

INDIANA POLICY

Review

Summer 2022

CRITICAL RACE
THEORY UPDATE
Abbott, p.17



K-12 Education: Choice Matters

“Involved Indiana parents desire a safe, academically and vocationally sound education reflecting their personal values. Given the phenomenal increase in school performance data, parents are now equipped to seek customized non-standard experiences tailored to the needs of their specific child or, at least, educational options.” — *Maryann O. Keating*

“When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government and to provide new guards for their future security.”



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A FUTURE THAT WORKS

Our mission is to marshal the best thought on governmental, economic and educational issues at the state and municipal levels. We seek to accomplish this in ways that:

- Exalt the truths of the Declaration of Independence, especially as they apply to the interrelated freedoms of religion, property and speech.
- Emphasize the primacy of the individual in addressing public concerns.
- Recognize that equality of opportunity is sacrificed in pursuit of equality of results.

The foundation encourages research and discussion on the widest range of Indiana public policy issues. Although the philosophical and economic prejudices inherent in its mission might prompt disagreement, the foundation strives to avoid political or social bias in its work. Those who believe they detect such bias are asked to provide details of a factual nature so that errors may be corrected.

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Wednesday Whist

Our Pusillanimous Courts

American politics operates as a ratchet. That is, it allows continuous motion in one direction while preventing motion in the opposite direction.

Some time ago, the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, led by the late Charlie Rice of Notre Dame Law School and then foundation president Mike Pence, took the Legislature to the state Supreme Court.

We argued that legislators hid a vote redefining their own salaries behind an unrelated provision to aid the disabled. We said it violated Article 4, Sec. 19 of the Indiana Constitution, to wit:

“Every act shall embrace but one subject and matters properly connected therewith.”

Yet, the court upheld a lower court ruling although it was conceded that the legislation in fact did not “embrace but one subject.” The majority justices said we didn’t have standing, that we “failed to demonstrate any interest beyond that of the general public.”

That was in 1995. At the time, although disappointed by the ruling, we thought that perhaps the decision touched on points of jurisprudence beyond the ken of everyday journalists, something in the legal murk that only an accomplished juris doctor could sort out.

Today, we understand but wish we didn’t. We have gone back and read the dissenting opinion by Justice Brent Dickson:

“By refusing to allow the plaintiffs access to the courts for resolution of their claims of constitutional violation, the majority appears to relinquish to the legislative branch a portion of this Court’s judicial responsibility.”

Do you see what happened there? The Court had a choice between the Constitution and the legislative leadership. It chose the legislative leadership.

Put another way, it had a choice between supporting a collegial institution of the ruling elite or upholding the law. It chose the ruling elite.

Nobody had to go to the trouble of actually changing the words of the Constitution. They just ignored them, and the Court was perfectly fine with that — even for legislators to deceive the public to enrich themselves. Does it get more clear?

Looking forward, and given the foundation’s experience with Section 4, what now would prevent the court to rule in support of legislation, say, increasing the requirements to run for public office in ways that ensure incumbency and negate democratic remedy by the irrelevant “general public”?

Every “emergency” is met with calls to nullify this or that individual freedom. Our pusillanimous courts are largely silent.

As a result for many decades now the direction of the ratchet has been toward the centralization of power and the degradation of constitution.

Eventually, though, a ratchet breaks when either its prowl or the mainstay fails under stress.

Listen for the snap. — tcl



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A Survey of K-12 Education in Indiana: Changing Patterns

Increased competition is a cost-effective means of attaining higher quality in both public and private schools.

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Hoosiers hold opinions about K-12 education: Where it should take place, who should pay and how to determine its quality. The assumption that the K-12 student next door is attending the traditional public school down the street or the religiously affiliated one around the corner is no longer valid. The changes to Indiana K-12 education during the past 10 years have been significant and, for those not directly engaged in K-12, it is difficult to conceive of the present K-12 pattern. This survey of Indiana policy options, enrollment and academic performance outlines the current topography of Indiana K-12 education.

Indiana Options for K-12 Education

Around the country, public and private K-12 choices are increasing and each state labels, finances and regulates these options differently. EdChoice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, publishes a comprehensive guide to school choice programs for every U.S. state ("The ABCs of School Choice, 2022"). Our goal is to focus on which educational options are used in Indiana and how these uses are affecting Indiana K-12 education.

The appointed Secretary of Education acts as CEO of the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and is one of 11 members on Indiana's State Board of Education. Public educational policy and funding, however, originates in the General Assembly. First we consider types of institutions and then Indiana policy support.

Public District Schools — This refers to traditional public schools, operated and financed by tax revenue for students living in a specified geographic neighborhood, sometimes referred to as the catchment area. However, school districts may also operate magnet schools with specialized curriculums and programs not available in neighborhood schools.

Inter-Intra District Open Enrollment Public Schools — Intra-district choice allows families to enroll in any public school within their district. Inter-district choice allows families to send their children to out-of-district traditional public schools. Public schools, however, generally give enrollment preference to those living within assigned district lines.

Charter Schools — These are independently run schools but funded with tax revenue. They are exempt from many rules and regulations of district schools but accept public accountability. In most states, if a charter school receives more applications than places available, they accept students through a lottery process.

Eleven charter schools opened in 2002, the first year for charter schools in Indiana. For the 2020-2021 school year, the Indiana Department of Education lists 112 charter schools.

Each charter school must be sponsored by a nonprofit organization. Like traditional public schools, charters are free to enter into contracts for educational services provided by profit-seeking firms. They may also receive private donations. Virtual charter schools are expected to meet the same state requirements as on-site charter schools.

Charter schools are free to tailor programs to address the needs of a particular community such as disadvantaged or at-risk students. They may have strict admission, attendance and parent expectation requirements that discourage certain students from applying. In some cases, families assume responsibility for amenities, such as transportation. A charter school may have less-than-optimal facilities and resources than district schools. However, like Success Academy in South Bend, a charter can legally lease or buy unused public district school space (Lanich).

K-12 charter schools vary significantly in defining their mission and curriculum. Consider, for example, two existing secondary charter programs. Herron High School, sponsored by the Indianapolis mayor, provides a classical liberal arts education for students in grades 9 through 12. On the other hand, Purdue Polytechnic High School (PPHS) offers STEM-focused experiences, including industry internships and technical certifications. PPHS has locations in Englewood, Indianapolis and South Bend. Graduates meeting certain standards are offered admission to Purdue University, but the PPHS charter, with its board of directors, is a separate entity from Purdue University.

Educational choice no longer refers just to K-12 school options but to a diverse set of learning opportunities for those roughly between the ages of 5 to 19. Here, a distinction is sometimes made between virtual online charter educational programs tailored to an individual and, on the other hand, charter cyber schools with a set curriculum. For example, Indiana Connections Academy would be considered a charter cyber school for grades K-12, accredited by Cognia. Connections Academy is a non-profit division of

Pearson Education, Inc., a large producer and global distributor of educational materials.

At this point, it is impossible to predict either growth in private demand or state and local policy in Indiana regarding charter schools. Representing them is the Indiana Charter School Board (ICSB).

Private Schools — These may be either not-for-profit or profit-seeking institutions. Private schools are required by the state to maintain accurate daily records to verify enrollment and attendance for each child. However, it is the responsibility of public K-12 districts to locate, identify and evaluate all students with disabilities, residing within its boundaries, including those attending nonpublic facilities or being homeschooled.

Indiana offers two voluntary forms of state approval for nonpublic schools, namely nonpublic state accreditation and recognition status. Both types require their personnel to be "properly licensed." The standards for nonpublic state accreditation are the same as those required for public schools. Nonpublic state-accredited schools agree to administer ILEARN and ISTEP+ exams and make these results available to the Department of Education. Indiana Learning Evaluation Assessment Readiness Network (ILEARN) measures student achievement and growth in high school biology, English/Language Arts (grades 3 through 8), Mathematics (grades 3 through 8), Science (grades 4 and 6) and Social Studies (grade 5). Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) is an assessment for high school students that measures student achievement in Mathematics and English/Language Arts and it serves as a graduation qualifying examination.

A recognized nonpublic school must specify its mission and comply with governance and curriculum requirements. Recognized nonpublic schools can request using alternate tests in place of ILEARN and ISTEP. Recognized nonpublic schools show the highest growth rate of K-12 institutions in Indiana by school type.

At this time, religiously affiliated nonprofit schools continue to enroll the highest percentage of K-12 students in Indiana's nonpublic schools. Networks of Catholic, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Baptist, Mennonite, etc., schools have a long history in Indiana. Most of these affiliated schools sponsored and subsidized by a particular denomination were established before Indiana set aside K-12 funds for attendance at private schools. Like many Catholic diocesan schools, they may be state accredited or accredited elsewhere and state-recognized. A significant change is that the percentage of independent nondenominational Christian schools compared with total denominational schools more than doubled between 1989 and 2011 (Catt).

