



# Likely Biden/Trump rematch dominates

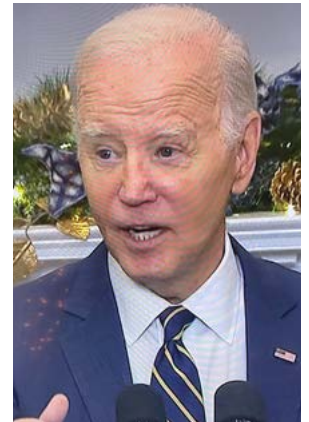
HPI's first 2024 forecast for INGov, INSen races

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — When it comes to the 2024 election, the most immediate and logical first thought is ... what a long, strange trip it's gonna be.

In the 21st Century, American voters have gone from "all politics is local" to "all politics is national." For the third consecutive presidential election, Americans will most likely be choosing from two wildly unpopular nominees between Democrat President Joe Biden and former Republican President Donald J. Trump.

Here's the kicker: Not only is Trump facing 91 criminal charges in four different legal venues, he'll likely be in trial from Super Tuesday on. Between the time he clinches his third GOP nomination and the July 15-17 Republican National Convention, he



could be a convicted felon.

With less than 11 months to go before the 2024 election, President Biden is vastly unpopular, with ABC News/Fivethirtyeight's polling composite revealing 55.2% disapprove of his job performance while 38% approve. But Donald Trump is even more unpopular, with Fivethirtyeight on Tuesday showing that 57.9% disapprove and 38.6% approve.

On Tuesday, the two candidates revealed why they are so unpopular. At a Massachusetts fundraiser, President

**Continued on page 3**

## The great discordance

By **MICHAEL J. HICKS**

MUNCIE — I'm calling the time we live in the "Great Discordance" between the perceptions Americans have about the economy and the actual state of the economy. By nearly every measure, we are in a period of remarkably strong economic performance. This is especially true of those measures economists typically use to judge the overall strength of an economy.

However, the widely respected Consumer Sentiment Survey, along with several political surveys about the economy, tell a very different story. The disagreement here isn't just wonky economist talk about



**"My approach is different: No drama, no vendettas, no whining."**

- Nikki Haley, former U.N. ambassador at Wednesday's final GOP presidential debate in Tuscaloosa.

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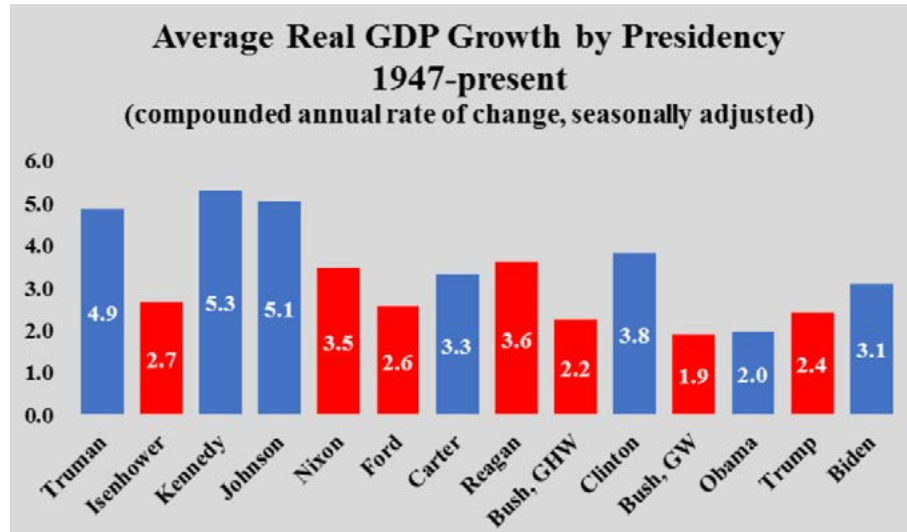
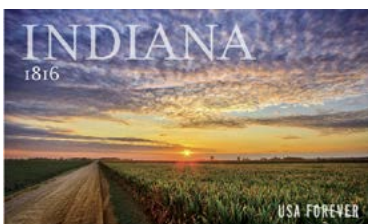
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**Jack E. Howey**  
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data. The real “Great Discordance” is between what Americans say they feel about the economy and how they are actually behaving in their real lives.

**Much of our** perception about the national economy comes from our local experience. America’s cities are growing quickly, and remain places of prosperity and opportunity. However, outside cities, growth is largely stagnant. Half of Midwestern counties have lost population for three or four decades. These are places where grown children will not return, and home values won’t keep up with inflation.

The national divergence in economic conditions means that perhaps a third of Americans will live in or be from counties that are in decline. Even if these folks do well individually, the perception of decline in these places weighs heavily on opinions.

Obviously, recent inflation plays a role in perceptions of economic unease. For some this is warranted, but for most it is not. That understanding requires an understanding of inflation and what caused it.

Our current bout of inflation was caused by too much spending during the COVID recovery, and monetary policy that responded too late. Most of that overspending was in the 2020 CARES Act, which was supported by the Trump administration and nearly every member of Congress. Later bills,

such as the American Recovery Plan, worsened it. Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon — too much money chasing too few goods.

Inflation is a decline in the value of the dollar. The choice we made during COVID was between the risk of inflation and a deeper, longer economic downturn. We got inflation. It’s normal to complain about inflation, but again the inflation we just went through involved a trade off between higher, longer unemployment and higher inflation. It is clear that political sentiment favors higher unemployment to higher inflation. That Americans appear to prefer higher unemployment over historically mild inflation is not something any of us should be proud of.

**By “historically mild,”** I mean that inflation since the start of COVID has averaged 4.6 annual rate of growth. But, the average over my lifetime is 3.8%. The trade off between that extra 0.8% inflation and employment is pretty clear. It took six years and eight months for employment to rebound from the 2007-2009 recession. It took only two years and one month to recover from the far deeper job losses of the COVID downturn.

Moreover, private sector wage growth has outpaced inflation since the start of COVID. Likewise, Social Security has also kept pace with inflation. So, the vast share

of Americans are earning more in inflation-adjusted terms than they were before COVID. That is not true for everyone.

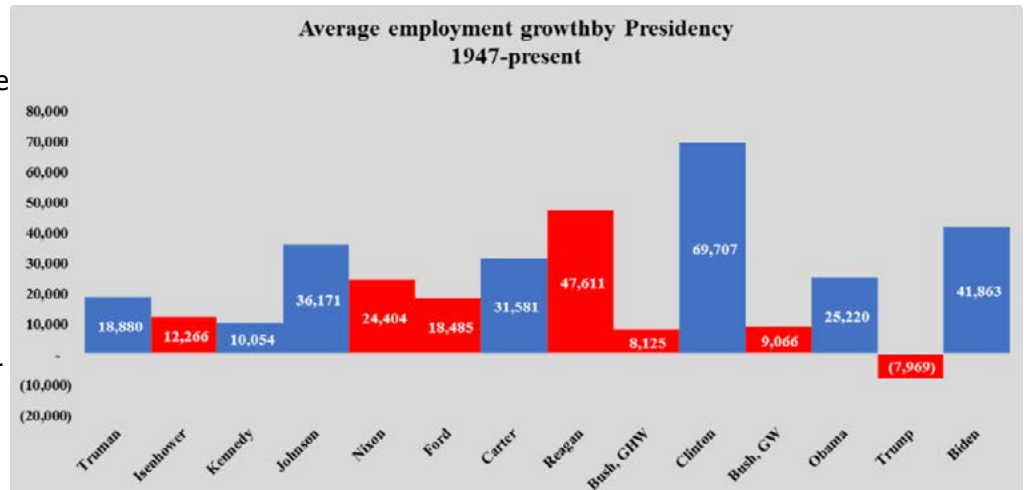
No other public sector pension — military, federal or state — has kept up with inflation. Pay for public sector employees has likewise trailed inflation, sometimes substantially. That is the source of the recruiting problems in the military, which is spreading to other occupations from school teachers to police officers. Indeed, almost all the budget windfall by state governments is simply money illusion.

**Retirees who live on savings** have felt a pinch, as stock markets have suffered a bad couple of years due to inflation. So, there are reasons for some folks to feel glum about the economy. Still, for most Americans this is a time when we should be pleased with the national economy and hopeful that we might be entering a period of more robust growth. There is even some evidence we are entering a national period more like the 1990s than the last decade.

Labor markets are tight, but we've seen three quarters of productivity growth. That is a very robust sign of a longer expansion. Labor force participation has returned to pre-COVID levels, for both men and women. Again, average wages have outpaced inflation since the start of COVID, with the greatest wage growth among the bottom two-thirds of workers. We have more people working, at higher inflation-adjusted wages, than at any time in history.

The lack of a lengthy COVID business cycle and the increase in home values has led to substantial growth in wealth by households. The balance sheet of American households has never been stronger than it is today. Consumer spending is likewise at a record pace. Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales were at record highs. This is surprising given the longer period between Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, which tends to reduce early sales.

