term limits and a balanced budget amendment in D.C. or we can expect more of the same.”

He said he expects a “robust primary,” adding, “I love the competition. The more the merrier. Make your case. If you’re not interested in doing that you probably shouldn’t be running in the first place. I have a record that no one else has. Their records will be narrow and they will be talking mostly about what they want to do. I’m going to feel real good when we get into the gubernatorial forums; we’ve had four or five already. I’m not using notes. I’m talking about what I’ve done in the real world and what I’ve done in the Senate and that’s resonating.

“I’m going to run this race as if it’s as close as it can be,” he said. “I’m going to do what I did when I took out two congressmen and a sitting senator. I’ll take nothing for granted. That will continue until one of us wins the primary, and I intend to do that.

As for GOP Chairman Kyle Hupfer’s resignation and Gov. Eric Holcomb’s nomination of Anne Hathaway as his successor, Braun said, “Whoever takes the helm, I’ll work with them.” He said he likes Anne Hathaway. “Anne’s been in Republican politics a long time. I get along with Anne. I’m sure she’ll do a decent job and we’ll see how that works.”

Asked about Micah Beckwith’s lieutenant governor candidacy, Braun said, “That’s the process and I’ll respect it. I’ve had a lot of people express interest, but I won’t say who. I’m not going to put the cart before the horse.”

### Chambers donations not limited to Republicans

A rival campaign tipped HPI/State Affairs Indiana off to donations Brad Chambers, a Republican and founder and CEO of Buckingham Companies, has made to Democrats, including \$5,000 to then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama’s Committee for Change in 2008. According to FEC filings reviewed by HPI, Chambers also donated to Democratic U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, U.S. senators Evan Bayh and Joe Donnelly, Vice President Kamala Harris and U.S. Rep. Kweisi Mfume.

Filings with the Indiana Secretary of State also show Chambers made donations to state Rep. Greg Porter, two-time gubernatorial nominee John Gregg, and Indianapolis Council President Vop Osili. All are Democrats. There were also contributions to a number of state Democrat committees.

Democrats were not the only ones to benefit from Chambers’ generosity. FEC filings show he also made contributions to Republicans, including Mike Braun for Indiana, U.S. Sen. Todd Young and Friends of Todd Young, U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks, John McGoff, John McCain, Mike Pence, Luke Messer and the Indiana Republican Central Committee.

### Holcomb stays neutral

Gov. Holcomb professes to having no plans for weighing in soon on the Republican gubernatorial cam-

paign. He told reporters Tuesday that Chambers’ entry into the race wasn’t changing his assertion of neutrality regarding the Republican field.

“I’m a tourist,” Holcomb said when asked by State Affairs about a possible endorsement. “Like Hoosiers, I’m going to inspect the plans that all the candidates lay out before the public, and I’ll be seeking to ‘Amen’ or support the plans that continue to see our trajectory — whether its GDP or population growth or capital investment, etc. — [and] how it will continue to improve and make Indiana an even better place,” Holcomb said.

Holcomb says he has “no timeline” on making an endorsement. “It’s going to be according to, with all due respect, how they roll out their plans. Not trying to micromanage anybody’s campaign. I did my own. It turned out OK.”



### Hill blasts Holcomb over pandemic actions

Hill’s campaign issued a statement denouncing consideration of new face mask requirements in some parts of the country amid increases in COVID-19 illnesses with new virus variants.

Hill clashed with Holcomb in 2020 over the governor’s executive orders for face masks, and on Tuesday said he had “reined in the unchecked power that Gov. Holcomb claimed to have” back then. Hill said he would not require mask use at public universities, businesses, government offices or churches if he became governor.

“In 2020, Gov. Holcomb tried to shut down businesses, schools, and churches,” Hill said in his statement last week. “He wanted to force residents to wear masks and take away medical autonomy. I stood up to him when most in my own party did not. Hoosiers are still trying to recover, but for many, it is too late.”

Holcomb and many other top Republican officials had called on Hill to resign as attorney general over allegations that he drunkenly groped four women at a party celebrating the end of the 2018 legislative session. The state Supreme Court suspended his law license for 30 days, finding “by clear and convincing evidence that [Hill] committed the criminal act of batter.”

### Crouch wants to eliminate income tax

Lt. Gov. Crouch says she wants to eliminate the individual income tax by the end of her first term if she’s elected governor of Indiana (Dwyer, [IndyStar](#)). It’s a familiar refrain among the halls of the Statehouse lately — Senate Republican leaders have said they are interested in doing this eventually, and a budget deal they

struck speeds up income tax cuts down to 2.9% by 2027. But Crouch's goal would significantly quicken that pace, with the idea of keeping more money in Hoosiers' pockets and attracting more workers to live in the state. "Hoosiers need to keep more of their own money to secure their livelihood in the era of Bidenomics," Crouch told IndyStar. "Groceries, energy prices, interest rates, and other household expenses have all trended in the wrong direction since 2021, and I am determined to help people in any way I can." Crouch said she would accomplish this not by raising any other taxes on Hoosiers, but by cutting spending and limiting government growth. Her administration would create a commission to examine every government agency and department to identify where cuts could be made.

## U.S. Senate

### Club For Growth runs ad for Banks

Ahead of the Republican presidential primary debate in Milwaukee Wednesday night, political committee the Club for Growth Action has released a new ad highlighting support for Rep. Jim Banks in Indiana's 2024 U.S. Senate race (IndyStar). The Club for Growth Action is one of the political arms of the Club for Growth, a conservative advocacy and fundraising group, which endorsed Banks for Senate upon his announcement entering the race in January. The Club for Growth Action's \$13,000 ad buy is planned to air digitally and on Fox News across all Indiana TV markets, ahead of, during and following Wednesday night's debate, according to the committee. The ad itself features both the Indiana Republican Party and former President Donald Trump's support of Banks. The ad shows the congressman saying he will go to the Senate to "shake things up" as part of the "next generation of conservative fighters."