Some independent private schools, such as La Lumiere and Culver academies, do not necessarily require Indiana state recognition but any private independent that admits students with state-funded scholarships must be state-recognized. The Indiana State Board of Education may recognize a nonpublic school in Indiana if the school holds accreditation with one or more of the following entities:

- Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities (AASDAS)
- Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACSWASC)
- American Association of Christian Schools (AACS)
- Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)
- Christian Schools International (CSI)
- Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS)
- International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA)
- National Lutheran Schools Accreditation (NLSA)
- North Central Association (NCA)/ AdvancED

There were 154 Amish schools in Indiana according to a recent U.S. Department of

Education survey. By 2017-2018, there were over 100 Amish schools alone in Northwestern Indiana, each with a three-person school board. These schools, none of which extends beyond 8th grade, have not sought state recognition. Some, however, do participate in a network of Amish schools (Catt).

The Indiana Non-Public Education Association serves as an advocate, promotes engagement and strives for the advancement of non-public schools.

Homeschooling — The Indiana Department of Education views home schools as nonpublic, non-accredited facilities. Homeschool educators can, but are not required to, register by submitting their grade level enrollment to the Department. Home educators are required by law to teach a minimum of 180 days per calendar year.

Several states, not including Indiana, require notification if children are being homeschooled and student progress reports. A few states also require curriculum and teacher-qualification approval.

Financing Indiana's K-12 Options with Tax Revenue

Under Indiana law, K-12 Tuition Support is the dollar amount appropriated by the State Legislature for a given fiscal year. Included in this appropriation is a formula for funding all public and charter schools, the Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship program and Choice Scholarships.

The Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship is a one-time \$4,000 scholarship for students who graduate from a publicly supported high school at least one year early. Choice Scholarships are a voucher-type program unique to Indiana for students attending nonpublic schools.

Funding Public Schools

For the U.S. as a whole (2015-2016), 8.1 per cent of tax-funded K-12 was paid by the Federal government, 47.4 per cent was paid by the states and 44.5 per cent was paid by local government. Local funding is generally raised through property

taxes. State funding is derived from sales revenue and, in most states, income taxes.

To equalize opportunity between districts and cap property taxes, Indiana in 2009 substituted the local contribution (called “Tuition Support Levy”) with state funding. At that time, additional funding for lower-socioeconomic districts was broken out from basic funding and placed into a separate category, referred to as the Complexity Grant. It was expected that local funds for public education would be reserved for transportation, construction and debt service. Localities, however, did retain the option of passing additional property tax levies to fund district schools.

Indiana, like other states, determines a foundational amount per full-time equivalent student for providing K-12 services. Beginning in the fiscal year 2020, school corporations, including charter schools, receive the full foundation amount for each non-virtual student and 85 per cent of the foundation amount for each virtual student. Average Daily Membership (ADM) is a count of students enrolled and expected to be in attendance for kindergarten through grade 12 in an Indiana public school district or charter school corporation on a particular day. Although the State Tuition Support formula was based for many years on a foundation amount for every student, the socio-economic Complexity Index is now incorporated into a calculation referred to as the Basic Grant.

Indiana’s Complexity Index, a component of the Basic Grant, provides additional state funding to K-12 corporations depending on measures of the socio-economic characteristics of families in a given schools corporation. The Complexity Index is calculated on the percentage of students who qualified for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The number of students receiving foster care services is also a factor. In addition, the Complexity Grant considers the percentage change in complexity factors from one year to the next as well as the percentage of English Language Learner students.

Table 1 lists the per-student Basic Grant awarded to public K-12 corporations based on complexity.

Table 1: Basic Grant per Student by Complexity (Fiscal Year 2020)

| Indiana K-12 Corporations Considered: | Number of Corporations: | Basic Grant per Full-Time Equivalent Student: |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| High Complexity | 94 | \$6,776 |
| Mid Complexity | 193 | \$6,159 |
| Low Complexity | 81 | \$5,782 |
| | 368 | \$6,231 |

Source: Indiana Department of Education

Although the General Assembly appropriates funds for the ensuing two fiscal years, the Indiana Tuition Support formula is updated annually. The Basic Grant amounts listed in Table 1 do not include additional funds allocated for Honors Diploma Grants, Career and Technical Education Grants and Special Education Grants.

The Basic Grant amounts in Table 1 includes neither any locally raised funding nor the \$3 billion in federal coronavirus relief expected over the next three years. Applications for coronavirus relief payments by a particular district must be reviewed by Indiana’s Department of Education and meet federal guidelines. Public information on coronavirus relief payments is not easily available (McCoy).

Nationally, Indiana ranks below average on most metrics related to total education funding (27th in funding per student, 27th in funding per resident and 21st in funding per \$1,000 in personal income). In addition, Indiana does not compare favorably to its five neighboring states (Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin) in terms of per-student funding or teacher salaries (Toutkoushian).

However, Indiana is one of the most equitable states in education funding by school district

(Ferguson). It also has the lowest income tax rate compared with bordering states, clearly a benefit to parents and taxpayers in general. In addition, Indiana offers several tax credits and deductions that are favorable both to public and private education. Public and private Indiana colleges and universities benefit from donations resulting from the College Tax Credit, whereby couples filing jointly receive a \$200 tax credit for a \$400 college/university donation. In addition, the Public School Educator Expense Credit allows a dollar-for-dollar credit of \$100 for non-reimbursed expenses that a public school educator incurs.

Inter-District Settlements

Financial transfers are not an issue when students attend a district school other than the one based on their place of residence (Intra-District Transfers).

Funding allocations become an issue when students live outside the district but are attending school in another district. Cash transfers between districts may be charged for Inter-District students when the parent(s) do not pay full tuition for enrollment in an out-of-district school corporation.

Child protective agencies can place a child in an out-of-district school; these are considered Transfer Out students for a particular year. Other Transfer Out students may be attending a school corporation outside of their legal settlement based on an agreement between the corporation of legal residence and the servicing corporation. In addition, a student can qualify for a “better accommodation” under Indiana Code. Transfers to charter schools are not considered Transfer Outs.

Funding Charter Schools

State Tuition Support per Indiana Code defines “School Corporation” to encompass both charter schools and any local public school corporation/district established under Indiana law.

Beginning in the fiscal year 2020, all school corporations, including charter schools, receive

the full Basic Grant for each on-site student and 85 percent of the amount for each virtual student.

Note that charter high schools for adults, such as Excel Centers, sponsored by Goodwill Industries, are not included in the K-12 Indiana state tuition support formula. However, they can qualify for support through Indiana’s Adult Learners fund (IDOE. Digest . . .).

Subsidizing Private Schools

Across the U.S., 29 states have K-12 voucher-type programs. Vouchers permit parents to choose a private school for their K-12 students, using public funding to pay for tuition. Funds typically expended by the state to the relevant school district are reallocated to pay partial or full tuition at both religious and non-religious schools.

Indiana’s Choice Scholarship Program is a voucher-type program but limited to students from families whose income does not exceed 300 per cent of federal eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches. Eligibility gives preference to students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), to those who otherwise would be attending an underperforming public school and, with several exceptions, to those with prior public school attendance.

Under the most recent state guidelines, a family of four can make up to \$147,075 and still be eligible for an Indiana Choice Scholarship. As of July 1, 2021, all eligible students receive a full grant, equal to 90 per cent of the state’s basic grant for a child attending a local public school.

In 2013, the Indiana Supreme Court ruled in *Meredith vs. Pence* that the Choice Scholarship Program does not violate the state constitution and that constitutional prohibitions against government funding of religious entities do not apply to institutions providing primary and secondary education.

In 2021, 324 schools participated in the “Indiana Choice Scholarship Program.” Most of these schools are affiliated with Catholic, Lutheran and other Christian denominations. However, the list also includes two Hebrew academies, an Islamic school and several

nonsectarian schools. It also includes Montessori schools and an increasing number of independent private schools.

A full list of schools participating in the Indiana Choice Program and scholarship amounts earned by each institution is available on the website of the Indiana Department of Education. An eligible school is afforded the right to a fair hearing before any action to terminate its eligibility in the Choice Scholarship Program.

Not to be confused with Choice Scholarships, Indiana's "School Scholarship Tax Credit Program" allows individuals and corporations to claim a 50 per cent tax credit for contributions to approved scholarship-granting organizations, referred to as SGOs. These funds, donated to nonpublic schools, assist with tuition for qualifying students. Like the Choice Scholarship Program, eligibility is limited to students from families whose incomes do not exceed 300 per cent of federal eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches.

In 2019-20, six scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs) determined scholarship amounts and awarded 9,494 scholarships. The average value of these scholarships was \$2,350 approximately 20 per cent of public school per-student total spending.

Note that the "School Scholarship Tax Credit Program" represents voluntary private donations. However, these Tax Credits are capped at \$17.5 million for 2021-2022 and \$18.5 million for 2022-2023.