The simple fact is that Americans are behaving as



if they are in the midst of a very strong economy. But, that is not what they are telling surveyors. And yes, I am aware there are a lot of young people worrying about mortgage rates. This week a 30-year fixed rate mortgage averaged 7.29%. But the average over the past 50 years was 7.74%. In fact, from the year the first baby boomer turned 30 until the last one turned 30, the 30-year fixed rate mortgage average was 10.43%.

Doubtless part of the perception about the economy is due to election-season politicking. That's to be expected, but we shouldn't be seeking our own bespoke reality. I have plenty of complaints about the current administration, but since Joe Biden took office, GDP growth has topped a 3.1% annualized rate. In contrast, Trump managed only 2.4%, Obama 2.0% and Bush43 only 1.9%.

**We are in the best economy** since the late 1990s boom.

The plain fact is that we are in the midst of an unusually robust recovery that is broadly beneficial to Americans. That is what economic data plainly report, but more importantly, that is how Americans are actually acting, both as consumers and as business owners. ❖

**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.**

## 2024 Forecast, from page 1

Biden suggested the only reason he's seeking reelection is because Trump is seeking a comeback. "If Trump wasn't running, I'm not sure I'd be running," Biden said.

A few hours later on Sean Hannity's Fox News show, the host tried to get Trump to tamp down fears he would install an authoritarian dictatorship in a second term. Did Trump have "any plans whatsoever, if reelected president, to abuse power? To break the law? To use

the government to go after people?" he asked. Trump deflected.

Hannity tried again: "You are promising America tonight, you would never abuse this power as retribution against anybody?"

"Except for Day 1," Trump replied. He added later, "I said, 'No, no, no — other than Day 1.'"

That underscored what Biden had said earlier in the day. "Trump's not even hiding the ball anymore," he said. "He's telling us exactly what he wants to do. He's

making no bones about it.” He added that Trump is “determined to destroy American democracy.”

Politico Playbook observed: The back-and-forth underscored just how sobering, nasty and unprecedented a Trump-Biden rematch promises to be. A presidential frontrunner idly musing about being a “dictator,” even for a day, is not normal stuff.

On Tuesday, Trump was the decisive leader in GOP primary polling at 59.2% nationally with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis at 13.1%, Nikki Haley at 10.5%, Vivek Ramaswamy at 5.2% and Chris Christie at 3%. In Real Clear Politics national polling composite, Trump leads DeSantis 61.3% to 13.2%, with Haley coming in at 10.5%. In Iowa, Trump leads with 47% (DeSantis is at 17.3% and Haley at 14.3%); in New Hampshire Trump leads with 45.7%, Haley at 18.7%, Christie at 11.3% and DeSantis at 7.7%; and in Haley’s home state of South Carolina, Trump leads her 49.3% to 18.8%.

While Haley has been endorsed by the Koch Network’s Americans For Prosperity and she has found some polling traction in recent weeks, it would be an upset for the ages if Haley or DeSantis would some how, some way defeat Trump for the presidential nomination.

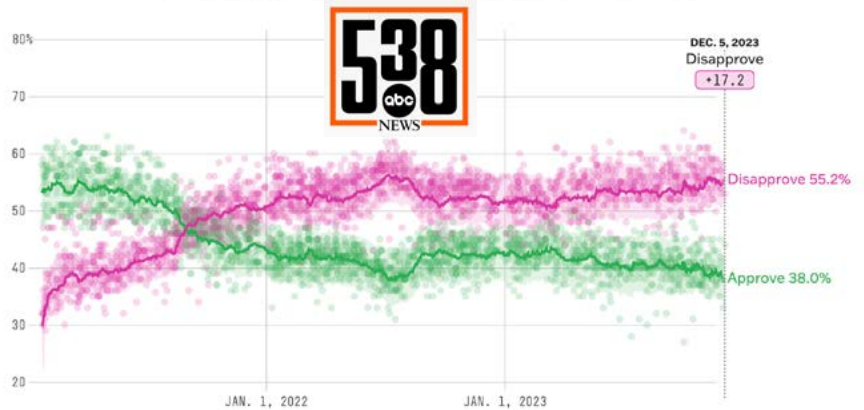
It once was that Americans voted their pocketbooks. But in 2012, voters returned President Barack Obama for a second term despite historic norms that suggested he should have lost. A key question is whether that trend continues a dozen years later. Will this be a pocketbook election, or one to preserve “democracy”?

A year before that 2012 election, the Brookings Institute observed, “If the election pitting Obama against the strongest potential Republican nominee, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, were held tomorrow, the president would probably lose. But a year is a very long time in American politics, and three factors could change the odds in Obama’s favor. Economic growth could exceed expectations, and the unemployment rate — long stuck at 9% — could come down fast enough to restore a modicum of Americans’ shattered hopes for the future. The Republicans could commit credal suicide by nominating a presidential candidate outside the mainstream or unqualified for the office.”

“He’s more likely to drive the Republican Party into defeat at the hands of Joe Biden than he is to drive the country toward dictatorship,” said Fox News commentator Britt Hume of Trump.

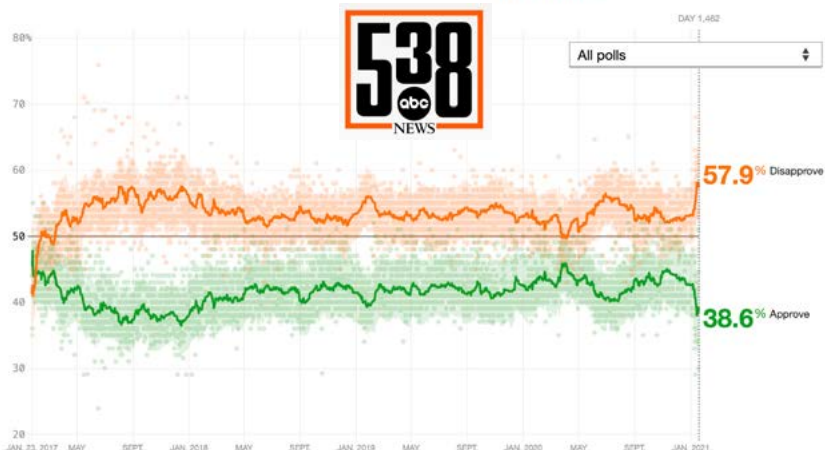
As 2023 turns to 2024, there is what Ball State economist Michael J. Hicks calls the “great discordance” with the economy. Dr. Hicks, whose column appears in

### Do Americans approve or disapprove of Joe Biden?



### How popular is Donald Trump?

An updating calculation of the president's approval rating, accounting for each poll's quality, recency, sample size and partisan lean. [How this works](#) »



HPI/State Affairs, explains, “The real great discordance is between what Americans say they feel about the economy and how they are actually behaving in their real lives. The simple fact is that Americans are behaving as if they are in the midst of a very strong economy. But, that is not what they are telling surveyors.”

### How strong is the economy?

The U.S. unemployment rate for October was 3.9%; in Indiana it was at 3.6%.

The U.S. gross domestic product increased at an annual rate of 5.2% in the third quarter, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the second quarter it increased 2.1%.

According to the BEA, personal income in the U.S. increased \$218.3 billion in the third quarter, an upward revision of \$18.8 billion from the previous estimate. Disposable personal income increased \$144.0 billion, or 2.9% in the third quarter, an upward revision of \$48.2 billion from the previous estimate. Personal saving was \$815.4 billion in the third quarter, an upward revision of \$51.0 billion from the previous estimate.

As for Wall Street, Reuters reported on Monday,

"The bull is nearly loose." The S&P 500's feverish late-year rally has brought the index to its highest closing level of 2023, leaving it just 4.2% away from the all-time peak reached in January 2022, Reuters reported. A close above 4,796.56 on the S&P 500 would confirm that the index has been in a bull market since bottoming out on Oct. 12, 2022. The benchmark index is up 19.7% for the year and has risen 28.5% from its October 2022 low." Forbes Advisor reported: As of the end of November 2023, the S&P 500 has posted a total return of about 21% for the year, well above its average annual return of around 10%.

At mid-day Tuesday the Nasdaq stood at 15,817.80 (its all-time high was 15,971.59 on Nov. 5, 2021) and the Dow was at 36,059.94 (its all-time high was 36,799.65 points on Jan. 4, 2022.)

### The 2023 elections were good for Dems

Then there are the 2023 elections. Reid Epstein of The New York Times reported that in special elections this year for state legislative offices, Democrats have exceeded President Biden's tailwind performance in the 2020 presidential election in 21 of 27 races, topping his showing by an average of 7%. "Those results, combined with an 11-point triumph for a liberal State Supreme Court candidate in Wisconsin this spring ... run counter to months of public opinion polling that has found Mr. Biden to be deeply unpopular heading into his reelection bid next year," Epstein observed.

In the November general election, Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear won reelection in Kentucky, and Ohio voters passed Issue 1 to codify abortion rights in the state constitution. The AP also projected that Democrats won both chambers of the Virginia legislature and an open seat on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Democrats believe that abortion rights will generate a good turn out in 2024. Per ABC News' exit polls, 46% of people who voted in Ohio said they voted for Biden in 2020, versus 43% for Trump, an 11-point swing from 2020.