### County chair won't sign off on Rust candidacy

Though Indiana's Republican U.S. Senate primary has all but been declared for U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, another Republican has announced his candidacy (Dwyer, IndyStar). John Rust, board chair of Seymour egg producer Rose Acre Farms, announced his campaign Tuesday afternoon, branding himself a Christian, capitalist, America-first conservative who would bring an "outsider's voice" to Washington. As a gay conservative who says "wokism" and "radical LGBTQ policies" pushed him to make the leap from the private sector to politics, Rust said in a press release that he'll be "the Democrats' worst nightmare in the Senate." But the state GOP says Rust doesn't meet the qualifications to run, and they've already made a high-profile, unusually early endorsement of Banks, crowning him the presumptive nominee. Tuesday evening, Jackson County Republican Party Chair Amanda Lowery told IndyStar she has no plans to sign off on Rust's candidate certification. She said she wouldn't sign off on any Republican candidate who doesn't meet the voting requirements in state law, adding that it's "nothing

personal" against Rust. "John feels like he wants and needs to move forward, and that's what he's going to do," she said. "I've explained my position; I'm not going to waver from that position." State party press secretary Luke Thomas said Tuesday that Rust was free to run but that his candidacy will be subject to a challenge since he hasn't met the criteria. The Banks campaign, for one, plans to file that challenge.

## Mayors

### Indianapolis: Hogsett's "Della" ad

Hogsett for Indianapolis released a new ad, entitled "Della," which has begun airing on cable and network television across the city, as well as on digital platforms. The ad highlights Mayor Joe Hogsett's Peacemakers program through the inspiring journey of a current Peacemaker who personally endured the devastating



consequences of gun violence. Now working as an outreach worker, Della dedicates herself to engaging with community members, providing invaluable mentorship and intervening during

critical moments to prevent violence from escalating. In the ad, she thanks Hogsett for starting and supporting the \$150 million gun violence reduction strategy. "Della and the Peacemaker program stand as testaments to the power of community-driven initiatives in addressing gun violence and creating a safer community," said campaign manager Blake Hesch.

### Fort Wayne: Young stumps for Didier

U.S. Sen. Todd Young hosted a campaign event for Republican nominee Tom Didier. "During his talk at the event, Todd Young said he experienced the change that can happen in local communities with Republican leadership," Didier said in a Facebook posting. "He saw first hand the transformation of his home town into a dynamic place to live, that has happy, safe and healthy citizens. We have seen locally what change has come to cities like New Haven with unified Republican leadership. We know that our city is an amazing place to live, but we need a leader who will keep the city focused on advancing and isn't going to compromise the values that are the reason why so many of us call Fort Wayne home. I really appreciate Senator Young, my family and all our supporters who helped underwrite this event and contributed toward my campaign."

### Evansville: Firefighters endorse Rascher

The men and women of the Evansville Professional Fire Fighters Local 357 were able to raise over

\$19,000 in support of Rascher For Mayor. "This would not have been possible without our incredible community partners, sponsors and cadre of volunteers. We proudly stand with Natalie Rascher, so we can all keep Evansville a safe place to call home," Local 357 said.

**Evansville: PAC endorses Terry**

Run Sister Run PAC has officially endorsed Democrat mayoral nominee Stephanie Terr. The PAC works to uplift women candidates. "I am honored to have their support in my run for mayor of Evansville," Terr said.

**Presidential 2024**

**Poll finds Pence under water in Indiana**

Mike Pence is deeply unpopular in his home state of Indiana, according to new polling released by Change Research today. Just 20% of Hoosiers have a favorable view of Mike Pence compared to 65% who have an unfavorable one. Pence's favorability has collapsed since September 2020. The trend is seen even among Republican Primary voters. Pence's unfavorability is unique among other Republican contenders for the presidential nomination, and he trails Donald Trump 68-25 in a hypothetical head-to-head match-up in Pence's home state of Indiana. In a September 2020 Change Research poll, Mike Pence enjoyed a favorable/unfavorable rating of 51/45 among all voters in Indiana. However, as of August 2023, this rating has plummeted to 20/65. This indicates a remarkable decrease in public perception of Pence's favorability over the three-year period. Pence's decline is even more pronounced among Republican voters. He previously held an impressive 96/3 favorable/unfavorable rating among Republicans, but this has now eroded to 31/52. This sharp shift within his own party suggests a loss of support among core supporters.

**Braun touts Ramaswamy's campaign**

Braun says he likes the policies of former President Donald Trump but has held back from officially endorsing his campaign for president. Braun touted entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy on Monday as an exciting candidate who could turn around the nation's financial situation (Bolton, The Hill). "I think clearly the guy that is different that espouses a lot of what Trump did would be Vivek Ramaswamy, because you're going to have to have somebody that has a business back-

ground, is entrepreneurial," Braun told CNBC's "Squawk Box" in an interview Monday. He praised Ramaswamy as a candidate who could help solve the nation's fiscal problems. "I think that's why he's resonating," Braun said.

**Pence spoke 12 minutes during Fox debate**

Mike Pence spoke for more than 12 minutes — more than anyone else during the Fox News Republican presidential debate (Politico Playbook). The key monologue that put him over the top is instructive: At the end of a portion of the debate devoted to Jan. 6 and Trump's multiple indictments, when the Fox hosts were moving on to a new subject, Pence interrupted and demanded that he be allowed to speak. He then delivered an impassioned defense of his actions on Jan. 6. Pence, who repeatedly rolled over the moderators and pilloried his opponents, emerged last night fully as the conviction

candidate that he has gradually become over the last year, after he initially flirted with some more politically convenient strategies.