The "Education Scholarship Account Program" is yet another separate program from the Choice and Scholarship Tax Credit programs. This new option launched in Fall 2020, like the other two programs, is limited to students from families meeting the 300 Percent of FRL income level. Specifically, the Account Program targets the 13 per cent of Indiana Students with special needs.

Student eligibility is determined by having an individual education program (IEP) developed by a public or private school. Once enrolled, students remain eligible for the Account Program until they graduate or turn 22 years old.

For those eligible, a portion of their assigned state funding will be made available in an education saving account (ESA) to be used for private school tuition or other educational expenses, including special needs services and therapies, individual classes, testing fees and transportation.

Accounts range up to 90 per cent of what a student would receive in the school district of residence plus extra funds allocated for special needs status. The Indiana legislature appropriated \$10 million for Education Scholarship Accounts for 2022-23.

Note that all three programs, namely "Choice Scholarships," the "School Scholarship Tax Credit Program" and the new 'Education Scholarship Account Program," are based on income. Although 90 per cent of Indiana students qualify based on income, the income ceiling and other eligibility requirements, although politically expedient, are somewhat divisive and distortionary. Furthermore, they limit competition and the academic benefits of school choice.

Although Indiana is a leader in school choice, the federal government also plays a role. Originally, the U.S. Internal Revenue Code authorized State-sponsored 529 plans to assist families with future narrowly qualified post-secondary school expenses. If families wish, they can contribute post-tax dollars into 529 accounts. Earnings accumulate tax-free and distributions are untaxed. A significant change in 529 plans took place in 2017. They now permit withdrawals of up to \$10,000 annually for private K-12 tuition expenses. Additionally, Indiana taxpayers get a state income tax credit (capped at \$1000 for joint filers) equal to 20 per cent of their contribution to Indiana's "College Choice 529."

Subsidizing Homeschooling

For homeschooling families, not enrolled in a public charter program, an Indiana tax deduction of \$1,000 per qualified dependent child is available for private and homeschool expenses regardless of income.

In Indiana, homeschooler participation in extracurricular activities is at the discretion of the public school. The only exception is high school athletics, where participation also falls under the purview of the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA); in this case, homeschool students must be enrolled in (and earn passing grades from) at least three public school classes per day plus two additional school-approved classes (distance education, community college, etc.).

How Hoosiers Are Exercising their K-12 Options

A Parent and Family Involvement study of the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) program tried to identify factors that parents of K–12 students rate as “very important” when choosing a school. In the 2018–19 school year, 36 percent of student parents surveyed indicated that they had considered multiple schools for their child. Among these, 79 percent indicated that the quality of teachers, principals, or other school staff was very important. Other factors indicated as being very important include safety (including student discipline) (71 percent) and curriculum focus or unique academic programs (such as language immersion and STEM focus) (59 percent).

Table 2 indicates the relative share of students attending traditional public, public charter and accredited private K-12 schools. Realize, however, data on attendance mode (in-person or virtual) is not yet available for the years shown.

Public District Schools

Traditional public schools continue to dominate Indiana K-12 enrollment, accounting for over 85 per cent of all students. However, between 2016- 2021, the absolute number of Indiana public school K-12 students declined by 1.2 per cent, not unlike a similar decline for the nation as a whole. This decline is driven by demographics

Table 2: Indiana K-12 Percentage Enrollment by School Type

| Year | Traditional Public School Enrollment | Public Charter School Enrollment | State Accredited Non-Public Enrollment excluding Choice Scholarship Recipients | Choice Scholarship Recipients | Other | Total |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------|---------|
| 2019-2020 | 87.94% | 3.9% | 4.1% | 3.19% | .72% | 100.00% |
| 2020-2021 | 88.34% | 4.47% | 3.86% | 3.16% | .17% | 100.00% |

Source: Indiana Department of Education. Choice Scholarship Program Annual Report, April 2021.

(the number of children between the ages of 5 and 17), as well as transfers to non-public schools.

In 2018-2019, 144,619 K-12 students transferred out of or between Indiana’s public schools. It is noted that 44 per cent of these out-of-district transfers chose traditional public schools, 31 per cent chose public charter schools and 25 per cent chose non-public schools.

It is significant that during the 2016-2021 period in which traditional public school enrollment in Indiana declined, special education and English language learners increased by 6.2 per cent.

Inter-Intra District Open Enrollment Public Schools

As expected, larger school districts experience the largest absolute number of student transfers. Districts experiencing the largest number of students transferring from one public district to another are Indianapolis Public Schools, South Bend Community School Corporation, Fort Wayne Community Schools, Anderson Community School Corporation, Elkhart Community Schools and Marion Community Schools.

Those experiencing large transfers to charter schools are Gary Community School Corporation, Indianapolis Public Schools and Anderson Community School Corporation. Districts

experiencing the largest number of transfers to private schools, are Ford Wayne Community Schools, South Bend Community School Corporation, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, Perry Township Schools and Indianapolis Public Schools (Burbrink).

To get a grasp on relative geographical variation in response to K-12 options, consider two school districts: Carmel Clay Schools and South Bend Community School Corporation.

Based on the 2021 Fall enrollment count there were 16,334 K-12 students reported to be residing within Carmel Clay School boundaries:

- Ninety-seven percent were attending Carmel Clay schools
- Two percent were attending a different public school district or a public charter school.
- One percent were attending a non-public school through the Choice Scholarship program.

At the same time, of the 22,749 students reported to be residing within the South Bend Community School Corporation boundaries:

- Sixty-five percent were attending South Bend Corporation schools.
- Twenty-one percent were attending a different public school district or a public charter school.
- Fourteen percent were attending a non-public school through the Choice Scholarship program.

Charter Schools

Parents of over 50,000 Hoosier children have chosen to enroll their children in charter schools. This represents approximately 5 per cent of all Indiana's K-12 students. As a percentage of K-12 Hoosier public school students, 2.59 per cent are enrolled in on-site charters and less than 1 per cent in virtual charters (IDOE. Indiana K-12 State Tuition Support. . .).

The preferred option for Hoosier parents considering alternatives is to pursue enrollment at an out-of-district traditional public school, rather than a public charter or private school. In many

communities, a non-virtual charter or private school option is not easily available.

Private Schools

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics for the school year 2019-2020, Indiana had 869 K-12 private schools with 115,421 students.

As previously indicated, a listing for every private school participating in the Choice Scholarship program is available from the Indiana Department of Education. Included are enrollment data and state funds received unless student identification is an issue given small enrollment (IDOE, Choice Scholarship Program . . . , Appendix C).

About 80 percent of K-12 students in Indiana are eligible for Choice or Tax Credit Scholarships but less than 4 percent participate. In the fiscal year 2021, Choice Scholarships represented only 2.33 per cent of K-12 state funding.

Enrollment in private Indiana accredited schools surged between 2011 and 2015 but declined between 2016-2021 at a rate slightly lower than public schools.

For the U.S. as a whole, enrollment in Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools decreased by 64 per cent between 1960 and 2015. The national decrease between 2010 and 2015 was 7 per cent (nces.ed.gov, Table 205.70). Indiana's school choice program may have modestly arrested the enrollment decline in the state's religiously affiliated private schools.

The largest institutional impact of school choice in Indiana is the growth in nonaffiliated private schools. Between 2011 and 2016, over 100 additional independents (not affiliated with a particular religious denomination) private schools received state accreditation.

Homeschooling

In 2016, a study of American households indicated that 3.3 per cent of students ages 5 through 17 in the United States were being homeschooled. In Indiana, edCHOICE presently

estimates that the share of Indiana K-12 students being homeschooled is 2.6 per cent (Engage).

Once located, families vary in the extent to which they consider children in school part-time to be homeschoolers. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) asks households if anyone in the household is “currently in homeschool instead of attending a public or private school for some or all classes.” About 18 percent of homeschoolers are in a brick-and-mortar school part-time. Given the growth of virtual education and cyber schools, it is not always the case that children educated at home or in multi-family pods are instructed by parents (U.S. Department of Education, School Choice. . .).

In 2016, parents of homeschooled students were asked to identify the most important reason for choosing to homeschool their child. The reason reported was a concern about the school environment, such as safety, drugs or negative peer pressure (34 percent). The two other reasons for homeschooling frequently cited as most important were dissatisfaction with the academic instruction at their schools (17 percent) and a desire to provide religious instruction (16 percent) (U.S. Department of Education, Parent and Family Involvement . . .).