"I think it's fair to say that we're in uncharted territory in the world of modern-day elections," said Fivethirtyeight's Lean Askarinam. "There are two possible options that account for Democrats' success tonight: One, the races that took place were so localized and dependent on individual candidates that it's no reflection at all of the national political environment, since voters regularly differentiate between state and federal elections. The

### Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth for Indiana

In the 1st quarter of 2023, the real GDP growth rate for Indiana was 1.0% per year.



Source: [Bureau of Economic Analysis](https://www.bureauofeconomicanalysis.gov/).

other possibility is that voters are disentangling the presidency from their political preferences writ large, and the Democratic Party hasn't taken a hit even though its standard-bearer, President Joe Biden, has an average approval rating below 40%. Tonight feels a lot like 2022, when Democrats won in spite of Biden, not because of him. In 2024, we'll see if Biden can win in spite of Biden."

The University of Virginia's Kyle Kondik and J. Miles Coleman said

after the November election, "Last night's results have given Democrats a shot in the arm and have confounded the recent narrative about Democrats being in deep trouble next year. But it's also true that these races in many respects differ from the election coming up next year. It may be the case that President Biden is in fact uniquely vulnerable, and that even former President Trump — himself dragged down by plenty of vulnerabilities that likely are not getting the kind of attention now that they will if he is renominated — could beat Biden."

### HPI's first 2024 forecast

Conventional wisdom during the past eight years of the Trump era has repeatedly been turned on its ear. But the question I ask is this: If you had to choose a scenario, which would you prefer to have as a candidate or campaign manager:

- 1.) An 81-year-old incumbent president, who despite his current 38% approval rating, is presiding over an emerging bull market; or
- 2.) A 78-year-old former president who is facing 91 criminal indictments, who will be tethered to court proceedings at key moments, and is saying things out loud that have never been heard in the American political context.

Trump has his electrifying 2016 upset of the millennium, but he's been on a bad losing streak since 2018 that would have permanently sidelined any other politician. The most compelling question at this point is why so many Republicans are re-hitching to the Trump lemming train, when recent polling shows that Haley is in a much better position to win back the White House. The Messenger/Harris poll on Tuesday found that a Haley-Biden match-up would result in a 4-point lead for the former South Carolina governor. Trump's lead over Biden was 7%, but again, Haley doesn't have the Trump baggage.

American voters have been reading and hearing a multitude of warnings about the authoritarian nature of a second Trump presidency. These warnings look, at this writing, to be poised to be ignored by GOP primary voters, giving credence to Trump's famous 2015 quote, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any voters, OK?"

But should Trump be convicted of a crime sometime between Super Tuesday and the Republican convention in July, will that become a sobering reality check? The 1925 murder conviction of Indiana Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon D.C. Stephenson in Noblesville collapsed the support that he had been garnering for a 1928 Republican presidential run.

"To beat Trump we have to be unified," said former U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney on Tuesday on MSNBC's Morning Joe, who says in her new book that the U.S. is "sleepwalking" into a dictatorship. "The numbers are on our side."

Cheney said on NBC's Today Show on Monday "there's no question" that Trump will refuse to leave office if he wins a second term next year and warned that a vote for the ex-president "may mean the last election that you ever get to vote in. He's already done it once. He's already attempted to seize power, and he was stopped, thankfully, and for the good of the nation and the republic."

U.S. Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., responded to Cheney on CNN's State of the Union: "I think a continuation of the Biden presidency would be a disaster for peace and prosperity at home and abroad. Our border is broken. The only person who is really going to fix a broken border is Donald Trump. When he was president, none of this stuff was going on in Ukraine. Hamas and all these other terrorist groups were afraid of Trump. I think Liz's hatred of Trump is real."

There are plenty of dangers facing President Biden. The southern border is a porous mess, though blame can be saddled on both political parties. Biden faces daunting war-time scenarios in Ukraine as well as Israel and Gaza, which could splinter Democrat Party progressives. At 81 years old, any health episode be it minor or major, could have a catastrophic impact on his reelection prospects. And he is running with a historically unpopular vice president, forming his reelection campaign with Kamala Harris as a full partner. In past election cycles (1940 and 1944 with President Franklin Roosevelt) the choice of keeping an incumbent veep was a game-time decision based on prospective election outcomes.

The oft-lament of voters in 2023 strikes a similar refrain I heard in 2016, which was: Out of 330 million Americans, are these really the best two candidates we have to choose from? **HPI Horse Race Status:** Leans Biden.

## Indiana's governor's race

The open Indiana governor's seat normally would dominate the state's political landscape over the next year. But it stands to play second fiddle to the presidential race, with Donald Trump capable of sucking the oxygen out of any venue, room, arena or ratings period.

Currently, we rate U.S. Sen. Mike Braun a nominal favorite to win the GOP nomination because he won



**U.S. Sen. Mike Braun and Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch in Kokomo last April. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**

statewide in 2018, defeating three incumbent members of Congress in doing so. He's a self-funder, but is leading the money race. He has been endorsed by Donald Trump and Club for Growth. On Tuesday, he picked up the endorsement of 2022 1st CD nominee Jennifer-Ruth Green. Over the past month, Braun has reported \$140,000 in large

donations.

That compares to \$340,000 in large donations picked up by former Commerce Secretary Brad Chambers since Nov. 1, including one for \$100,000 (from Trevor Gray), two more for \$50,000 and \$10,000 from former GOP Chairman Al Hubbard. Since Nov. 1, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch has recorded \$52,000 in large donations; Eric Doden has recorded \$60,000, and Curtis Hill has posted \$45,000 during the same time frame. Of Hill's three large donations, two were from out of state.

Key emerging issues include the Wabash River water diversion proposal for the Boone County LEAP district as well as the performance and activity of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation that has been headed by Chambers and Doden.

Chambers defended his legacy LEAP project, telling The IndyStar, "If the study indicated harm for any Hoosier community, we wouldn't have moved forward with the project." Doden said he is "deeply concerned" about the water diversion; Hill called for a "halt" to the project; Crouch asked for a "comprehensive review of state water policies"; and Braun said the controversy was due to "poor communication" by the state.

Look for the LEAP district to become a GOP campaign focal point leading into the primary. We're also watching the three self-funders - Braun, Chambers and Doden - and whether they go negative on each other. Some speculate that could create a lane for Crouch to emerge.

Whoever wins the GOP nomination will be a prohibitive favorite in the November election. Probable Democrat nominee Jennifer McCormick is showing little

money traction, posting just one large donation (for \$25,000) since September. In an out-going treasurer's report filed on Sept. 20, the McCormick campaign reported just \$293,000 raised and \$167,000 cash on hand.

**The U.S. Senate race**

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks is the prohibitive favorite to not only win the GOP nomination, but to win the seat being vacated by Sen. Braun. Banks has been endorsed by Donald Trump and the Indiana Republican Party. He faces a potential GOP primary challenge from Jackson County egg producer John Rust. His Rose Acre Farms was found liable for egg price fixing last month. Rust is suing to gain ballot access after Jackson County Republican Chair Amanda Lowery refused to certify his candidacy. Banks posted \$2,902,349 in his October FEC filing, disbursed \$1,545,851 and had \$2,691,981 cash on hand in October. Rust posted \$1,606,716, disbursed \$551,534 and had \$1,055,181 cash on hand. Democrat Keith Potts posted \$67,409, disbursed \$51,417 and had \$15,991 cash on hand. Democrat Marc Carmichael raised \$73,756 and had \$51,417 cash on hand in October.

**Congressional races**

There are currently two open congressional seats currently held by Republicans, including the 3rd CD where Rep. Banks is running for the Senate, and the 5th CD where U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz is retiring. Of the nine CDs, only the 1st CD is nominally competitive. Republican Lake County Councilman Randy Niemeyer is challenging second term Democrat U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan. The other six incumbents are in "safe" races.

In the 3rd CD, 2019 Fort Wayne Republican mayoral nominee Tim Smith had a \$200,000 cash lead over former judge Wendy Davis, and more than \$300,000 over former congressman Marlin Stutzman. In his October FEC report, Smith posted \$605,344, loaned his campaign \$500,000, had disbursements of \$54,305 and had \$551,038 cash on hand. Davis raised \$548,347, loaned her campaign \$73,500, had disbursements of \$249,741 and had \$298,606 on hand. Republican state Sen. Andy Zay reported \$461,268 raised, disbursements of \$223,394 and had \$237,874 cash on hand. Stutzman posted \$253,651, disbursements of \$10,134 and had \$243,517 on hand.

**Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

In the 5th CD, state Rep. Chuck Goodrich and trucking executive Sid Mahant both had nearly \$1 million cash on hand. Both had loaned their campaigns \$1 million. Goodrich posted \$1,530,001 for the period, had

disbursements of \$536,459 and had \$993,541 cash on hand. Mahant posted \$1,113,431, had disbursements of \$124,918 and had \$988,512 cash on hand. Republicans Raju Chinthala, Mark Hurt, Lonnie Dale Powell and Max Engling reported no activity. Goodrich has been running cable and broadcast TV ads for more than a month. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Goodrich.