Former President Donald Trump disputed that he asked his vice president to put Trump "above the Constitution," in his first post after the first Republican primary debate (Politico). "I never asked Mike Pence to put me above the Constitution. Who

would say such a thing? A FAKE STORY!" Trump said on his Truth Social platform. Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said during the debate that Pence "deserves our thanks as Americans for putting his oath of office and the Constitution of the United States before personal, political and unfair pressure." Pence refused to pledge to pardon Trump, but he didn't rule out the possibility. "I don't know why you assume Donald Trump will be convicted of these crimes," Pence replied. "That is the difference between you and me. I have given pardons when I was governor of the state of Indiana. It usually follows a finding of guilt and contrition by the individual that's been convicted. If I am president of the United States, we'll give fair consideration to any pardon requests." ❖

Likely Voters	September 2020	August 2023	Net Change
Very Favorable	42	7	-35
Somewhat Favorable	9	13	+4
Neutral	4	14	+10
Somewhat Unfavorable	4	17	+13
Very Unfavorable	41	48	+7
Never Heard of Them	1	1	0
<b>Total Favorable</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-31</b>
<b>Total Unfavorable</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>+20</b>
<b>Net Favorable</b>	<b>+6</b>	<b>-45</b>	<b>-51</b>

Republicans	September 2020	August 2023	Net Change
Very Favorable	81	12	-69
Somewhat Favorable	9	19	+10
Neutral	1	17	+16
Somewhat Unfavorable	1	17	+16
Very Unfavorable	2	35	+33
Never Heard of Them	0	1	+1
<b>Total Favorable</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-65</b>
<b>Total Unfavorable</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>+49</b>
<b>Net Favorable</b>	<b>+93</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-114</b>

# Donald Trump joins Eugene Debs's legacy

By JACK COLWELL  
South Bend Tribune

SOUTH BEND – Eugene Debs, a native Hoosier nominated for president, has had a unique claim in presidential election history. It now could be matched by Donald Trump.



Debs, born and raised in Terre Haute, where he began his political career as city clerk, also served in the Indiana General Assembly. He became a union organizer and official.

Five times Debs was the nominee for president of the Socialist Party.

His best vote total was in 1920, when Debs got nearly a million votes.

What is unique for Debs in presidential history is that he got all those votes in 1920 while in prison. He had been sentenced for violating the Espionage and Sedition Acts after a speech denouncing U.S. involvement in World War I.

Even though Trump now faces all those indictments, all those charges, is there much chance that he could match Debs for the distinction of running for president while in prison?

Trump would have to win the 2024 Republican nomination. He is likely to do so. But with all the possible trial delays and appeals – and uncertainty about what a jury would decide and what sentence a judge might impose – it seems far less likely that he would run as an inmate.

**But maybe.** He could run even if in prison. He undoubtedly would run. And he would get a lot more votes than Debs. He could even win the presidency while in prison.

While some states bar felons from running for some offices, the U.S. Constitution, not state law, sets qualifications for president – requirements only on age (at least 35) and citizenship. Nothing about imprisonment, present or past.

(A couple of law professors argue that the 14th Amendment insurrection clause already could bar a Trump

candidacy. Don't bet on the Supreme Court agreeing.)

Debs, Inmate No. 9653 in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, was able to run, not in the traditional sense of being out on the campaign trail, but from his cell. Debs was permitted to release one campaign statement every week. Trump, with social media, would send thousands of messages.

Debs still got nearly a million votes because he, like Trump, built up a following with long rally speeches denouncing conditions in the country. He also was accused of inciting violence. Debs had become president of the American Railway Union, and accusations involved the violent 1894 strike against Pullman, railcar builder with a company town for Chicago workers. The workers were angry over sharp wage cuts and went on a strike that disrupted rail service and mail service.

**President Grover Cleveland's** administration obtained an injunction to halt the strike. There was violence. Strikers destroyed railcars. Illinois National Guard troops fired into a crowd, with deaths and injuries.

Although Debs was reported to have favored nonviolence, he was restrained by court order from direct contact with the workers. He was sentenced to six months in county jail for contempt of court. The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

It was while in jail that Debs became a Socialist.

He was the Socialist Party presidential nominee in 1900, 1904, 1908 and 1912, building support as a third-party candidate but never coming close to winning. He skipped running in 2016. But he continued to speak at

rallies across the nation, opposing involvement in World War I. After the United States declared war against Germany in 1917, Congress passed the Espionage and Sedition Acts, criminalizing efforts to interfere with conducting the war or using "disloyal" language.

Debs continued to speak out against the war, the draft and the Sedition Act.

A fiery speech in Canton, Ohio, on June 16, 1918, brought charges and conviction. On Sept. 18,

1918, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison. And that's where he was when he ran for president in 2020. He has been unique in that.

Thus far. ❖



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## How the self-funding INGov race takes shape

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

EVANSVILLE – Indiana now boasts six Republican candidates for governor. The latest to join the race, Brad Chambers, will likely stir little enthusiasm beyond Indianapolis. His candidacy, primarily depleting votes and support from Suzanne Crouch, seems destined to aid Mike Braun.



It's worth examining that three of the six candidates — Braun, Eric Doden and Chambers — are wealthy millionaires, capable of self-funding significant portions of their campaigns. Only Crouch and Curtis Hill must seek and secure support from thousands of donors to win. Among them, only Crouch is successfully raising the necessary funds.

Many people view self-funding as a virtue. By using personal wealth, a candidate, so the argument goes, remains free from obligations to lobbyists and other influential donors. But consider the alternative. Fundraising demands organization, professionalism and efficiency. These are qualities we desire in a governor — and in most elected officials.

**Donors don't simply give** money to political candidates. They must be approached, and that approach requires a campaign organization dedicated to identifying, communicating with and nurturing supporters, whether financial backers, fellow politicians or ordinary voters.

The amount of money and its source can also indicate the breadth and depth of a candidate's support within the party. This information is vital not only to the general electorate but also to primary voters seeking to choose the most robust and capable candidate. Self-funders can often conceal weaknesses in organization or efficiency that

become critical in the general election and once in office. Reflect on the fact that many self-funders running for federal office in recent years have failed spectacularly. Steve Forbes, Meg Whitman, Howard Schultz, Linda McMahon and Mitt Romney spent millions of personal funds and lost. In 2018, some 19 congressional candidates who lavished over \$1 million on their political dreams failed to survive their party's primary.

In Indiana, Braun, Trey Hollingsworth and Jim Baird financed successful congressional runs, but for every triumph, there are more defeats. Democrats Mel Hall and Yatish Joshi lost their congressional campaigns despite substantial finances. Republicans Steve Braun and Jonathan Lamb met the same fate in their congressional bids.

**Why doesn't self-funding** always succeed?

Many self-funders harbor an exaggerated confidence in the influence of money in politics. The campaign consultants drawn to these affluent candidates often lack the motivation to correct this misconception.