Student Performance

The National Assessment of Economic Progress (NAEP), referred to as the Nation’s Report Card tests students across the U.S. It samples performance of students in 4th, 8th and 12th grades in various subjects and it then provides reports for each state. Table 3 compares Indiana student performance with other states

Table 3: Indiana Scores and State Ranking in the National Assessment of Economic Progress

| Subject and Grade | Year | Score (0-500) | Points Above National Average | Indiana’s Rank in the U.S. | At or above Basic (%) | At or above Proficient (%) | At Advanced (%) |
|--------------------|------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Mathematics | | | | | | | |
| 4 | 2019 | 245.00 | +5.00 | 7th | 84.00 | 47.00 | 11.00 |
| | 2017 | 246.51 | +7.35 | 6th | 85.60 | 48.01 | 12.14 |
| | 2009 | 242.62 | +3.52 | 18th | 87.14 | 41.59 | 5.44 |
| 8 | 2019 | 286.00 | +5.00 | 12th | 73.00 | 37.00 | 10.00 |
| | 2017 | 287.71 | +5.75 | 12th | 74.65 | 37.79 | 11.60 |
| | 2009 | 286.81 | +5.14 | 17th | 77.76 | 36.15 | 7.29 |
| Reading | | | | | | | |

Source: U.S. Department of Education. The Nation’s Report Card, National Assessment of Educational Progress

based on NAEP tests. Unfortunately, 12th-grade results are not yet available for individual states.

In 2019, Indiana 4th and 8th graders continued to score higher than U.S. overall averages in mathematics and reading and 7th highest in 2019 among all states and the District of Columbia in 4th-grade mathematics.

NAEP data do not offer comparisons between public and private schools in a given state. However, it does offer limited information for comparing performance between charter, some private schools and traditional public schools for the nation as a whole. In 2019, it reported that its sample of charter school students in the U.S. performed below public school students in grades 4th, 8th and 12th in math and reading. Catholic 4th and 8th-grade school students, as a subset of private schools, performed at a higher level in math, reading and science than public school students in 2019. They also scored higher than public and charter schools in civics in 2010 and 2018. Note that these scores for private school enrollment are based on a national sample and information by state is lacking.

End of course 2015 test results for Algebra, English and Biology for each accredited Indiana secondary school (public and private) are

available for download from the Indiana Department of Education. However, to avoid individual student identification, scores for schools with insufficient enrollment are excluded.

Conclusion

The pros and cons of K-12 changes on Hoosier children are ambiguous. As always, a particular child's well-being depends on agents operating in trust on his or her behalf whether parents, teachers, administrators, or policy-makers.

Involved Indiana parents desire a safe, academically and vocationally sound education reflecting their personal values. Given the phenomenal increase in school performance data, parents are now equipped to seek customized non-standard experiences tailored to the needs of their specific child or, at least, educational options. Many are willing to advocate for this within institutions and through the political process. K-12 options create incentives for involved parents to recognize the time and out-of-pocket expenses required in realizing their desired levels of academic, cultural and character formation.

In terms of raising and allocating K-12 tax revenue, the Indiana General Assembly and local municipalities remain in charge. A legitimate goal is a just distribution between students given what the public is willing to provide. The centralization of K-12 operating expenses has standardized per-student spending, with the downside that curriculum and disciplinary standards in Indiana's district schools may be less in line with local preferences.

Hoosier state lawmakers are responding to interest groups' pressure in allocating funds based on family income, students' academic potential and the decreasing percentage of resident taxpayers with young children. Local referendums supplement state funding, but there is no assurance that this will result in increasing the human resources needed for quality education. Meanwhile, municipalities and school corporations struggle with the costs of federal and

state regulations and in funding their pension obligations. K-12 options are a realistic means of addressing these issues.

Nonprofit and profit-seeking institutions are adapting to changes in K-12 funding. The introduction of vouchers for which only some families qualify complicates the tuition burden and private subsidies at nonprofit private schools. All schools, private and public, will need to become more transparent about their expectations for parent support, financial and otherwise.

Close supervision by Indiana's Department of Education and local school boards is essential given increased tax-funded options. Compliance, however, will consist merely in assessing full-time equivalent enrollment, instructional hours per week, the yearly calendar and financial accounting. Authorities are not on-site and lack classroom and subject expertise. Teachers of proven ability who are employing best educational practices are necessarily degraded if officials exercise excessive authority and regulation.

Increased competition between schools is a cost-effective means of attaining a higher degree of quality in both public and private schools. Present indications suggest that Indiana is on track in increasing its quality of primary and secondary education relative to the U.S. as a whole. ♦

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The Immanence of Critical Race Theory

There are thousands of consulting firms specializing in this offshoot of Marxist thought and now for a fee your school can get an 'equity audit' as easily as an accounting audit.

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Introduction and Background

In September 2020, President Donald Trump issued an executive order prohibiting federal agencies and federal contractors from requiring employees to undergo diversity, equity and inclusion training. The order barred training that had divisive concepts such as race or sex stereotyping and scapegoating. Immediately, the radical left (aka the Democrat Party) went ballistic.

Among the content considered divisive is Critical Race Theory (CRT). Reports indicate that over 300 diversity, equity and inclusion training sessions were canceled as a result of the order.

Over 120 civil rights organizations and allies of the Democrat Party signed a letter condemning the order. Of course, they are back on the schedule since the change in administrations.

It started on day one of the Biden administration. That's when Joe Biden signed an executive order saying America suffers from "systemic" racism and promised to advance "equity," a concept mandating that everyone have the same outcomes. And as used by the liberal left, equity is about tearing some people down rather than lifting everyone up.

During the last year, the national media frequently reported numerous protests by parents of public-school students as well as others. These protesters object vigorously to the imposition of CRT in the nation's classrooms. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz recently said that "the federal government should not be funding the training for a Marxist ideology that teaches people to hate America."

CRT is an offshoot of Critical Theory (CT), which was first presented to the world in the 1930s by German Marxists in academia. Critical Theory is said to be any approach to social philosophy (their term, not mine) that focuses on reflective assessment and critique of society and culture in order to reveal and challenge power structures. With roots in sociology and literary criticism, it argues that social problems stem more from social structures and cultural assumptions than from individuals. It further argues that ideology is the principal obstacle to human liberation. (In other words, it's never the individual's fault, it is always the fault of someone else, such as the oppressors and America's institutions.)

The left wants to hide the origination of CRT as a part of the Marxist ideology of Critical Theory that has now inculcated higher education. Even a former dean of the college of education at one of Indiana's prominent public universities had a research specialty in Critical Theory, publishing numerous articles and books on the topic. Critical Theory has been around in

academic circles for over 75 years but has found a new home in the nation's schools under a variety of disguises.

Back to CRT; what exactly is it? The term seemed to appear out of nowhere at statehouses and at political rallies. Over the past year, it has morphed from an obscure academic discussion point of the Left into a covert intrusion into the public schools. And CRT has become a political rallying cry of conservatives.

Critical Race Theory is a way of thinking about America's history using the lens of racism. Leftist university academics developed it during the 1970s and 1980s in response to what they viewed as a lack of racial progress following the civil rights legislation of the 1960s.

In the mid 1970s, some academics coined the term in a way that it cannot be confined to a static and narrow definition but is an evolving and malleable practice. CRT critiques how the "social construction" (their term, not mine) of race and institutionalized racism perpetuate "a racial caste system that relegates people of color to the bottom tiers."

It would be helpful if a more specific description of how a racial caste system that relegates people of color to the bottom tiers could exist in America, considering all the civil rights laws that the United States of America has enacted and operated under for well over a half century. But again, CRT centers only on a claim that racism is somehow "systemic" in the nation's institutions and that these institutions function to maintain the dominance of white people in society.

The architects of the theory argue that the United States was founded on the theft of land and labor. CRT proponents believe that federal law has preserved the unequal treatment of people based on race. Their evidence is anecdotal; neither do they identify specific federal laws that perpetuate such unequal treatment.

Proponents also believe race is culturally invented. By that they mean that race

is a "social construct," the product of social thought unconnected to biological reality.

As such, CRT rejects claims of a merit-based or colorblind society, arguing that it is the systemic nature of racism that bears primary responsibility for reproducing racial inequality. So, anyone who claims that he or she is colorblind is not actually colorblind, no matter how sincere.

The most troubling of these arguments is that merit must be rejected (can we spell "socialism?") Our nation was built on the concept of meritocracy. Employees that produce more work with better quality than others should be hired and rewarded. Those who contribute most to society are rewarded as well.

Many observers view these and other concepts underlying Critical Race Theory as an effort to divide Americans by rewriting history and convincing some white people that they are inherently racist and should feel guilty because of their advantages. But again, CRT advocates fail to provide evidence of these advantages other than the anecdotal.

CRT also has become a catch-all phrase to describe racial concepts that conservatives find objectionable, such as "white privilege," "systemic inequality" and "inherent bias." Leftists push the idea that equal opportunity is not enough but equity in outcomes must be achieved. This is the precise definition of socialism: everyone treated the same whether they are productive or not.

CRT therefore admonishes white people for being oppressors while classifying Black people (and sometimes people of other races too) as hopelessly oppressed. They call this "white privilege."

Simply put, Critical Race Theory argues that U.S. social institutions (e.g., the criminal justice system, education system, labor market, housing market and healthcare system) are laced with racism embedded in laws, regulations, rules and procedures that lead to differential outcomes by race. Leftists overlook the six

"Critical Race Theory? It's a bunch of garbage."
(Dr. Ben Carson)

decades of racial progress since the civil rights laws were enacted on the federal level and states long ago enacted their own set of civil rights laws.