We're continuing to keep an eye on the 4th CD, where U.S. Rep. Jim Baird was rumored to be considering retirement. He announced for reelection in October, saying, "Now more than ever we need capable conservatives to fight the far left extremists who want to take our nation down a path of fiscal ruin and moral depravity. I will continue to fight with my conservative colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives for life, liberty and opportunity for every Hoosier I represent."

All eyes will be on the secretary of state's website during the filing period that opens in the first week of January and closes at noon Feb. 9.

Republican Charles Bookwalter has declared and posted \$129,100 on his October FEC report, with \$93,000 cash on hand. Baird raised \$99,000 for the period and reported \$342,000 cash on hand.

State Rep. Craig Haggard says he will seek the 4th CD Republican nomination if Baird changes his mind. "My plan is not to challenge the incumbent," Haggard told Capital Chronicle. "The best way for me to put it is: I'm going to run for the Fourth Congressional District, period — when it's ready to go — whether that's in a month or two, whether that's February 9, or after this next

term. I'm running!" **Horse Race Status:** Safe Baird.

**Statewides**

Democrat Destiny Wells announced she will challenge first-term Republican Attorney General Todd Rokita. "We believe the population does not have the time for this side show," said Wells in November. "We want to get back to serving Hoosiers."

In February, Rokita announced for a second term, tweeting on X, "Confirming I am seeking reelection in '24. I am proud of my work bringing back nearly \$1 billion to taxpayers in just over two years, fighting wokeism, protecting citizens and our jobs from federal overreach, bureaucrats and special interests while always standing up for liberty."

Rokita faces a new professional misconduct investigation over his defiant response to Indiana Supreme Court reprimand he received earlier this month (Davies, State Affairs). The Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission notified Rokita of the new review in a Nov. 17 letter that



**U.S. Rep. Jim Banks (left) with State Rep. Chuck Goodrich at Gaylor Electric earlier this year. (Banks X Photo)**

asked for his response to possible professional conduct violations following his reprimand over public comments about Dr. Caitlin Bernard after she provided an abortion to a 10-year-old Ohio rape victim last summer in a case that drew national attention.

Commission Executive Director Adrienne Meiring specifically sought Rokita's reply to allegations that the Nov. 2 statement issued by his office to the Supreme Court's reprimand defending his actions contradicted his sworn admissions submitted to the court of rule

violations. Rokita's office issued a statement Wednesday that started "We cannot comment on something we have not seen," even though Meiring's letter said she was enclosing copies of the grievances submitted by two attorneys.

Rokita and Donald Trump have traded endorsements. There is also speculation that should both win second terms, Rokita could find himself on a short list to be appointed U.S. attorney general. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Rokita. ❖

## Crouch cited by Indy Democrats

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — A couple of weeks ago Howey Politics Indiana reported an unusual Suzanne Crouch fundraiser in Carmel. It was sponsored by Marianne Glick, president and owner of GlickArt, who was described as a frequent Democratic contributor.



One source told HPI that the event was filled with a number of "well-heeled women" who were writing checks for Lt.

Gov. Crouch. The source said Glick described Crouch as "a different kind of Republican."

Indiana has an open primary system where voters can cast ballots for either the Republican or Democrat. Currently former Republican superintendent of public instruction Jennifer McCormick is the only credible Democrat running for governor. There is also a lackluster U.S. Senate primary between Marc Carmichael, Keith Potts and several other Democrats.

Should the six-way GOP gubernatorial primary head into tossup territory, Crouch could find herself in a position to pick up Democrat support.

For this idea's credence, look no further than Monday night's Indianapolis City-County Council meeting, where the overwhelming Democrat majority presented Lt. Gov. Crouch with a special resolution praising her work on the Mental Health Summit last May. The resolution acknowledged: "Lt. Governor Crouch, who throughout her many years of public service has been committed to programs and services for people with disabilities, led the charge in instituting the Indiana Mental Health Roundtable, committed to partnering with institutions and organizations, both public and

private, to: 1) reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, 2) strengthen the mental health delivery system, and 3) improve access and affordability to resources.

"It was an honor to stand in front of the Indianapolis City-County Council and be presented with this resolution," said Crouch. "But, I accepted this award on behalf of everyone who serves with me on the Indiana Mental Health Roundtable and for other state leaders, like Sen. Mike Crider and Rep. Greg Steuerwald, who are strong advocates for Hoosiers battling mental illness or addiction issues."

The Indianapolis City-County Special Resolution, sponsored by Democrat Councilwoman La Keisha Jackson, also brought attention to the lieutenant governor's historic testimony on behalf of Senate Enrolled Act 1 in front of the Indiana Senate Appropriations Committee in January. SEA 1, passed by both legislative chambers and signed by Gov. Eric Holcomb, is considered the most significant legislation ever advanced in Indiana to address mental illness and addiction issues.

It was a far different reaction than Crouch received on SB 1ss during the 2022 special session of the Indiana General Assembly that had the lieutenant governor breaking a 23-23 Senate tie over affidavits that victims of rape or incest must provide as a condition of obtaining an abortion.

During her campaign kickoff in December 2022, Crouch underscored that vote. "I have always been a

relentless defender of Indiana values," she said. "That's why I cast a critical vote to toughen Indiana's abortion laws protecting the unborn."

McCormick told HPI in May, "I know the lieutenant governor was proud about casting that last vote and I'm like, shame on her. Shame on her. She just





turned back 50 years of women’s rights and freedoms. We’re not fooling anybody. Everybody’s aware of it. Very few people are in favor of it.”

Why might some Democrats gravitate toward Crouch in a Republican primary? One is that McCormick appears to be finding little traction on the money front, and if that continues, she will find herself an underwhelming underdog. In an Indiana secretary of state filing by her out-going campaign treasurer on Sept. 20, the McCormick campaign reported raising just \$293,000 and had just \$167,000 cash on hand.

Some Democrats like Glick see a potential Crouch administration more palatable than other Republicans like Sen. Mike Braun, Eric Doden and former attorney general Curtis Hill.

**China week**

It has been “China week” in the Indiana gubernatorial race. called for travel restrictions from the Asian powerhouse after reports of a “new pathogen.” And Brad Chambers released a plan to “combat the threat from China.”

On Monday, Braun joined U.S. Sens. Marco Rubio, J.D. Vance, Rick Scott, Tommy Tuberville in a letter to President Biden urging travel restrictions from China. “At this moment, the world faces another unknown pathogen emanating from the PRC that could spread to other countries, including the United States,” the senators wrote. “The PRC has reported an increase in this mystery illness — which it claims to be pneumonia caused by known pathogens — since mid-October. This illness reportedly is a special hazard for children and has overrun hospitals in the north of the country. The World Health Organization (WHO) says it is unclear if the disease is due to an overall increase in respiratory infections or separate events. If history is any indication, we have cause to be concerned.”

That was in reference to the COVID-19 pandemic that surfaced in Wuhan in late 2019, spreading to the U.S. in early 2020, prompting the Trump and Holcomb administrations to a number of mandates and restrictions.

“[W]e should not wait for the WHO to take action given its track record of slavish deference to the [Chinese Communist Party],” Braun and the senators write. “We must take the necessary steps to protect the health of Americans, and our economy. That means we should immediately restrict travel between the United States and the [People’s Republic of China] until we know more about the dangers posed by this new illness. A ban on travel now could save our country from death, lockdowns, mandates, and further outbreaks later.”

Meanwhile, Chambers released his plan to

“combat the threat of China to Indiana and Hoosiers” by prohibiting the sale of the state’s real property to countries that pose a threat to the United States. The former Commerce secretary said he was aiming to protect Indiana’s intellectual property while addressing the threat of Chinese-owned TikTok, among other proposals.

The Combating China plan is accompanied by the launch of his latest television ad titled “TikTok,” which began airing statewide this week.

“China is a threat we cannot ignore. They steal our intellectual property. They threaten our jobs and security. I’m Brad Chambers. I’m a businessman. To build an economy of the future, we must have the courage to stop China,” Chambers says in the ad. “Stop them from buying Hoosier farmland. Stop them from shipping fentanyl-laced pills to our kids and hypnotizing them with TikTok. The bottom line: Stop China.”

Chambers said of his proposal, “The threat of China continues to have far-reaching consequences that we cannot continue to ignore. That’s why, as governor, I’ll take action to stop China’s theft of our state’s intellectual property, its callous distribution of deadly fentanyl to Hoosiers and the hypnotizing effects of TikTok on our children.”

The Chambers’



Combating China plan includes:

- Prohibits the sale of Indiana real property to countries that pose a threat to the United States, including China;
- Protects Indiana’s intellectual property;
- Addresses the threat of Chinese-owned TikTok;
- Stops the fentanyl epidemic support by Chinese precursor chemicals;
- Bolsters Indiana’s role in ensuring the United States’ independence from China in semiconductors.