Money matters, of course, but candidates like Chambers soon discover that campaigning requires skill honed through experience. They often lack this know-how, and squandering millions on a gubernatorial campaign is usually an ill-advised way to learn.

In the context of Indiana's political landscape, these insights offer a nuanced perspective on the upcoming gubernatorial race. The dynamics of self-funding versus grassroots fundraising reflect broader questions about political integrity, voter engagement and the role of money in democracy.

As the campaign for governor unfolds, voters and political observers would do well to look beyond the dollar signs, recognizing that the path to victory requires more than a thick checkbook. It demands a connection with the electorate, a well-organized campaign and a vision that resonates with the values and needs of the people of Indiana. ❖

**Joshua Claybourn is an attorney, historian and author in Evansville. You can follow him on Twitter here.**

## Consequential charges



By **SABRINA HAAKE**

GARY – In America's latest iteration of law vs. scofflaw, Fani Willis has brought the most consequential prosecution in U.S. history. Her 41-count indictment against Donald Trump and 18 of his closest co-conspirators threads the infinitesimal needle between free political speech and fraud, sewing Trump's falsehoods into a cloak

of criminal enterprise beyond the protection of the 1st Amendment.

Trump's incessant drumbeat about a stolen 2020 election, repulsive to voters who value fact over fiction, is legally challenging to parse; under the 1st Amendment, politicians have the right to lie to the American public.

Trump can claim he is Jesus Christ, the Earth is flat, and that a chlorine enema will cure cancer, and there's little the courts can do. Since 1943, the Supreme Court has protected political speech — even demonstrably false and ridiculous political speech — as the heart of the 1st Amendment, because, "If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high

or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion ...”

In deference to this reality, Jack Smith’s indictment largely avoided Trump’s political rallies and skipped incitement of the Jan. 6 capital violence entirely. Ms. Willis was not so constrained. She relied on Georgia Code Section 16-10-20, which makes it a crime to lie to any state, city or local government official in Georgia regarding any matter within their jurisdiction. It means Trump, free to lie ad nauseam at rallies, broke the law when he lied to Georgia officials to try to change the outcome of the 2020 election.

**The Georgia indictment** cites 162 separate acts by Trump and his co-conspirators, including false statements, impersonating a public officer and forgery, and weaves them into criminal racketeering under Georgia’s RICO statute. Trump’s “overt acts in furtherance of the conspiracy” to overturn the presidential vote in Georgia began on Nov. 4, 2020, when Trump made a nationally televised speech falsely declaring victory.

That lie quickly metastasized into varied iterations, including a pressure campaign on state and local officials to violate their oaths of office; transmitting false elector votes and forging elector certificates; falsely accusing workers of ballot stuffing; sending a preacher to intimidate an election worker into falsely confessing to election crimes she did not commit; and Trump’s pressure on Georgia’s Republican secretary of state, to “find” nearly 12,000 non-existent votes. The indictment also identifies several Republican officials in Georgia who stood up to Trump, recognized he was asking them to break the law, and told him “No”.

Trying to explain how Trump’s stolen election claims resulted in massive court losses (61 cases), despite such extreme efforts, one Trump advisor commented, “It’s tough to own any of this when it’s all just conspiracy shit beamed down from the mothership.”

Trump, who bragged in 2005 about assaulting women’s genitalia, which he dismissed as fake news, was found guilty of same in 2023 by a jury of his peers. Aside from his vitriolic attacks on female professionals, he likes to brag that he personally “killed Roe v. Wade.”

He campaigned on eliminating the constitutional right to an abortion, and his justices Gorsuch, Coney Barret and Kavanaugh, have tilted a political court to the far

right, injuring women more than any other demographic in the process.

As red states are now free to force pregnancy and birth on half the population, women have lost medical agency over their own bodies, even when their own lives are at risk. How gratifying it is, then, to see Trump taken down by a woman, as there is no federal pardon for state crimes.

Republicans have abandoned the rule of law, preferring authoritarianism over the loss of power, which makes it all the more satisfying to watch Willis rein them in. Excuse me while I swoon, but Fani Willis is no pushover and no bleeding heart. She has taken on violent gangs and is now prosecuting famous rapper Young Thug under the same RICO statute ensnaring Trump.



She leans conservative on criminal justice issues, and sought the death penalty for a man who murdered four women during an Atlanta shooting spree targeting Asians. She also prosecuted public school teachers in a high-profile test cheating scandal, a risky move that put the interests of children, who can’t vote, over the interests of teachers, who wield outside political power over elected officials, including Willis. When criticized for the case, she told her detractors to “put it in my obituary.”

I think her obituary is writing itself: Fani v. Tawny, the woman from Georgia who took a criminal president down. ❖

**Sabrina Haake is a trial lawyer who lives in Gary and represents municipal clients in Chicago. Reach her on Twitter @SabrinaHaake.**

# Factory jobs are not coming back

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

MUNCIE – I give a number of public talks each year on changes to the state and local economy. One trick I use to help folks understand these changes is to ask a couple of questions. This sets up a great discussion about issues ranging from educational attainment to quality of life to economic development and trade policy.



The first question is simple: "In what year did Indiana's manufacturing economy produce the most 'stuff' as measured in inflation-adjusted dollars?" Economists call this gross domestic product and it is measured as the value-added production in our state. That just means we subtract all the imported parts,

whether they come from Ohio or Thailand.

I get all kinds of thoughtful answers regarding which year was our production peak: 1944, 1955, the '70s, '80s or '90s. There are reasons to suppose all of these are true. I rarely get the right answer, or anything close to it. The answer to this question is 2022.

That's right folks, last year was our peak manufacturing production year of all time. Don't be surprised; 2021 was our previous peak, as was 2018 before it. We might not have a new peak in 2023, but I'd wager a case of 3 Floyd's Zombie Ice IPA that 2024 will again be a peak year for factory production in Indiana.

My second question is: "In what year did manufacturing employment peak in Indiana?" The answer to that question is 1973. Nearly every audience has someone who gets close to the right answer. So, what happened?