Nor have leftists proven that unequal outcomes have been directly caused by racism. Unequal outcomes can have a variety of additional causes, such as: single-parent families, poverty, lack of education, minimal or no training, poor attitude, lack of work ethic and personal intellect factors.

There is no question that there is a history of racism in America. But it is not as prevalent as it was 75 years ago. Sure, there are some people of all races that one could call racists. But only laws can be legislated, not the heart. There are just too many federal and state civil rights laws that protect Americans from racism to conclude that America is a racist country. A few examples of areas protected by these laws are employment, housing, public venues, public school education and voting rights.

Fifty years ago, the law school in Indiana from which I graduated began admitting minorities over some majority-race applicants with higher undergraduate grade point averages and higher Law School Admission Test scores. No loud voices of opposition were heard. Affirmative action (which favors minority races over majority race) in employment and education matters has been implemented for the past six decades.

With all the opportunities government has afforded to minorities during the last half century and more, it does not appear that a caste system exists. Leftists would want all Americans to view American society as a feudal system with two fixed classes, the oppressed and the oppressors, but nothing could be further from the truth. There clearly is still upward mobility available for all Americans.

Who Is Pushing Critical Race Theory?

Some people believe there is a conspiracy among certain groups to clandestinely push Critical Race Theory upon the nation's school children. However, they are wrong. No one is

covertly pushing CRT upon innocent school children from the shadows. They are instead pushing CRT from their public web sites and training sessions. They are using "racial sensitivity" and "cultural competency" training to train teachers and supervisors in CRT principles. The expectation is that teachers will use this training to enlighten America's K-12 school children to become racially sensitive and culturally competent and to accept the basic principles of CRT.

This article is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of which organizations are advancing the cause of CRT. The reader may be surprised to learn how many national organizations are endorsing CRT principles.

A list of key words that describe CRT principles was developed by the author using the literature about CRT. These key words were used when examining web sites and to determine eligibility for the list of organizations advancing CRT. Some web sites used a multitude of these terms and a few used only one or two.

Key words or elements of CRT are racial equity; systemic race discrimination; racially discriminatory policies; institutional racism; race-based disparities; suppression; oppression; slavery; Jim Crow laws; segregation; reparations; white privilege; bias; implicit bias; white power; white dominance; white nationalism; resistance; disrupting inequality; interpersonal racism; white fragility; amoral sadists; racial caste system; second class citizenship; micro-aggressions; stereotypes; violence, fear and trauma; white legacy; equity lens; and other words of like import. Please note that the list does not include the term equality as this concept is not an element of CRT.

The organizations listed below are listed in random order and not necessarily in order of importance or success in advancing CRT principles. Here is the list:

Democrat National Committee

The 2020 Democratic Party Platform States the Democrat party's goals regarding advancing

the CRT cause. The platform was considered by the 2020 Platform Committee at its meeting on July 27, 2020. The platform was approved by the Democratic National Convention on August 18, 2020:

“Democrats . . . recognize that race-neutral policies are not sufficient to rectify race-based disparities. . . . Democrats believe that we can only build a more just and equitable future if we honestly reckon with our history and its legacy in the present. We support removing the Confederate battle flag and statues of Confederate leaders from public properties. We recognize Black history has too often been intentionally suppressed or excluded from our history books and will invest in recovering, celebrating and highlighting Black history as American history. We believe Black lives matter and will establish a national commission to examine the lasting economic effects of slavery, Jim Crow segregation and racially discriminatory federal policies on income, wealth, educational, health and employment outcomes; to pursue truth and promote racial healing; and to study reparations. We must acknowledge that there can be no realization of the American dream without grappling with the lasting effects of slavery and facing up to the centuries-long campaign of violence, fear and trauma wrought upon Black Americans.”¹

National Association of Colored People

“The NAACP Condemns Anti-Critical Race Theory Bills and Calls for Teaching About American Slavery from a Black Perspective.”

On the National association of Colored People’s (NAACP) web site is an op-ed that criticizes bills in state legislatures that are anti-Critical Race Theory. NAACP asserts, like the “teacher loyalty” bill recently introduced in New Hampshire, these bills are oblivious solutions looking for a problem. These bills typically

prohibit teachers from advocating “communism, socialism, or Marxism” or the “overthrow by force of the government of the United States.” Interestingly, says the NAACP, the only time teachers are likely to teach about an overthrow of the U.S. government by force is when teaching about the Confederacy.

The captivity and forced labor of Africans in the Americas (despairingly known as slavery) is presented the same way to students. It is taught from the captor’s perspective, re-imaging labor camps into “plantations” and amoral sadists into “masters.” The universal heroism, endurance and resistance of African forced laborers are recast as passive “slaves” who were waiting for the white conscious community to free them, according to the NAACP.

The NAACP states on its Know the Issues section, that the organization is committed to dismantling racism and disrupting inequality to create a society where all people can truly be free. They state that their work includes civic engagement, systemically building racial equity and supporting policies and institutions that prioritize the urgent needs of Black people, who are most impacted by race-based discrimination.²

The NAACP’s position affirms that every child deserves an opportunity to reach their full potential. But our education systems are collapsing under inequity, it says, and it is mostly because of poverty. Students who experience severe economic obstacles perform worse than students who have access to more wealth. To bridge these gaps and ensure that all children get a real chance at a fulfilling education, they conclude we need to address systemic racism and poverty as tangible barriers to learning and future achievement. They further conclude that every Black student deserves access to great teaching, equitable resources and a safe learning environment from grade school classrooms to

¹ <https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform/>

² <https://naacp.org/know-issues>

college campuses. students matter and working on their behalf has never been more urgent.³

American Federation of Teachers

From 2016 to 2021, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) passed five resolutions that support CRT.⁴ They are summarized below:

1. AFT Resolution 2016: "Racial Equity"

The AFT argues that systemic inequity in education has relegated millions of children of color to under-resourced, struggling schools. The union promises that it will advocate for the development and implementation of programs to provide professional development and cultural competency training that helps teachers and other school staff understand the effects of long-term discrimination and pervasive poverty and to help them examine bias that exists in all.

2. AFT Resolution 2021: "Black Lives Matter at School Week, Feb. 1-5, 2021"

AFT Local 1, Chicago Teachers Union, supported the development and implementation of the "Reparations Won" curriculum, which was a part of the nationally historic and precedent-setting reparations package, whose requirements included that the history and fight for justice of the John Burge police torture survivors be taught to all eighth- and 10th-grade students in Chicago Public Schools.

AFT position affirms a commitment to ending systemic racism in American society and to removing all manifestations of that racism from America's schools. AFT says that to achieve these goals, the AFT will work with organizations committed to ending systemic racism in American society, such as Black Lives Matter, Color of Change and the NAACP and with organizations committed to ending racism in schools, such as the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools; Black Lives Matter at School; Facing History, Facing Ourselves; and Teaching Tolerance.

3. AFT Resolution 2021: "Making Black Lives Matter" in our Schools"

The AFT argues that it is essential to develop inclusive curriculum and employ culturally responsive pedagogy that reflects the full diversity of our students, especially the historical experience and heritage cultures of Black students. AFT affirms its commitment to ending systemic racism in American society and to removing all manifestations of that racism from America's schools.

4. AFT Resolution 2020: "Enough"

This resolution argues that white supremacy is systemic and institutionalized and that it influences the lives of everyone living in the U.S., albeit in different ways. The union further argues that the eradication of this white supremacy is a necessary precondition toward creating a culture of equity and equality and, therefore, must be a primary goal of education.

The AFT promises it will support racial, social and economic justice by: 1) . . . writing strong anti-racism and anti-oppression language into governance documents; and 2) providing anti-racist and anti-oppression training for all union members and employees of the unions.

5. AFT Resolution 2020: "Confronting Racism and in Support of Black Lives"

This resolution states, at a time when a global health pandemic is exposing and exacerbating long-standing and persistent inequities in health, education and economic security, murders of Black people underscore the destructive impact of systemic racism, a culture that enables white nationalism and white supremacy and the resultant violence on African Americans, other people of color, Native Americans and other vulnerable groups such as transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. These evils have extracted a costly toll on our nation, as a divided whole they assert.

³ <https://naacp.org/issues/education-innovation>

⁴ <https://www.aft.org/>

The AFT has established a Racial Equity Task Force charged with addressing the crisis of anti-Blackness and its harmful effects. AFT thereby renews its commitment to end systemic racism in America and to fight to ensure fair and equitable treatment of people of color, as well as members of other marginalized communities.

The AFT commits to advocate for professional development that includes cultural competency, implicit bias and trauma-informed practices.

National Education Association

The National Education Association (NEA) has numerous online resources about CRT.⁵ Its Focus Academy Online Series includes a topic of “Advancing Racial Justice.” Participants explore the fundamental concepts of understanding racial justice: unconscious bias, racism in the United States, framework of expressions of racism, acting to interrupt racism at all levels and system analysis.