**U.S. Senate**

**Banks presses university president**

At a House Committee on Education and the Workforce hearing, U.S. Rep. Jim Banks (IN-03) questioned University of Pennsylvania President Ms. Liz Magill about the university allowing antisemitic speech in the wake of Hamas’s October 7th terrorist attack on our ally Israel.

Rep. Banks said: “Ms. Magill, the fact is that Penn regulates speech it doesn’t like. Everyone gets

this, no one more than the faculty and students who know exactly which lines are OK to cross. You're speaking out of both sides of your mouth. You're defending it. You allow these professors to teach at your college, you create a safe haven for this type of antisemitic behavior. You said something earlier about antisemitism being symbolic of the larger society—your university is a hotbed of it, and one of the reasons that we're seeing a rise in antisemitism and an unsafe environment for Jewish college students all over this country — you're largely responsible for it. With that, Madam Chair, I yield back."



his professional sports career and moved into politics, his extremist views have become clear. Hoosiers do not want to elect another Mike Pence-style extremist Republican. Hunter Smith's history of support for hate groups like the Indiana Family Institute make it clear that if

elected, his focus would be on pushing extreme views, not on working for Hoosiers."

## Cities

## General Assembly

### HD24: Former Colts player files

Former Indianapolis Colts punter Hunter Smith is jumping into politics with a run for the Indiana House seat being given up by Republican Rep. Donna Schaibley. Smith brings celebrity into the campaign from his 10 seasons with the Colts, including with the 2007 Super Bowl-winning team (Davies, State Affairs).

The Republican told State Affairs that he's motivated by conservative issues such as encouraging adoptions and keeping taxes low, but also environmental and sustainable agriculture matters through his business that's promoted as a "regenerative farm."

Smith, a first-time candidate, said that after Schaibley's retirement announcement he was encouraged to run for the seat by several friends, including Elise Nieshalla, who was appointed by Gov. Eric Holcomb last week to replace departing State Comptroller Tera Klutz. "I will be very humble in my approach," Smith said in an interview. "I'm not some sort of a new young firebrand who wants to step in and immediately start trying to swing a stick he doesn't carry."

He filed paperwork with the state Election Division on Nov. 9 creating a campaign committee for the Republican nomination for House District 24 that covers the western section of Carmel, along with much of Westfield and northeastern Boone County.

Business executive Bill Gutrich of Westfield has also created a campaign committee as a Republican since Schaibley announced Oct. 12 that she wouldn't seek reelection in 2024 after a decade representing the district.

"The environment is a very large deal to me, in my mind, it is one of the principal issues of our time and not just the environment or climate change, but actually right sizing and right diagnosing the issues that we have," Smith said.

The Indiana Democrat Chairman Mike Schmuhl reacted, saying, "While some people might remember Hunter Smith from his ball playing days, since Smith left

### Mishler wins Elkhart Council recount

Election night results for Elkhart's 1st District race showed a razor-thin margin between Democrat Aaron Mishler and Republican Nicole Reed ([WVPE](#)). Mishler won by just six votes, causing Republican Party leaders to file for a recount. After the re-tally was completed Monday, Mishler emerged with a seven-vote margin, winning 491-484. "Our opponent in the race, she fought a good fight and she ran hard," Mishler said. "Our victory showed how hard she worked but also how shared our volunteers and staff worked to get us across the finish line."

## Presidential 2024

### Final GOP debate had explosive exchanges

Obnoxious blowhard. Fascist neocon. Angry, bitter man. The final GOP debate of 2023 featured some of the most explosive exchanges yet, [Axios'](#) Zachary Basu writes. The Iowa caucuses are in 39 days. Donald Trump didn't show up. Top takeaways: 1. Nikki Haley treated like front-runner. Viewers may be surprised to learn the former UN ambassador is actually polling in third behind Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, given the dogpile she faced from the very jump. But Haley has all the momentum, with a stream of billionaires and Wall Street mega-donors — plus the Koch political network — now lining up behind her as the most viable Trump alternative.

Throughout the debate, Haley was the clear target of attacks over her record, her political donors and her past work on Boeing's board ([Washington Post](#)). And those attacks came as Haley has, in many ways, surpassed DeSantis as the new alternative to Trump in the GOP primary. "I love all the attention, fellas," she said amid the criticism from some of the candidates onstage.

2. Chris Christie unleashed. Moderator Megyn Kelly's first question was the one on everyone's mind: Why are you still in the race with an approval rating of 25% among Republican voters? Christie responded by declaring himself "the only person on stage who is telling the truth" about Trump: "He's unfit to be president." ❖

# Time to weigh in on 2024 HPI Power 50

**By BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Yes, it will soon be 2024 and the year of the Mother of All Elections!

If you're former President Donald J. Trump or the plethora of voices ranging from former allies and colleagues to the media, as well as "Never Trumpers," this election is going to determine the future course of not only the United States, but perhaps, western democracy.

Hoosier voters will be selecting a new governor, U.S. senator and at least two members of Congress. There are five credible Republicans running for governor along with Democrat Jennifer McCormick. At this writing, U.S. Rep. Jim Banks is the overwhelming favorite to win the senatorial seat.

The 2024 Howey Politics Indiana Power 50 will reflect this coming election. With a tepid short session of the Indiana General Assembly, some of the big players making our 2023 biennial budget will recede this year.

We also have new mayors in Evansville, Gary, and Terre Haute.

Since 1999, HPI subscribers and readers have helped generate the annual Power 50, which is designed to forecast who will be in the best position to impact politics in Indiana and the United States. It is our annual exercise in gauging clout and influence from City Halls, to the Indiana Statehouse, to Washington, D.C.

Some of you will construct your own entire list. Others will nominate those they feel deserve mention.

We will publish our 2024 version of the Power 50 on Thursday, Jan. 11.

Send your lists, nominations and comments to [bhowey@gmail.com](mailto:bhowey@gmail.com).

## Here is the current 2023 Power 50 List:

1. Gov. Eric Holcomb
2. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch
3. U.S. Sen. Mike Braun
4. Mitch Daniels

5. House Speaker Todd Huston
6. Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray
7. White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain
8. U.S. Transportation Sec. Pete Buttigieg
9. U.S. Sen. Todd Young
10. Mike Pence
11. Chief of Staff Earl Goode
12. Ways & Means Chairman Jeff Thompson
13. Senate Appropriations Chairman Ryan Mishler
14. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett
15. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry and Councilman Tom Didier
16. Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer
17. U.S. Rep. Jim Banks
18. Ambassador Joe Donnelly
19. Commerce Sec. Brad Chambers
20. State Rep. Robert Behning and Sen. Jeff Raatz
21. Luke Kenley
22. Dr. Kris Box
23. State Sen. Mike Crider
24. Attorney General Todd Rokita
25. U.S. Rep. Larry Buchson
26. Secretary of State Diego Morales
27. U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts and U.S. Justice Amy Coney Barrett
28. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.
29. Jennifer McCormick
30. Vanderburgh Commissioner Cheryl Musgrave and Natalie Rascher
31. State Rep. Robin Shackelford
32. OMB Director Cris Johnston
33. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke
34. South Bend Mayor James Mueller
35. Gary Mayor Jerome Prince and State Sen. Eddie Melton
36. Eric Doden
37. Bob Grand
38. U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan
39. U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz
40. U.S. Rep. Andre Carson
41. Education Sec. Katie Jenner Ph.D.
42. Democratic Chairman Mike Schmuhl
43. House Majority Leader Matt Lehman
44. Senate Majority Leader Chris Garten
45. Jeffersonville Mayor Mike Moore
46. Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen
47. Senate Minority Leader Greg Taylor
48. Purdue President Mung Chiang
49. Elkhart Mayor Rod Roberson
50. Trey Hollingsworth ❖

**2023 will be prelude to coming cycles**  
Biennial budget session, mayoral races will set the stage for 2024 cycle  
By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis and MARK SCHUEFF, JK, in Washington  
This year will be a "prelude," or a setting of the table for politics and policy for the coming era. There will be a new "transformational" biennial budget by the end of April and a potential "re-thinking" of high school education and, perhaps, an increase in public health funding following the most lethal pandemic in state history. More than 100 Hoosier elites will either confirm current or elect new leadership by November.  
And on a broader electoral front, the 2024 races for the White House, U.S. Senate and Indiana governor will begin to take on definition. The political  
Continued on page 3

**Indiana's slating relic**  
By CRAIG DUNN  
CARMEL – I don't normally start out the New Year by congratulating and complimenting the Democrat Party, but this year will be an exception. Marion County Democrats struck a long-overdue blow against cronyism and political power masters by ending the archaic system of slating candidates before the primary election.  
Slating is the process of the "party" putting its large thumb on the scale of democracy in an attempt to get the candidates that it prefers for the fall election. In a perfect world, this might be a reasonable approach and I am sure that when it was originally established, it

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**  
"I think it's important for us, as Republicans, to address concerns and come to an agreement. We need not waste everyone's time. We need more deliberation."  
- U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz, who voted 'present' during the 5th and 6th ballots for House speaker.