**Well, three big** things happened. Estimates vary, but maybe a quarter of factory jobs, mostly from 1990 to 2007, were lost to foreign competition. The rest were lost due to productivity; workers and factories simply got better at making goods. But, there's a catch even here. Close to half of those manufacturing jobs that were lost to productivity and trade weren't really lost; they were just reclassified from "manufacturing" to "professional services." These are the people who service robots, design factory modifications, teach Lean Six Sigma, provide security, take out the trash or write computer code.



These facts set up some deep and uncomfortable questions about state and local policy. Right away it is important to note that manufacturing in Indiana is an important and healthy sector of our economy. It is a source of rapid productivity growth, innovation and wealth creation. Factories can be great places to work, particularly the newer, safer facilities, where workers are better paid. For state and local governments, manufacturing could be an important source of tax revenue to sustain roads, public safety, education and quality of life.

One thing manufacturing will not be is a growing source of jobs. This has been true for a half century, and it'd be helpful if everyone admitted that obvious truth.

**The good news is that** should not be a problem for our economy. For every factory job Indiana lost since 1973, other industries created seven more jobs. Most of these jobs pay better than the factory jobs they replaced. In fact, nationwide, the data is even better. We've lost about 6.5 million factory jobs since the national peak in 1979 but created more than 66 million jobs elsewhere.

In historical terms, this is a remarkably soft adjustment to changing economic conditions. In fact, it'd be hard to find such a large structural change that occurred anywhere, with so much warning, that carried with it so many alternative opportunities for workers and communities. Economists have long puzzled why so many places and people failed to adjust effectively. I think there is a two-part answer.

The first factories to close due to trade or productivity pressures were the least productive plants. These factories would tend to have a disproportionate number of lower-skilled factory workers, doing work that a poorly educated worker in a third-world country could do. But, even the best workers at these plants would've been exposed to less technology and fewer new production practices.

Better-skilled and educated workers transition to other jobs more readily. So, job losses from automation and trade tended to clobber those least prepared to deal with the consequences. For these workers, relocating brought few opportunities, so they stayed. But, this excess supply of labor

did nothing to boost the prospects of a community. In fact, there is at least anecdotal evidence that newer, more technologically advanced firms went out of their way to avoid places where other factories closed.

The national numbers surrounding this are stark. Since 1992, the U.S.A. has created 39.4 million new jobs, which is very respectable. But, 33.7 million of those went to college graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher, and another 9.5 million to folks who'd been to college or received an associate's degree. Since the end of the Great

Recession, the data is even worse. The U.S. economy has created more than 17 million jobs for college graduates, while employment for everyone else is down by roughly 700,000 jobs.

**These facts offer strong** support for an argument that the increasing demand for more highly skilled workers is leaving behind those who lost lower-skilled jobs. But, this has been happening for a couple of centuries. So, it would seem to me that the stagnation and decline in so many cities and towns across the Midwest have other contributing factors. Though there are many possible explanations for the continued stagnation of much of the Rustbelt, at least part of the reason must be the fact that many people continue to believe that prosperity is just one more factory announcement away.

To be fair, it takes tough, honest leadership to confront this problem. It could start by simply stating a few facts. I'd like to hear someone repeat the fact that

"since the end of the Great Recession, in June of 2009, more than 100% of all the net job growth in the USA went to college graduates." Then add, "This means that to prosper, our state must be full of world-class schools that offer every student the chance to go to college."

Of course, we aren't anywhere near that level of discourse. Instead, we get too many adults telling students to plan on a future with growing factory jobs. And, we have too many communities working to get those new factory jobs, instead of preparing for a different future. That's a dismal combination of mistakes, that surely explains part of the ongoing stagnation of much of the Midwest. ❖

**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.**

## 652,000 wasted Indiana votes

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Old Testament book of Lamentations must be popular reading these days. Both the Left and the Right want the restoration of times past. The difference is the Left is phlegmatic and, like the author(s) of that book, cries for relief from above. The Right, however, has weaponized discontent.



How is the Right winning? They took control of legislatures and the Congress via radical reapportionment. It happened slowly by a careful strategy with clear objectives.

If you want to do something about abortion rights, education, environmental conditions, gun violence, health, redistricting, street repairs, even zoning regulations, you have to reach the legislators who make the laws that govern.

Yes, we have seen dramatic wins in ballot measures on abortion rights in Kansas and Ohio. But we have seen no consequential change in the composition of legislatures themselves.

**This is a result of drawing** district lines for the benefit of incumbent officials. They, regardless of party, will do everything necessary to preserve the status quo and gain advantage if possible.

Look at Indiana's state House of Representatives. Republicans have 70 of 100 seats. There's nothing wrong with that, if that is what the people of Indiana choose.

But the people did not make that choice. It was made by the two political parties. Republicans declined to run candidates in 14 of the 30 seats held by the Democrats. For their part, Democrats declined to run candidates for 33 of the Republican held seats.

Thus, Hoosiers have 47 of 100 seats uncontested in the House. In total, 652,000 votes were wasted (39% of all votes cast in the 2022 House elections). Each of those 47 seats needed only one person to vote and the uncontested seats would have been won.

**This is not democracy.** This is a combination of cowardliness and stupidity. Both parties choose to avoid losing in districts they think unwinnable. They don't want to waste money and energy on losing this campaign and have little interest in future contests.

When you don't field candidates, you deny your voters the opportunity to support your party. When you don't field candidates you deny all voters the opportunity to hear your program. It may be dismissed today, but can take root and grow, if the seed is planted by an active campaign.

Political know-alls tell me more than a ten point margin (55% vs 45%) is a landslide. Thus, in 2022, we had only ten seats that were competitive. Republicans won four of those and Democrats six.

Shouldn't we have more competition in politics? The sloth and negativism of our major parties pollutes the political air. The lack of oxygen also suppresses third parties which garnered only 16,000 votes (less than one percent) for House seats in 2022.