In another training online session titled “Speak Truth in Teaching not Critical Race Theory,” NEA members are instructed that right-wingers have resorted to their usual dog whistle strategies of distraction and division. The NEA claims that right wingers have co-opted the phrase “Critical Race Theory” as a catch-all for their anxieties about losing power and dominance. As with “political correctness” in the 1990s and “cancel culture” today, they have made public schools, college campuses and school boards a primary battleground, stoking fears about how and what is taught to our children so they can undermine trust in and funding for schools and teachers. The NEA says members will learn how to develop powerful race and class messaging appropriate for any campaign they are working on.

Another NEA training session held last year was for UniServ Directors (who are state union employees assigned to one or multiple local teacher unions). They often serve as union negotiators; organizers; recruitment of members;

public relations mouth pieces; strike planning and organization; and provide pseudo legal advice to members and local unions. The training is entitled “Advancing Racial Justice through UniServ Work.”

The NEA Center for Organizing and the NEA Center for Social Justice partner to provide a training designed to build participants’ skills through awareness of implicit bias, interpersonal racism and institutional racism. UniServ Directors learn how to:

- Establish a common language for talking explicitly about race
- Develop a shared understanding of the levels of racism and its impact
- Develop a common toolset for next steps in applying an equity lens to their work
- Build and deepen awareness of implicit bias, micro-aggressions and stereotypes
- Identify skills and strategies to confront implicit bias, micro-aggressions and stereotypes

Another online training session is also titled “Advancing Racial Justice through UniServ Work.” UniServ Directors work with members, supporters and partners to address white supremacy culture in many settings. They must be highly skilled in leading, coaching and organizing across racial differences and especially in dealing with white fragility and interpersonal oppressions. UniServ Directors also support the organizing efforts of members and leaders who are working to dismantle systemic racism. They learn to:

- Establish a common language for talking explicitly about white supremacy culture
- Develop a shared understanding of the levels of racism with a focus on system examples
- Develop a common toolset for dismantling systems of privilege and oppression
- Deepen skills and strategies to confront implicit bias, micro-aggressions and stereotypes.

The NEA provides many additional training sessions involving the concepts of CRT. One such

⁵ <https://www.nea.org/>

item appears as a link to their web site: The Meaning of Anti-Racist Teaching by Franchesca Mejia. She proudly proclaims quoting another teacher: “Practically speaking, teaching through an anti-racist lens simply means helping students understand racism’s origins and guises, past and present, so they can act to disrupt, rather than perpetuate, white supremacy,” says Ursula Wolfe-Rocca, a former high school social studies teacher in Portland, Ore.

In a web link NEA offers us “The Truth About Critical Race Theory” (at least the union’s truth). NEA claims it is setting the record straight over the national conversation about Critical Race Theory (CRT) — what it is and what it isn’t.

CRT, they say, is based on an understanding that who we are, the laws we have in place, the histories that have been handed down to us and race has shaped all. It is taught in law schools, graduate schools and to undergraduates. As for public schools, the NEA offers, those students deserve age-appropriate and accurate history lessons. According to the NEA, anything other than this is a dog-whistle strategy that certain lawmakers use to distract and divide.

American Association of School Administrators

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has a web site devoted exclusively to equity in public education. The material contained therein espouses equity in public education, as opposed to equality of opportunity. By this web site the AASA has implicitly endorsed a key component of Critical Race Theory.⁶ One of the webinars on this site professes:

“Rising Need for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Research shows as terrible as the growing achievement gap is, so is the rise in mental health issues among young people. Students need their schools to help them build SEL skills to prepare them for life outside the classroom.”

Again, SEL is a close cousin of CRT and in some cases is CRT.

There are 33 other webinars on this site. Almost all deal with the topic of equity. Diversity, Inclusion and Equity are the new buzz words of public-school administrators. Diversity and inclusion and equality of opportunity are concepts that have been around for decades. However, the third element of this triad, equal opportunity, has only been recently replaced with the equity concept.

National School Boards Association

“Reimagining School Board Leadership: Actions for Equity” is a recent publication by the National School Boards Association’s (NSBA) DIRE (Dismantling Institutional Racism in Education) and the Center for Safe Schools.⁷

The publication argues that if all students are to be educated in a manner that prepares them for success in school and in life, school board members must lead with an equity lens. Because the notion of educational equity means different things to different people, the NSBA suggests it is important to clearly define what educational equity is and is not. NSBA’s Center for Public Education defines educational equity as being achieved when all students receive the resources, they need so they graduate prepared for success.

As the concept of equity can mean different things to different people, NSBA, its Board of Directors and staff embarked on a journey to define the concept of educational equity. In 2017, the NSBA Board of Directors adopted the following definition of equity:

“We affirm in our actions that each student can, will and shall learn. We recognize that based on factors including but not limited to disability, race, ethnicity and socio-economic status, students are deprived of equitable educational opportunities. Educational equity is the intentional allocation of resources, instruction

⁶ <https://home.edweb.net/aasaequity/>

⁷ National School Board Association (2021)

and opportunities according to need, requiring that discriminatory practices, prejudices and beliefs be identified and eradicated.”⁸

As schools across the country responded to acts of systemic racism in the summer of 2020, NSBA launched the Dismantling Institutional Racism in Education (DIRE) initiative to assist state school boards associations and other education leaders in addressing racial inequities.

The NSBA’s DIRE initiative acknowledges that institutional, structural and systemic racism has been engrained in the history of America and throughout its public education system. It is dedicated to understanding and recognizing the root causes of barriers to equitable educational outcomes for each child.⁹

American Medical Association

The American Medical Association (AMA) developed a recent policy that recognizes racism in its systemic, cultural, interpersonal and other forms, is a serious threat to public health, to the advancement of health equity and a barrier to appropriate medical care. AMA offers that a proactive approach is necessary to prevent, identify and eliminate, racism — particularly considering that studies show historically marginalized populations in the U.S. have shorter lifespans, greater physical and mental illness burden, earlier onset and aggressive progression of disease, higher maternal and infant mortality and less access to health care.¹⁰

The policy describes the various forms of racism as follows:

- **Systemic racism:** structural and legalized system that results in differential access to goods and services, including health care services.

- **Cultural racism:** negative and harmful racial stereotypes portrayed in culturally shared media and experiences.

- **Interpersonal racism:** implicit and explicit racial prejudice, including explicitly expressed racist beliefs and implicitly held racist attitudes and actions based upon or resulting from these prejudices.

The AMA has been leading an aggressive effort to embed equity in thoughts, actions and processes so as not to perpetuate inequities and instead help people live healthier lives. In 2018, the AMA adopted policy to define health equity and outline a strategic framework toward achieving optimal health for all. To help navigate these challenges, in 2019 the AMA hired its first chief health equity officer to establish the AMA’s Center for Health Equity to elevate and sustain efforts to address systemic level changes that can improve health.

Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter (BLM) began as a call to action in response to so called state-sanctioned violence and anti- Black racism. They claim that their intention from the very beginning was to connect Black people from all over the world who have a shared desire for justice to act together in their communities. The impetus for that commitment was and still is, the rampant and deliberate violence inflicted on blacks by the state.¹¹

They have expressed their desire to make resistance to oppression the new normal. They declare that they have directly challenged state oppression and violence and disrupted the existing system.¹²

⁸ <https://www.nsba.org/Advocacy/Equity>

⁹ <https://www.nsba.org/Advocacy/Equity/DIRE>

¹⁰ <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/ama-s-strategic-plan-embed-racial-justice-and-advance-health-equity>

¹¹ <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>

¹² BLMLA.html

The BLM also claims that they disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable.¹³ Needless to say, a large number of Americans disagree that children should be raised in villages, but argue that it would better for children to be raised in two parent households.

American Bar Association

The American Bar Association (ABA) appears to be an early adopter of CRT. It has a web site full of Critical Race Theory.¹⁴ The ABA web site proffers an article, A Lesson on Critical Race Theory by Janel George, a civil rights attorney.¹⁵

George poses the question: “So, exactly what is CRT, why is it under attack and what does it mean for the civil rights lawyer?”

George argues that CRT is not a diversity and inclusion training but a practice of interrogating the role of race and racism in society that emerged in the legal academy and spread to other fields of scholarship. CRT critiques how the social construction of race and institutionalized racism perpetuate a racial caste system that relegates people of color to the bottom tiers. CRT theorizes that racism is not a bygone relic of the past. Instead, it acknowledges that the legacy of slavery, segregation and the imposition of second-class citizenship on Black Americans and other people of color continue to permeate the social fabric of this nation.

While recognizing the evolving and malleable nature of CRT, George cites Khiara Bridges on a few key tenets of CRT, including:¹⁶

- . . . Acknowledgement that racism is a normal feature of society and is embedded

within systems and institutions, like the legal system, which replicate racial inequality. This dismisses the idea that racist incidents are aberrations but instead are manifestations of structural and systemic racism. . . .