# Congress keeps flirting with shutdowns

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Back in mid-November, when President Biden signed the latest stopgap funding bill to keep the government operating, official Washington no doubt heaved a sigh of relief. The measure, which originated in the fractious House, passed there only with support from the Democratic minority — in fact, many more Democrats than Republicans voted for it, even though it was put together by the GOP leadership. It was signed a day before the federal government was due to shut down, and keeps some agencies and departments operating until Jan. 19 and the rest until Feb. 2.



Plenty of others have commented in print and online about the unusual two-tiered structure of the bill and what it accomplishes—painfully little, say many conservatives, while many Democrats and liberal commentators give GOP House Speaker Mike Johnson credit for at least keeping the government operating and buying time for Congress to do what it’s supposed to do: Fund the government through the regular appropriations process.

As longtime journalist Karen Tumulty put it in *The Washington Post*, the measure “is a challenge to Congress to get back to working in the more orderly fashion it was designed to operate in. What Johnson is trying to do — and it’s an admirable goal — is nudge the appropriations committees of both houses to get back to doing their jobs.”

The question, of course, is whether they can pull it off. This was the second stopgap funding measure this year, and the Republican caucus in the House is no less divided than it was, leading to plenty of trepidation about what will happen as the January and February deadlines approach.

**All I can say is**, I fervently hope Congress gets back on track with the appropriations process, because believe me, this is a terrible way to run a government. Even when Congress steps back from the brink of a shutdown, it’s damaging. Government employees may become inured to the threat, but it’s demoralizing and distracting nonetheless. Our economy needs to be able to operate with some certainty about what the government will be doing: repeated brinksmanship ripples through both the business and nonprofit sectors. And perhaps more than anything, there’s a huge cost in terms of the time and effort agencies have to put into figuring out how

to manage a shutdown — which they have to do well in advance. It means they can’t turn their attention to any long-term effort to plan or improve. Shutdown threats, in other words, are highly disruptive.

And that’s not even to mention the cost of an actual shutdown. A report a few years ago by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations found that the previous three shutdowns had cost taxpayers nearly \$4 billion in back pay to furloughed workers and other costs, including extra administrative work, lost revenue, and late fees on interest payments owed by the government. In other words, stopping the government is no cost-saving measure.

**The impact on the public**, of course, is also measurable. Beneficiaries of aid programs (SNAP and other nutrition programs, for instance) face huge uncertainty about whether they’ll make it week to week; loan programs are suspended, affecting small businesses, farmers, and others; the national parks and other government-funded attractions close, putting a dent in local tourist economies; and furloughed federal workers, even with the promise of back pay, sometimes begin looking for other work, while government recruiters find it tougher to find qualified candidates willing to put up with that kind of disruption.

As Congress debated this most recent funding measure, House Speaker Johnson said that his goal was to get Congress back to voting on individual appropriations



bills—and to avoid stopgap funding and massive omnibus bills in the future. That’s an admirable ambition. We can only hope that enough of his colleagues agree that, early next year, they don’t drag the United States through another shutdown drama. ❖

**Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.**

# The law protecting the lawless man

By **SABRINA HAAKE**

GARY – It's exasperating to watch the American legal system bend over backward to protect a lawless man committed to its destruction, but here we are.

Last week the D.C. Court of Appeals heard oral arguments on the proper scope of Donald Trump's gag order in the 2020 election fraud case. Whatever they decide, their opinion will be sorely tested as the trial proceeds through jury selection, evidentiary rulings and closing arguments sure to enrage an already incendiary defendant with no impulse control.



Trump, whose unparalleled dominance of right wing media and fact-challenged fans yields a menacing threat, is flexing to dismantle the rule of law to escape it. Lacking a viable legal defense to multiple prosecutions for business and tax fraud, hush money campaign fraud, "find-me-eleven-thousand-votes" conspiracy fraud, and "Hang Mike Pence" fake elector fraud, Trump's brazen strategy is to skip all substance and go straight for the jugular of judicial authority itself.

Anyone paying attention is getting an extraordinary civics lesson wrought from a perilous chapter in American history.

To the trial bar, a gag order presents a simple intersection between two common interests: The rule of law and free speech. Gag orders preserve fair trials by making sure witnesses, jurors and prospective jurors are not intimidated or frightened into silence (or perjury). Such orders often run up against the First Amendment, because they limit speech and communication for the duration of a trial, which can last many months.

Trump's particular case is without precedent because his vitriolic attacks are without precedent, as is his status as a defeated president seeking reelection. Most defendants are counseled by their defense lawyers to keep quiet; they certainly don't go out of their way to attack the rule of law or the judge presiding over their case. Not so Trump, who openly encourages political violence and routinely attacks prosecutors, judges, staff, witnesses, and the American legal system itself.

**In the unrelated business fraud case,** presiding Judge Arthur Engoron and his staff received hundreds of credible threats following Trump's attacks. In the election fraud case, Trump makes nonstop references to "Deranged Jack Smith" and "Smith's team of Thugs." His public promise that "IF YOU GO AFTER ME, I'M COMING AFTER YOU," and his salivating reverence for putting officials to death alongside petty shoplifters, have infused domestic politics with a sinister threat of violence.

Although Trump attacks his legal opponents to amplify his fundraising, First Amendment protection yields at the point where speech intimidates, incites violence, criminal acts, or a riot.

At oral argument on the gag order, Trump's lawyers advanced a free-for-all absolutist view, one that would allow Trump to walk a tightrope adjacent to the line of inciting violence, just like his "fight like hell or you're not going to have a country anymore" J6 speech on the Ellipse. As his theory seems to go, Trump could obliquely encourage MAGA to burn down a witness' house while he sleeps, without using those exact words. If the house remains uncharred the next morning, Trump's speech is protected under the First Amendment because, 1. He didn't explicitly mention arson; and

2. The possibility of future violence is too remote. As the prosecution put it, "(Trump)... well knows that by publicly targeting perceived adversaries with inflammatory language, he can maintain a patina of plausible deniability while ensuring the desired results."

**What passes for substance** on Fox is no more than a platitude. Trump's relentless attacks against DOJ/Jack Smith "thugs" fall under the rubric of political speech because Smith was appointed special counsel by an attorney general serving under Biden's presidency. No factual nexus or evidence linking Smith's decisions to Biden is needed; Trump's right-wing echo chamber feeds on insinuating headlines alone.

Trump's alleged political speech is clearly intended to delegitimize the legal system itself, as he campaigns on a promise to weaponize the rule of law and seek revenge. Judge Patricia Millett, who served on the gag order appeals panel, told defense counsel that labeling Trump's attacks as "core political speech" begs the question of whether it is both political speech and speech "aimed at derailing or corrupting the criminal justice process."

In other words, Trump counsels' constant refrain of "core political speech protected by the First Amendment" is circular and empty, like using a word in a sentence to define what that word means.

For now, the gag order remains on hold while the appellate court examines its scope. Whatever the outcome, the tension between Trump's free speech and the rule of law will likely be settled by the Supreme Court.

Weaponizing the First Amendment in unprecedented ways, Trump has transformed a venerated legal shield into a lethal sword that threatens democracy itself. The painful civics lesson from this saga, likely to get worse before it gets better, is that the U.S. is just as vulnerable, just as susceptible as any other nation in the world, to the evil march of fascism.

In that regard, Trump is teaching us a valuable lesson: The U.S. is not exceptional after all. ❖

**Haake is an attorney practicing in Gary and Chicago.**

# Urban segregation in America's melting pots

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

EVANSVILLE – America's sprawling urban landscapes, often celebrated as melting pots, hide a surprising truth: Rather than being bastions of diversity, they are hotbeds of segregation.



This revelation, presented in a groundbreaking study published in *Nature*, titled "Human mobility networks reveal increased segregation in large cities," overturns the long-standing notion of inherent urban diversity. By tracking the movements of 9.6 million people through mobile phone data, the research reveals a startling fact: Contrary to common belief, larger cities exhibit greater segregation

than smaller ones.

This revelation forces us to rethink our understanding of urban diversity. Historically, we've seen major cities as dynamic hubs promoting varied interactions. Yet, data paints a different picture. In the 10 largest metropolitan areas, segregation surpasses that in smaller cities by an astonishing 67%, dismantling the urban melting pot myth and exposing a pattern of isolated communities.

The roots of this segregation lie in city spaces themselves. Take, for example, the diverse array of restaurants in a city, each appealing to specific tastes and, unintentionally, to certain socioeconomic groups. These spaces, while enriching culturally, also lead to self-segregation. This trend isn't confined to dining; it permeates various urban areas, deepening the existing divides.

**This study serves as a crucial** wake-up call. Larger cities, though rich in opportunities, inadvertently reinforce socioeconomic divides. These divisions have broad implications, affecting social cohesion, economic progress, and public health. Ironically, the diversity these cities pride themselves on is contradicted by the segregation they contain.