Isn't it time to open the doors of the Statehouse and let fresh air in? ❖

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# Explaining Republican loyalty to Donald Trump

By **ALAN I. ABRAMOWITZ**

CHAROTTESVILLE, Va. – Less than six months before voters begin casting ballots in the first presidential caucuses and primaries, former President Donald Trump continues to dominate the field of Republican candidates. According to RealClearPolitics as of Aug. 22, Trump is receiving an average of 55.9% support in national polls of Republican voters compared with 14.6% for his nearest rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. Moreover, Trump’s margin over DeSantis has increased in recent months following indictments in multiple jurisdictions for allegedly criminal conduct including his notorious efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

What is perhaps even more surprising than Trump’s domination of the Republican nomination contest is his continued competitiveness in a potential general election matchup with President Biden. Despite all of the criminal charges filed against him, Trump remains locked in a near dead heat with Biden, receiving an average of 43.7% of the vote compared with 44.2% for Biden according to the most recent RealClearPolitics polling average.

Donald Trump’s competitiveness in a general election matchup with Joe Biden is due mainly to intense loyalty from Republican voters. In a recent New York Times/Siena national poll that had Biden and Trump tied with 43% of the vote, only 7% of Republicans, including leaning independents, preferred Biden to Trump. Among respondents who reported voting for Trump in 2020, the former president led Biden 91%-2%. Given the close divide in the country between supporters of the two major parties, this sort of loyalty among Republican voters is what is keeping the 2024 presidential general election highly competitive.

## Negative partisanship

In this article, I argue that the key to understanding both Donald Trump’s domination of the Republican nomination contest and his continued competitiveness in a general election matchup with Joe Biden is negative partisanship. Negative partisanship refers to the growing dislike of the opposing party and its leaders among voters who identify with or lean toward one of the two major parties in the U.S. This trend is very apparent in Figure 1, which displays the average ratings of the presidential candidate from a voter’s own party and from the opposing party on the 0-100 degree feeling thermometer scale in surveys conducted by the American National Election Studies between 1968 (the first survey to include the feeling thermometer scale) and 2020.

The data shows that while ratings of the presidential candidate from one’s own party have remained fairly stable over this time period, ratings of the opposing party’s presidential candidate have fallen considerably, especially since 2008. In both 2016 and 2020, supporters of both major parties, including independents leaning towards a party, gave the opposing party’s candidate an average rating of just above 10 degrees compared with average ratings of close to 40 degrees between 1968 and 1976. In 2016, 57% of partisans gave the opposing party’s presidential candidate a rating of zero, the lowest rating possible on the scale. In 2020, 63% of partisans gave the opposing party’s candidate a rating of zero.

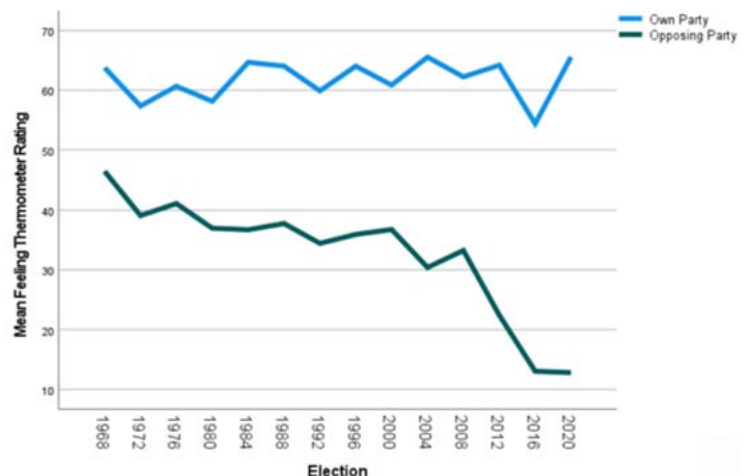
One of the most important consequences of negative partisanship is that crossing party lines to support a candidate from the opposing party has become totally unacceptable to the large majority of partisans. As a result, defection rates by partisans have declined dramatically in all types of elections, and especially in presidential elections. This displays the rate of defection by partisans, including leaning independents, in presidential elections between 1952 and 2020. Whereas, defection rates generally ranged between 15- 20% between 1952 and 1980, they have been consistently below 10% since 2000. The three most recent elections have seen the lowest defection rates in the past 70 years. Even among partisans who have reservations about their own party’s candidate, as was true for many Democrats and Republicans in 2016, the opposing party’s candidate is generally seen as far worse.

## 2024 candidate preference

In order to examine Republican loyalty to Donald Trump in the run-up to the 2024 presidential election, I analyzed data from the 2022 Pilot Study conducted by the



**Figure 1: Mean feeling thermometer ratings of own party and opposing party presidential candidates, 1968-2020**



American National Election Studies. This was an online survey conducted by YouGov in November 2022 based on an opt-in sample designed to represent the voting-age population of the United States. In addition to questions about respondents' political attitudes and voting behavior in the 2022 midterm election, the survey included an extensive battery of questions about a possible 2024 rematch between Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

Table 1 displays the distribution of feeling thermometer ratings of Joe Biden and Donald Trump by Democratic and Republican identifiers, including leaning independents, in the ANES Pilot Study. The data in this table show that among supporters of both parties, negative feelings toward the opposing party's leader were much more intense than positive feelings toward their own party's leader. Only 42% of Democrats gave Joe Biden a rating of 85 degrees or higher on the feeling thermometer scale but 74% gave Donald Trump a rating of less than 15 degrees. Similarly, only 41% of Republicans gave Donald Trump a rating of 85 degrees or higher but 67% gave Joe Biden a rating of less than 15 degrees.

There is one interesting difference between the ratings given by Democrats and Republicans to their own party's leader: 16% of Republicans rated Donald Trump below 35 degrees while only 8% of Democrats rated Joe Biden below 35 degrees. These numbers suggest that a somewhat larger share of Republicans than Democrats had serious reservations about the frontrunner for their party's 2024 presidential nomination.