- Rejection of popular understandings about racism, such as arguments that confine racism to a few “bad apples.” CRT recognizes that racism is codified in law, embedded in structures and woven into public policy. CRT rejects claims of meritocracy or “colorblindness.” CRT recognizes that it is the systemic nature of racism that bears primary responsibility for reproducing racial inequality. . . .

CRT challenges white privilege and exposes deficit-informed research that ignores and often omits, the scholarship of people of color. CRT began in the legal field in the 1970s and grew in the 1980s and 1990s. It persists as a field of inquiry in the legal field and in other areas of scholarship. Colleges of Education are also spreading the CRT gospel.

CRT proponents argue that there is a particular limitation of legal efforts to address racial inequality. It has been the inability of many legal mandates to reach the covert and insidious nature of de facto racism. This has proved, they argue, that eradicating racial inequality in education is not merely an exercise in ending legal segregation.

ABA Section of Civil Rights

The ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice and the African American Policy Forum in 2021 collaborated on a four-part webinar series on Critical Race Theory. Over the past year, the ABA Section representative states that CRT has been increasingly misrepresented by the Right in

¹³ BLACK LIVES MATTER. What We Believe <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe>

¹⁴ <https://www.americanbar.org>

¹⁵ January 11, 2021, A Lesson on Critical Race Theory, Janel George. Found at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/civil-rights-reimagining-policing/a-lesson-on-critical-race-theory/

¹⁶ *Id.*

an organized, widespread effort to stifle racial justice and gender equity and weaken America's multiracial democracy. In response to these attacks, a five-day Critical Race Theory Summer School was held in mid-August 2021 to educate participants about the origins, principles and insights of Critical Race Theory and to chart a path forward.

***ABA-Wide 21-Day Racial Equity
Habit-Building Challenge*©**

The ABA Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council endorsed a “21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge ©,” and invited all ABA members to join them. The 21-Day Challenge concept was conceived several years ago by diversity advocate Eddie Moore, Jr., to advance deeper understandings of the intersections of race, power, privilege, supremacy and oppression. The Council encouraged ABA members to use this concept as an educational tool. The goal of the Challenge is said to assist each member to become more aware, compassionate, constructive, engaged in the quest for racial equity.

Presbyterian Church USA

The Presbyterian Church USA [PCUSA] is another strong proponent of CRT. Its national governing body, The General Assembly, at the 224th General Assembly (2020)¹⁷ passed a resolution entitled “Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action.” The motion provides for the following:

- PC(USA) churches and presbyteries would approve antiracism policies.
- PC(USA) agencies are to review business items to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022) to ensure coverage under social witness policy.

This 224th General Assembly of the PC(USA) declared that Black and Brown lives matter; that the country's most important institutions have

been built to sustain white privilege, to protect white lives and white property at the expense of our siblings of color; and that the church, through ignorance, denial and in some cases deliberate action, has participated in this injustice. The Church confessed it has been slow to face the reality of systemic racism. The Assembly pledged to actively confront and dismantle systemic racism in their church and in society at large.

The Assembly said there is a need to address institutional racism and oppression within the church and to call the church to do the hard work of repair necessary for reconciliation. The Special Committee on Racism, Truth and Reconciliation was directed to prepare for the 225th General Assembly (2022) a report deconstructing white privilege within its own denomination's (and predecessor denominations') history of involvement in the colonization, enslavement, oppression and genocide of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), including theological support and benefits to institutions. The report should also include a study of the denomination's history of prophetic witness, resistance and abolition and make recommendations towards proposed amends, reparations and reconciliation.

PCUSA says its members have much to lament. Members, in particular white people, in a predominantly white denomination, must confess their complicity in perpetuating systems of oppression against our BIPOC siblings.

The church must be the first place seeking racial justice and reconciliation, the dismantling of structural racism and the healing of our marginalized communities. It has, unfortunately, not often been so.¹⁸

United Methodist Church

The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church (UMC) (2016) provides a Charter for Racial Justice Policies in an

¹⁷Minutes, Part I, 224th General Assembly (2020) (pcusa.org)

¹⁸Id.

Interdependent Global Community.¹⁹ UMC argues that racism is a system of inequality based on race prejudice and the belief that one race is innately superior to all other races. In principle, the United States has outlawed racial discrimination; but in practice, little has changed, per UMC. Social, economic and political institutions still discriminate, although some institutions have amended their behavior by eliminating obvious discriminatory practices and choosing their language carefully.

The damage from years of systemic race-based exploitation has not been erased and by all measurable indicators, per the UMC. A colorblind society is many years in the future, according to UMC. A system designed to meet the needs of one segment of the population cannot be the means to the development of a just society for all. The racist system in the United States today perpetuates the power and control of those who are of European ancestry. It is often called white supremacy. With hopes deferred and rights still denied, the deprived and oppressed fall prey to a colonial mentality that can acquiesce to the inequities. UMC calls for a renewed commitment to the elimination of institutional racism. It supports and participates in the worldwide struggle for liberation in church and community.²⁰

The church commits to challenging unjust systems of power and access.²¹ UMC will work for equal and equitable opportunities in employment and promotion, education and training; in voting,

access to public accommodations and housing; to credit, loans, venture capital and insurance; to positions of leadership and power in all elements of life together; and to full participation in the Church and society.

UMC states racism has long been described as America's "original sin." The denomination's Council of Bishops called for every United Methodist to name the egregious sin of racism and white supremacy and join together to take a stand against the oppression and injustice that is killing persons of color.²² The United Methodist Church has mounted a denomination-wide campaign, "United Against Racism," that urges its members not only to pray, but to educate themselves and have conversations about the subject and to work actively for civil and human rights.²³

The United Methodist Social Principles state: "Racism, manifested as sin, plagues and hinders our relationship with Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself. We commit as the Church to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access." The church recognizes the existence of white privilege as an underlying cause of inequality. It supports the concept of affirmative action to guarantee more opportunities for all to compete for jobs.

United Methodists are called to continue to live out their vow to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present

¹⁹ADOPTED 1980

READOPTED 2000, 2008, 2016

RESOLUTION #3371, 2008, 2012 *BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS*

RESOLUTION #161, 2004 *BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS*

RESOLUTION #148, 2000 *BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS*

See Social Principles, ¶ 162A.

From The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church - 2016. Copyright © 2016 by The United Methodist Publishing House.

²⁰ Id.

²¹ UMC/United percent20Methodists percent20Stand percent20Against percent20Racism.htm

²² Id.

²³ What percent20does percent20The percent20United percent20Methodist percent20Church percent20say percent20about percent20racism.htm

themselves. United Methodists: 1) should advocate and work toward dismantling the unjust systems that cause, or even benefit from, continued inequality; 2) call out policies that disadvantage certain ethnicities; and 3) work for change and vote in ways that promote equal justice.²⁴

Salvation Army

A Salvation Army guide aimed at "courageous conversations about racism" asks "white Americans" to "stop trying to be 'colorblind.'" The guide, "Let's Talk About Racism," was released in April 2021 and created by the Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission. The Army proclaims it was meant to provide internal dialogue on the issue of racism among members of the Salvation Army.²⁵

The Army acknowledges in the guide, with regret, that Salvationists have sometimes shared in the sins of racism and conformed to economic, organizational and social pressures that perpetuate racism. The guide's introduction states that Christians need to evaluate racist attitudes and practices. The guide also asks salvationists to apologize for their racism, stating it is "necessary if we want to move towards racial reconciliation."²⁶ Additionally, the guide says white culture has challenges it needs to overcome, including denial of racism, defensiveness about race and further states that white Americans need to stop trying to be colorblind.

The Salvation Army's website once displayed its "Study Guide on Racism." They took the guide off their website (and cannot be found anywhere on the web using all the major search engines – it

has obviously been censored by big tech).

However, using an alternative source the writer was able to find it.²⁷ The guide claims that "racism can be so entrenched in institutions and culture that people can unintentionally and unwittingly perpetuate racial division."²⁸

After removal of the guide, the Army did some damage control. They said elements of the recently issued "Let's Talk About Racism" guide led some to believe they think they should apologize for the color of their skin, or that the Salvation Army may have abandoned its Biblical beliefs for another philosophy or ideology. They claim this was never their intention, so they removed the guide for "appropriate review," only after a substantial drop in donors and donations.

The Army declares that they remain committed to serving everyone in need — regardless of their beliefs, backgrounds, or lifestyle — and proffers that some individuals and groups have recently attempted to mislabel their organization to serve their own agendas. Opponents to the guide have claimed that the Army believes its donors should apologize for their skin color, that The Salvation Army believes America is an inherently racist society and that the Army abandoned its Christian faith for one ideology or another.

The Army argues that those claims are simply false and they distort the very goal of the Army's work. (However, a review of the guide and positional statement does not support the Army's arguments that the claims are false).

Consequently, for both reasons, the International Social Justice Commission has now withdrawn the guide, also for "appropriate

²⁴ This content was produced by Ask The UMC, a ministry of United Methodist Communications and originally published on June 16, 2020.