Yet, the study isn't just a problem statement; it offers solutions through thoughtful urban design. It proposes "hubs" — spaces deliberately crafted to connect high and low socioeconomic neighborhoods. It also introduces a "bridging index" to gauge these spaces' effectiveness in promoting integration. For instance, a shopping center at the juncture of diverse neighborhoods could become a true melting pot, diminishing current segregation.

The study not only raises awareness but also presents an opportunity for innovative urban development. Embracing true diversity requires rethinking urban planning, going beyond physical 'hubs' to inclusive policies and community efforts that unite different groups.

Public transportation plays a crucial role here. An efficient, accessible transit system can link disparate neighborhoods, making the city more inclusive. It can become both a literal and symbolic vehicle for integration, providing a common space for diverse groups.

Educational institutions and public spaces also shape the urban social fabric. Schools and parks serving varied socioeconomic backgrounds can become diversity incubators, nurturing exposure to different cultures from an early age.

**The study also calls for a** reevaluation of housing and urban development policies. Zoning laws, housing affordability, and urban renewal need critical examination to avoid unintentional segregation. Rethinking these policies can foster inclusivity and diversity.

While grand government-led initiatives and urban design may help at the margins, history advises caution. Often, top-down policies fail, tripped up by unforeseen social complexities. The proposed urban 'hubs', designed to bridge socioeconomic divides, risk repeating this error. They assume government planners can foresee and manipulate community dynamics, a risky venture. Such efforts frequently ignore the complex, natural human interactions for simplistic solutions.

Real change typically stems not from government planners but from individual choices and market dynamism. Personal reasons — economic, cultural, familial — guide choices about residence, dining, and socializing. These decisions usually stem from personal preferences and circumstances, not urban planning. In this intricate web of individual decisions and market forces lies the potential solution to urban segregation. Policies enhancing economic mobility and opportunity can naturally lead to more integrated communities, without government imposition.

Therefore, addressing urban segregation requires a more nuanced approach. It calls for creating conditions where diverse communities can naturally thrive — through better economic chances, education, and infrastructure — rather than rigid urban design. The challenge is not just to design superficially diverse cities, but to cultivate environments where diversity thrives in residents' daily choices and interactions.

Achieving true urban diversity goes beyond superficial alterations. It necessitates profound rethinking of our urban design, governance, and lifestyle. ❖

**Joshua Claybourn is an attorney and historian. Visit him online at [JoshuaClaybourn.com](http://JoshuaClaybourn.com).  
JoshuaClaybourn.**

# Studebaker closing brought despair, hope

By JACK COLWELL  
[South Bend Tribune](#)

SOUTH BEND – As they hurried through Gate 1 on Sample Street at the end of their shift, on that afternoon of Dec. 9, 1963, Studebaker workers didn't yet know the news.



Then they saw it. In that "Read-all-about-it!" era of newspaper street sales, carriers of The South Bend Tribune, then an afternoon newspaper, displayed copies just off the presses with the jarring headline that auto output was ending in South Bend.

Since I wrote the story breaking the news, the bad news that Studebaker wouldn't yet confirm, I remember well the

reaction.

Initially, for many of the workers, there was disbelief. Studebaker had always been here. Since long before they were born. For 111 years, producing farm wagons, then wagons settlers took to open the West and then autos for 61 years.

In the community, there were expressions of hope and despair.

Hope resounded in the rallying declaration of Paul D. Gilbert, owner of the area's largest clothing store: "This is not Studebaker, Indiana. This is South Bend, Indiana."

Gilbert was right. But it took some time, over half a century, to prove it to the rest of the nation. A steady population decline continued decade after decade, with a national description in 2011 of South Bend as a dying city.

**Then the 2020** Census showed there was significant population growth in the prior decade. Pete Buttigieg, in his presidential campaign, sang the praises of South Bend progress. The national news media came to see, and most of resulting stories were positive.

Now, we see more developments downtown and elsewhere in the city and welcome the news of a \$3.5 billion electric vehicle battery complex in the county.

But those in despair in the wake of the Studebaker closing had ample reason for their feelings. It was a

terrible time, especially for the some 7,000 Studebaker workers who lost their jobs. Also, for the thousands of others who were on layoff, hoping to be called back by Studebaker.

For all those workers the degree of despair was to change. It grew worse. They found that their pensions as well as their jobs were gone.

Their suddenly decimated finances meant that they no longer were spending as they had at stores or anywhere else locally. They couldn't afford movies or restaurants. This brought a wave of other layoffs and business closures.

**One of the worst results** of the despair was recorded in Tribune obituaries. An obit would tell of the death of a former Studebaker worker, say around 55 years old, with no cause of death listed. Those who knew the despair of that person – with no job, no pension, no hope – knew of or guessed at the cause. The precise suicide toll is uncertain.

Yet, amid all this, hope survived.

So did determination to prove the national critics wrong in their projections that grass would grow in the streets of South Bend.

Potholes, yes, after a harsh winter. Never grass.

In fact, one response was a widespread street paving program in the administration of Mayor Lloyd M. Allen, who had been elected just a month before Studebaker's decision.

Other mayors over the decades fought for projects to reject despair, to improve the city – Century Center, East Race Waterway, a first-class baseball stadium. Those and other projects often faced fierce opposition from citizens with a "can't do" attitude. They were dispirited, pessimistic. Could South Bend really afford to do anything? And, anyway, would such projects have any chance for success here?

Hope prevailed in approval of those and other significant improvements that kept the area viable until the time when opportunities and a "can do" attitude would project a brighter future.

There no longer was Studebaker. There

always still was Notre Dame. More manufacturing jobs were vanishing as they did also in other Midwest "Rust Belt" cities. But there has been growing diversity in employment. There always was hope. Finally, it overcame despair. ❖



# Haley has work to do to surpass Trump

By KYLE KONDIK

CHAROTTESVILLE, Va. – As we look ahead to — even perhaps as GOP primary voters look past — Wednesday night’s fourth Republican presidential primary debate, former Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has become a focus in the race. She arguably has surpassed Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL) as former President Donald Trump’s leading rival, and she recently won the support of Americans for Prosperity, the well-funded conservative outside group founded by the Koch brothers.

DeSantis still generally leads Haley nationally — he’s at 13% while Haley is at about 10.5%, per the FiveThirtyEight average. DeSantis also has a small lead on Haley in Iowa, the first contest of the nomination season. But Haley leads DeSantis in New Hampshire and South Carolina, the latter of which she governed from 2011-2017.

Of course, both DeSantis and Haley are well behind Trump essentially everywhere one looks, with Trump near 60% in national polls and around 45%-50% in the key kickoff states, although the polling in those states pre-dates Thanksgiving. There has, however, been some recent national polling, and Trump’s position remains strong. The DeSantis-Haley matchup, which we expect to be contentious once again in the debate tonight, is reminiscent of that meme (maybe you’re familiar with it) in which an athlete is shown celebrating wildly on a medal stand, only for it to be revealed that he did not actually win first place. It’s fair to say that DeSantis and Haley are jockeying for second, but not really for first, at least not at the moment.

This is at least in part because both DeSantis and Haley have thus far been unable to dislodge the piece of the GOP electorate that is hypothetically soft for Trump: college-educated voters. Haley has shown some strength among these voters, but not enough to even surpass Trump with this group—let alone with non-college Republicans, with whom Trump dominates.

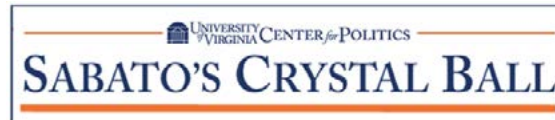
**At a couple of points earlier** this year, we noted the differences between Republican primary voters who do and do not hold a four-year college degree. This education gap was a key feature of the 2016 primary season, the last competitive Republican primary before this one. Donald Trump generally did markedly better with non-college Republicans than college Republicans—this presaged the changes to the broader electorate he helped propagate, getting a bigger share of white non-college voters than previous Republican presidential candidates but doing worse among white college graduates than

past Republicans. This dynamic endures in 2024 primary polling—one of the big questions we were pondering several months ago was whether someone could build a strong enough base among college-educated Republicans while also cutting into Trump’s non-college base to a significant enough degree to finish ahead of him in key states.

**So far, this has not happened**, and Trump’s huge leads nationally and in the kickoff states are built not only on very strong non-college support, but also better-than-needed support among college-educated Republicans. Back in the summer, we dubbed this Trump coalition “a case of beer plus a bottle of wine,” an homage to the classic “beer track versus wine track” distinction sometimes seen in primaries. In this instance, beer track means someone who does not hold a four-year college degree, and wine track means

someone who does. We noted that Trump had lots of beer track backing and more than enough wine track backing. This remains the case.

The Republican firm Echelon Insights, in its national polling from mid-November, found Trump getting 61%. That included Trump getting 67% among non-college educated voters and 48% among college-educated voters — so he was doing markedly worse with the latter group, but still leading it comfortably. Meanwhile, DeSantis



and Haley were far behind at 12% apiece nationally. But Haley had a clear education gap in her support — 20% with college-educated voters to just 7% with the non-college group — while DeSantis did not, at 12% with non-college and 13% with college respondents.