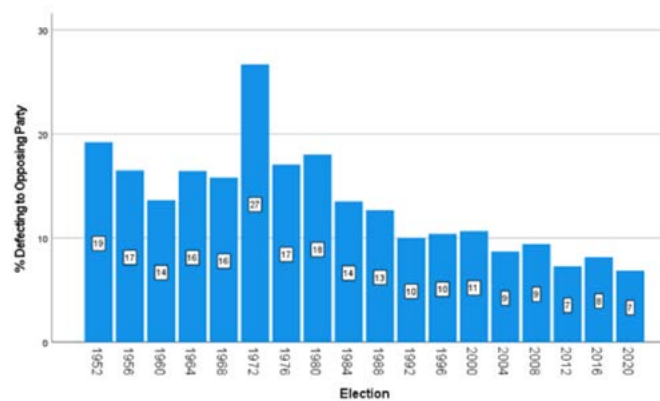
Respondents in the 2022 ANES Pilot Study were asked directly about their candidate preference in a potential rematch between Joe Biden and Donald Trump in 2024. The most striking finding in this table is that very few supporters of either party stated a preference for the opposing party's nominee. Only 7% of Democrats indicated that they would vote for Donald Trump over Joe Biden and only 4% of Republicans indicated that they would vote for Biden over Trump. However, a larger minority of voters in each party – 19% of Republicans and 13% of Democrats – indicated that they would vote for "someone else" if given a choice between Biden and Trump.

The fact that large numbers of Democrats and Republicans stated a preference for someone other than Biden or Trump in a 2024 rematch between the two candidates undoubtedly reflects the fact that a substantial minority of Democrats and an even larger minority of Republicans had serious reservations about their party's likely presidential candidate. However, a stated preference for an unnamed alternative candidate does not necessarily mean that these disgruntled Democrats and Republicans are likely to end up voting for an actual third party or independent

candidate with little or no chance of winning the election. Nor does this preference for "someone else" necessarily mean that these voters would actually defect to the opposing party's candidate in a one-on-one matchup. In fact, evidence from the 2022 ANES Pilot Study suggests that the large majority of those preferring "someone else" would end up backing their own party's nominee.

The relative feeling thermometer ratings of Biden and Trump among Democrats and Republicans who stated a preference for "someone else" in a rematch of the 2020 candidates. Relative feeling thermometer ratings are a very strong predictor of candidate preference -- over 90% of voters typically choose the candidate whom they rate more favorably. The results in show that the vast majority of those stating a preference for "someone else" would be likely to end up voting for their own party's candidate: 68% of Republicans rated Donald Trump more favorably than Joe Biden and 80% of Democrats rated Joe Biden more favorably than Donald Trump. Thus, even among the minority of Democrats and Republicans who preferred "someone else" in a rematch between Biden and Trump, relatively few actually rated the opposing party's candidate more favorably than their own party's candidate.

**Figure 2: Percentage of partisans defecting in presidential elections, 1952-2020**



**Conclusion**

Negative partisanship is the key to understanding the continuing loyalty of Republican voters to former President Donald Trump. Attacks on Trump by Democrats, liberals, and mainstream media figures and even indictments by federal and state prosecutors on serious criminal charges have only served to reinforce the loyalty of Republican voters to Trump. Republican voters see these attacks and indictments as efforts by the hated opposition party and its allies to weaken the former president and prevent his return to the White House. Similarly, in a general election matchup between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, even Republicans who have reservations about Trump overwhelmingly prefer him to Biden because they believe the portrayal of Biden by Republican leaders and conservative media outlets as a radical leftist and a threat to the survival of the nation. As a result, it appears likely that a rematch between Biden and Trump in 2024 will remain highly competitive with the outcome hinging on a small number of swing voters in a handful of closely contested states – an outcome that could lend itself to attacks on the integrity of the election by the former president and his allies. ❖

**Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star:** In a purely Terre Haute context, the ages of the mayoral candidates in this year's election seem a bit extraordinary. The Democratic Party challenger, 27-year-old Brandon Sakbun, would be the youngest mayor in Terre Haute history, if elected, according to Tribune-Star research of newspaper and local historical archives. Among Terre Haute's 42 mayors dating back to Elijah Tillotson in 1838, the city's youngest mayor remains Chambers Y. Patterson, a Democrat who served just prior to the Civil War from 1856 to 1860 and took office at age 31. By contrast, the four-term Republican incumbent, Mayor Duke Bennett, would become the city's second-oldest mayor, if elected. Bennett would take the oath at the age of 63 years, 10 months and two weeks, slightly younger than the late Pete Chalos, a Democrat who began his fourth term as the city's oldest mayor at age 64 in 1991, eclipsing seven others who were sworn in at sixty-something. The circumstance isn't that unusual, though, on a statewide basis. Indiana towns have elected twenty-something mayors of both parties, as well as those in their 60s, 70s and 80s. Future U.S. Transportation Secretary and Democrat Pete Buttigieg became South Bend's mayor at age 29 in 2012, becoming that city's second-youngest ever. Also in 2012, Republican Blair Milo, now serving in Gov. Eric Holcomb's administration, became LaPorte's mayor at age 28. In that same election cycle, Frankfort voters elected 23-year-old Butler University student Chris McBarnes as their mayor, and later reelected the young Republican twice. Meanwhile, current Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry, a Democrat, is 71 and seeking a fifth term, and former Loogootee Mayor Don Bowling, also a Democrat, finished his second and final term in 2011 at age 83 as the state's then-oldest mayor. So, here in Terre Haute, Bennett and Sakbun understand their current places on the time continuum aren't so unique. And for those wondering if Sakbun's youth limits his ability to handle running the city's government or if Bennett remains sufficiently energized for another four years in the job, both candidates have a response. "Whether it's my opponent or myself or anybody else that gets involved in running for office, it's not as much about the age; it's about the experience and what you bring to the table," Bennett said last week. ❖



**Niki Kelly, Capital Chronicle:** For several years I have heard ridiculous allegations that school and public libraries' shelves are brimming with pornography and obscenity. But I think it's clear now the censorship goes much further than that — to the detriment of society as a whole. Concerned parents are pushing the issue too far under the guise of protecting kids from smut. Indianapolis author John Green last week brought national attention to an ongoing attempt by the Hamilton East Public Library to

move young adult books to adult sections. And while he got a reversal, hundreds of other books have been similarly mislabeled — the issue is far from over. The turnover of four appointments last year at the Hamilton East Public Library introduced new members — including conservative hardliner and pastor Micah Beckwith — who set their sights on limiting access to books, especially in the children's and young adult section. The board passed a new policy that focused on profanity, violence and crime — even listing specific crimes and curse words that are unacceptable for younger readers. The Indianapolis Star reported that the shelves of the Teen Zone were gutted as librarians and staff conducted a review of thousands of books expected to cost the library system serving Fishers and Noblesville around \$300,000. And make no mistake, reshelving materials in ill-suited library sections is censorship all on its own. ❖

**John Krull, Statehouse File:** Demagogues and their followers often allow a crowd's roar to confuse them. They mistake the noise for actual power. Real power often works quietly, almost in silence. Consider the way U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, has dealt with former President Donald Trump. Democrats and other critics of the Senate minority leader have bashed McConnell's ongoing quietness, his bland but stolid imperturbability, regarding Trump's mounting legal troubles. Those critics accuse McConnell of ducking a fight with the former president—of refusing to take a stand against Trump, who now is under indictment and vulnerable. Those critics are mistaken. McConnell, who does understand the difference between applause and actual power, doesn't need to speak. Because he already has. After the Senate voted on Trump's second impeachment, McConnell claimed the floor to talk about why he had voted against convicting the ex-president. Even before that moment, McConnell had done damage to Trump's prospects by telling his Republican colleagues they were free to vote their consciences on the articles of impeachment. Seven of them voted to convict Trump, a number well short of that necessary to prevent the former president from ever holding federal office again but large enough to serve as a stunning public rebuke of a leader by his own political party. "There's no question, none, that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day," McConnell said. "The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president," he said, "and having that belief was a foreseeable consequence of the growing crescendo of false statements, conspiracy theories and reckless hyperbole which the defeated president kept shouting into the largest megaphone on planet Earth." ❖

## Trump ‘proudly’ to be arrested tonight

ATLANTA — Former President Donald Trump is set to surrender to authorities at the Fulton County Jail today to face charges that he engineered a vast conspiracy with 18 allies to overturn his 2020 election defeat in Georgia ([Atlanta Journal & Constitution](#)). The former commander-in-chief announced his intentions in a social media post, saying he would arrive in Atlanta in the afternoon to “proudly” be arrested on the 41-count indictment. He plans to arrive on the eve of a Friday deadline set by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis, whose investigation stretched for more than two years and involved a special grand jury. Trump isn’t expected to spend much time at the jail, though Fulton Sheriff Patrick Labat has indicated the Republican would be treated like any others charged with a crime. That means Trump will be booked and photographed, making him the first U.S. president featured in a mug shot. He is set to be released on a \$200,000 bond that stipulates he can’t intimidate witnesses or other defendants, or take any action that would “obstruct the administration of justice,” a pointed warning about his history of attacks against Willis and other prosecutors.



## Giuliani turns himself in

ATLANTA — Rudy Giuliani, who rose to prominence decades ago as a crime-fighting federal prosecutor and the mayor of New York City, turned himself in to an Atlanta jail Wednesday on charges that he and former president Donald Trump oversaw a vast conspiracy to illegally keep Trump in power after the 2020 election ([Washington Post](#)). Giuliani’s criminal booking on a \$150,000 bond marked the most dramatic consequence yet for his role in trying to re-

verse Trump’s loss to Joe Biden nearly three years ago. Giuliani is accused of conspiring to make false statements, file false documents and commit forgery, among other charges.

## 5 counties won’t take health funds

FRANKLIN — Five Indiana counties are choosing to give up a combined maximum of \$3.3 million in enhanced public health funding from the state in 2024, with the bulk of that funding coming from Johnson County, which qualified for up to \$2.1 million in funds ([Capital Chronicle](#)). But Gov. Eric Holcomb said Tuesday he is happy with the progress — of Indiana’s 92 counties, 85, or 92%, have chosen to join the state program with a few days left before a Sept. 1 deadline. “I think if you would have asked most (people) a few months ago, some smart people told me maybe 50% (would opt in),” Holcomb said. “... this is no state takeover; this is no mandate. This is about local providers and their community; it is about addressing quality of place. “Hopefully they’ll see the light and seek to join.” None of the Johnson County commissioners responded to calls from the Indiana Capital Chronicle nor did the public health department. Johnson County leaders told the Daily Journal earlier this month that the health department didn’t need the funds and already performs the “core public health services” required by the grant funding. “We’re not greedy. I mean, I just think the consensus is we don’t need it. So why would we take it?” Johnson County Commissioner Kevin Walls told the local publication. “... It could be better utilized someplace else. That’s kind of the bottom line.” Public health departments in four other counties, Whitley, Wells, Fountain and Crawford, all indicated that their commissioners declined the funding as well. Health departments and commissioners in an additional two counties — Adams and Harrison — didn’t respond to calls about whether they’d meet the dead-

line for the public health funds.

## Prigozhin killed in Russ plane crash

MOSCOW — President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia remained silent on Thursday on the crash of a private plane that included the mercenary leader Yevgeny V. Prigozhin on the passenger manifest, giving an address that made no mention of the aircraft ([New York Times](#)). A day after the jet crashed in a field between Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Russian leader and top Kremlin officials have made no mention of the fate of Mr. Prigozhin, the founder of the Wagner private military group who staged a brief mutiny against Russia’s military leadership in June, in one of the most dramatic challenges to Mr. Putin’s rule in decades. A passenger manifest released by the Russian civil aviation authorities on Wednesday showed Mr. Prigozhin’s name and that of Wagner’s top commander, Dmitri Utkin, among the seven passengers and three crew members. And Grey Zone, a Telegram account associated with the Wagner group, said that Mr. Prigozhin had been killed.

## Noel investigation is on-going ISP says

JEFFERSONVILLE — Law enforcement isn’t saying much about the case involving former Clark County Sheriff Jamey Noel other than what was shared last week when Indiana State Police searched property Noel owns. ISP Chief Public Information Officer Ron Galaviz told the News and Tribune Wednesday that the investigation is ongoing. The [News and Tribune](#) also contacted the special prosecutor in the case, Ripley County Prosecutor Ric Hertle, but Hertle has not responded. ISP said last week that warrants were served at a home on Old Tay Bridge Road in connection with a Clark County official. The warrants are related to allegations of corruption, tax evasion, fraud and ghost employment, ISP said.