This basic dynamic is also present in the key kickoff states of Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina (we’re excluding the other early GOP state, Nevada, because there is hardly any polling there and because there is a separate primary, which Haley is participating in, and caucus, which features Trump and DeSantis—the



latter contest is the one that awards the delegates).

We looked at some recent nonpartisan polls that provided crosstab information about how Trump, DeSantis, and Haley are doing with college versus non-college voters. There was one poll in Iowa (Iowa State University/Civiqs from mid-November), two polls in New Hampshire (CNN/University of New Hampshire Survey Center from mid-November and Monmouth University/Washington Post from mid-November), and one poll from South Carolina (CNN/SSRS from late October) that provided the information we wanted. Here's what they showed:

■ **Iowa (Iowa State/Civiqs):** Overall: Trump 54%, DeSantis 18%, Haley 12%; non-college: Trump 60%, DeSantis 16%, Haley 9%; college graduate: Trump 45%, DeSantis 22%, Haley 18%; postgraduate (this poll separated out college degree and postgraduate and did not include a combined college degree or higher vote): Trump 50%, DeSantis 21%, Haley 14%.

■ **New Hampshire:CNN/UNH:** Overall: Trump 42%, Haley 20%, DeSantis 9%; non-college: Trump 48% Haley 18%, DeSantis 8%; college: Trump 29%, Haley 26%, DeSantis 9%

■ **Monmouth/Washington Post:** Overall: Trump 46%, Haley 18%, DeSantis 7%; non-college: Trump 57%, Haley 11%, DeSantis 6%; college: Trump 32%, Haley 29%, DeSantis 8%

■ **South Carolina (CNN/SSRS):** Overall: Trump 53%, Haley 22%, DeSantis 11%; non-college: Trump 66%, Haley 16%, DeSantis 8%; college: Trump 32%, Haley 32%, DeSantis 17%

So we see a similar basic story: Trump does better with non-college voters than college voters, but he's still clearly doing well enough with college voters to prevent any of the other Republicans from getting close to him in the polls.

It's also worth noting that another GOP candidate, former Gov. Chris Christie (R-NJ), was in third place and ahead of DeSantis in both New Hampshire polls. His level of support skews toward college-educated voters, too, meaning that his presence in the race likely complicates Haley's ability to make greater inroads with this group in the Granite State.

**One key question about** the GOP primary season, and it may not be a key question at all if Trump steamrolls to the nomination as the current polls suggest, is what the educational makeup of the electorate actually is.

The 2016 state-level GOP primary exit polls suggested an almost 50-50 breakdown of college-educated versus non-college educated Republicans, which seems unrealistic given that the broader electorate is only about two-fifths college-educated and that exit polls can overstate the education level of the electorate. It is also possible that the GOP electorate has become a little less college-educated overall over the past eight years, because that is a group the party has lost strength with in the Trump era.

So while the exit polls of Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina all reported that roughly 50-50 split in 2016, it seems reasonable to believe that was overstated back then, and that we should expect there to be more voters who do not hold four-year degrees than those who do hold four-year degrees in GOP nominating contests.

Certainly that's what pollsters right now are suggesting in the leadoff states. The polls we previously cited also included some information about the GOP electorates in those states. The Iowa State/Civiqs poll had an electorate that was 44% college-educated (combining the aforementioned college graduate and postgraduate categories); the two New Hampshire polls showed that state at 34% (CNN/UNH) or 41% (Monmouth/Washington Post); and it was 38% in the CNN/SSRS South Carolina poll. Reasonable people familiar with these electorates may quibble on the margins with these numbers, but our overall takeaway is this — these polling results suggest that voters without a four-year degree are likelier to make up a larger share of the electorate in each of these three states, despite what the 2016 exit polls suggested.

Of the three states, New Hampshire has the highest overall four-year college attainment among adults 25 and older (it is above the national average) while Iowa and South Carolina have a bit lower-than average college attainment; Iowa is a lower-turnout caucus, which might make its level of college attainment higher than if it held a larger-turnout primary.

**So just to sum it up,** if one is splitting the GOP electorate by education level, the non-degree holding part is likely going to be bigger than the degree-holding part, and Trump is dominating with that larger part and doing perfectly fine with the smaller portion.

It is true that nomination contests can be more fluid than general elections. Remember, in a primary, party voters are choosing among candidates with whom they broadly agree, whereas the choice is much clearer in a general election, as voters are choosing between the two major parties. We don't have to go back far to see a primary race that changed rapidly in a very compressed timeframe — in the 2020 Democratic race, Joe Biden went from being around 20% in national polls right before Super Tuesday to over 50% just a week later.

But remember that the 2020 Democratic race had no clear dominant frontrunner prior to Biden grabbing that position by performing well on Super Tuesday, which was preceded by some of his rivals dropping out and endorsing him.

This Republican race already has such a candidate, Trump. So while the race could change fast, there has been no indication that it will. If there is a shift against Trump, we'd expect to see it in the college-educated bloc before we see it in the non-college bloc. It's something we'll continue to monitor, even as Trump's standing with that group remains more than strong enough to control the race. ❖

## Court hears RFRA abortion case

INDIANAPOLIS – A panel of three Indiana Court of Appeals judges are weighing arguments over whether the state’s near-total abortion ban violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act signed into law by then-Gov. Mike Pence in 2015 (Davies, [State Affairs](#)). The judges heard Wednesday from lawyers for the state attorney general’s office and the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of women who



claimed the ban violates their religious rights on when they believe abortion is acceptable. The state Supreme Court rejected in June the ACLU’s broad challenge to the abortion ban’s constitutionality, allowing it to take effect in August.

Along with the religious freedom challenge, the ACLU continues pursuing a separate lawsuit arguing that the ban’s health exceptions aren’t broad enough to comply with the state constitution. The ACLU wants courts to find the abortion ban violates the religious freedom law, often referred to as RFRA, and allow that ruling to be extended statewide through class-action certification. “Does it go back to the fact that the Legislature is legislating one religion over another one, a Christian-held religion over a Jewish or a Muslim faith?” Judge Leanna Weissmann said.

Indiana Solicitor General James Barta argued the Legislature was within its rights to decide the state’s compelling interest was to protect human life from the time of conception. “The prohibition on abortion and the exceptions are religiously neutral. People of all faiths are bound by the general prohibition and can take advantage of the exceptions,” said Barta, who is a top deputy to Republican Attorney

General Todd Rokita. Ken Falk, the ACLU of Indiana’s legal director, told the judges that the women the group is representing have changed sexual behaviors to avoid pregnancies since they are uncertain of abortion availability. Falk described one woman who wants to have another child but had an abortion previously because the fetus suffered from a serious birth defect. “She and her husband need to know that an abortion will be available because her religious belief compels her to obtain an abortion if, in fact, that’s necessary to preserve her health, whether that be physical or mental health,” Falk said. “She doesn’t have that assurance now because of this law.”

## Indiana hit by more cyber attacks

CROWN POINT — In November 2022, administrators at Crown Point Community Schools faced a bleak decision. Private data from the district had been stolen through an email phishing scheme and was being held hostage (Gerber, [CNHI](#)). Their choice? Pay \$2.6 million in ransom or face the possibility that the private information of students and staff could be sold online to the highest bidder. Superintendent Todd Terrill reached out to the FBI, Homeland Security and the Indiana Department of Education for help. After weeks of high-stress negotiations with the hackers, the ransom was reduced to \$500,000. “We are fortunate that we had strong financial management over many years that meant we could incur these costs,” Terrill said during a school board meeting earlier this year. In the first half of 2021, the average ransomware payment made by a government entity was \$570,000, according to a study by the IT security firm KnowBe4.

## Coats calls for unity among allies

ANDERSON — A United States government with a diminished

standing in the world could mean a perilous state of affairs that no one should want to pass along to the next generation, a native Hoosier with nearly five decades of experience in politics and government said (de la Bastide, [Anderson Herald Bulletin](#)). During an appearance Tuesday at Anderson University, former U.S. Senator Dan Coats said rancor in the halls of Congress and dysfunction elsewhere in the government is being noticed by the rest of the world, and it’s painting an unflattering portrait of the country’s values. “The picture going out to the world right now about where America is or what America is, it’s not a nice picture,” Coats said during a wide-ranging conversation with AU President John Pistole. “We’re not going to solve the threats that may come from China, North Korea, Syria, Iraq and other places unless we join together with other free nations to oppose these dangerous regimes.”

## FBI serving warrants in Indy

INDIANAPOLIS — Federal agents are serving warrants on the north side and other locations in Central Indiana, according to the FBI. An FBI spokesperson told [WRTV](#) on Wednesday that agents are “active in multiple locations” in and around Indianapolis. A DEA spokesman confirmed their agents are also involved in the investigation.

## McCarthy exits Congress

WASHINGTON — Former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is resigning from Congress and will leave at the end of this year, he announced in a Wall Street Journal op-ed on Wednesday coming two months after his unprecedented ouster from the speakership ([CNN](#)). “No matter the odds, or personal cost, we did the right thing. That may seem out of fashion in Washington these days, but delivering results.”