²⁵ file:///C:/Users/Jeff/Desktop/CRT/Church percent20Policies/Salvation percent20Army/Salvation%20Army's%20racism%20guide%20tells%20White%20Americans%20racism%20is%20'systemic'%20and%20colorblindness%20is%20harmful%20_%20Fox%20Business.html

²⁶ Id.

²⁷ <https://web.archive.org/>

²⁸ Id.

review.” However, the Army’s 2017 positional statement remains in force.

Indiana University²⁹

Indiana University has extended its financial support to anti-racist initiatives with a CRT bent. The university launched 25 research grants (\$15,000 each) for faculty studying racial equity and justice. The Indiana University Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture + Design and the Jacobs School of Music hosted voluntary virtual workshops on anti-racism, cultural appropriation and micro-aggressions. The Music School’s “Inclusion, Equity, Diversity & Justice” page has a link to “Examples of Diversity Statements and Anti-Racism Resources.” The music school’s Strategic Plan calls for “training in diversity, equity and inclusivity for all faculty and staff, at the direction of Jacobs Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion Offices and the Diversity and Equity Committee, in consultation with other units and relevant campus offices, especially the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs (OVFAA) and the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion.”

The university urged students to take the IU Diversity Pledge, which includes commitments “To beware of the bias in my language and actions” and “To understand and acknowledge the race, sexuality, gender, religion, age, education, ability, or socioeconomic privileges I have . . .” The university also lists the people who have taken the pledge.

The Ruth Lilly Medical Library offered an “Anti-Racism, Inequity and Implicit Bias in Health Care” research guide. The Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Multicultural Affairs offers “Anti-Racist Agenda, Tools and Resources.”

The university funneled \$55,000 to a conference in July of 2021 for educators and

administrators hosted by the nonprofit Indiana Black Expo under the title “Education Equity: The Role of Schools and Universities in Leveling the Playing Field.” Indiana’s Republican-run government also financially supported the event through grants. It featured two prominent activists, Dena Simmons and Bettina L. Love, as reported by the *Federalist* this summer.³⁰

One such workshop was moderated by Monica M. Johnson, assistant vice president for diversity education and cross-cultural engagement for IU. Johnson, who was appointed to her post in September 2020, spoke on “Higher Education’s Role in Advancing Equity.” Johnson was joined by four other IU staffers for the panel, including Rachel Ann Brooks. Brooks, the university’s director of diversity and inclusion, discussed the Black Lives Matter riots last summer. She said students “leveraging their voices” and “saying enough is enough” indicates America is at a crossroads. In her view, universities will either “show up or step back “for the left-wing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) agenda that encourages treating Americans differently based on the inborn color of their skin.”

Another workshop the university headlined was titled “Real Talk? How to Discuss Race, Racism and Politics in 21st Century American Schools.” Delivered by IU school of education professor Marcus Croom and planned by his left-wing consulting group Brio Education, the workshop is the same title as an August book by Croom. The public university instructor, who made \$39,700 last year from IU according to public records, is no stranger to controversy. On Oct. 10, Croom shared a lecture on Twitter by openly racist and antisemitic Rev. Al Sharpton with the hashtag “realtalk.” His feed also shows extensive support for CRT czar Nikole Hannah-Jones — the writer behind the ahistorical New York Times “1619 Project.” While Croom’s Black Expo address has not been made public despite

²⁹ <https://criticalrace.org/schools/indiana-university/>

³⁰ Why Is Republican-Run Indiana Letting Tax Dollars Fund Critical Race Theory? By: Gabe Kaminsky June 22, 2021. Found at <https://thefdrlist.wpengine.com/2021/06/22/why-is-republican-run-indiana-letting-tax-dollars-fund-critical-race-theory/>

his position and the event being sponsored through government agencies, it is clear where he stands on CRT. He is a major proponent and verbatim uses the term, unlike other proponents who use “diversity” and “equity” lingo for the same thing due to public backlash against such initiatives.

Croom proclaims on his school website that he “generate[s] knowledge through case study and qualitative methods using post-white vindicationist philosophy, practice of race theory (PRT) and race critical practice analysis.” Croom also claimed in a Feb. 2020 paper titled “Meet Me at the Corner: The Intersection of Literacy Instruction and Race for Urban Education.” He asserts that “[a]fter Critical Race Theory was introduced to the field of education, a number of works advanced our knowledge related to literary instruction and race.”

Indiana State University³¹

Indiana State University (ISU), another state taxpayer-funded institution, spent tens of thousands of dollars to co-sponsor an education conference that is giving a platform to Critical Race Theory activists. Financial documents reviewed by The Federalist upon receipt of a public records request show ISU has funneled a total of \$95,000 to the same Black Expo, Inc. referred to above, a far-left nonprofit.

ISU spent more than \$27,000 to support the CRT conference for educators across the state. For the 2021 conference, the documents show, Indiana State sent \$27,500 to Black Expo, the same number as its contribution last year and just shy of its \$40,000 contribution in 2019.

Butler University³²

A Social Justice and Diversity requirement for students has been instituted. It consists of three goals: 1) Recognize multiple and intersecting dimensions of identity and inequity through the study of critical scholarship on the historical, cultural, political and/or social experiences of marginalized communities; 2) identify and explain the causes and impact of privilege, power and oppression and cultivate tools for overcoming conflict and promoting equality; and 3) recognize and critique local, national, or global conditions that enable, perpetuate and/or challenge social injustice and inequity.

The Butler Giving Circle awarded “its second annual community partnership grant to the College of Education (COE) to support the development of a new mentoring program in which experienced teachers of color from the Partnership for Inquiry Learning’s Leadership Group will mentor small groups of COE students in inclusive, culturally responsive and anti-racist teaching.”³³ The COE’s proposal, entitled Mentoring Toward Social Justice and Equity in our Schools and Communities, was selected from among three finalists to receive the \$12,065 grant at the Giving Circle’s annual shareholder meeting on June 4, 2021.

In the new mentoring program, five teacher-leaders of color from the Partnership for Inquiry Learning will meet with small groups of COE students at least once per month throughout the 2021-22 academic year to focus on relationship building, discussing and applying learnings from shared readings and coursework and learning about successes in the mentor’s school community. Participants will then share what was learned through the program at local education

³¹ Documents Show Indiana State University Funnels Taxpayer Dollars to Critical Race Theory, by Gabe Kaminsky, June 29, 2021, found at <https://thefederalist.com/2021/06/29/documents-show-indiana-state-university-funnels-taxpayer-dollars-to-critical-race-theory/>

³² <https://criticalrace.org/schools/butler-university/>

³³ <https://criticalrace.org/schools/butler-university/>. See Second Annual Butler Giving Circle Grant Awarded to College of Education for New Mentoring Program by Jennifer Gunnels, June 28, 2021 found at <https://stories.butler.edu/second-annual-butler-giving-circle-grant-awarded-to-college-of-education-for-new-mentoring-program/>

conferences and with COE faculty, staff and students, thereby expanding the program's impact beyond its direct participants.

Dr. Susan Adamson, Director of the Partnership for Inquiry Learning and a COE faculty member, will lead the program in collaboration with COE Dean Brooke Kandel-Cisco, who says she hopes to see the mentoring program become sustainable in the long term as one component of a comprehensive approach to preparing teachers toward social justice and educational equity.

The mentoring program aligns with the University's Butler Beyond strategic priority of creating an intentionally diverse, inclusive and equitable learning and working environment through the curriculum, co-curricular learning, scholarship and community engagement. CRT is endorsed by the top leader of Butler, President James Danko in his 2021 State of the University speech.³⁴ A central part of Butler's strategic priority he says is to create an intentionally diverse, inclusive and equitable campus community. "We must remain deeply committed to our founding mission as we strive for a world in which rights and opportunities are equally afforded to all people. And we still have much work to do," Danko said. He provided an update on progress in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging that has occurred on campus over the past year, including an increase in staffing and the development of the Hub for Black Affairs and Community Engagement.

Commentary

There are numerous organizations and associations other than those cited above that

support CRT. These organizations were self-selected by the author only because he had some knowledge of their likely support for or involvement in Critical Race Theory activities. There are hundreds or more organizations, businesses and associations that support elements of Critical Race Theory. The author's time limitations prevented a more comprehensive search.

There are many consultants who have recently begun to offer diversity, equity and inclusion training to corporations, schools and government. Indeed, this is a lucrative business for consultants as client's storm like sheep to the slaughterhouse of the training room. It may be well to note that diversity and inclusion training has been offered by consultants for over 50 years. It is amazing how consultants are now able to feed at private and public money troughs because the word "equality" was replaced with the word "equity." In addition to training, some consultants have expanded their services to include "equity audits."

A few of the hundreds or thousands of groups that offer training on diversity, equity and inclusion are: 1) Compliance Training Group;³⁵ 2) Critical Diversity Solutions;³⁶ 3) Linkage;³⁷ 4) Hackman Consulting Group LLC;³⁸ 5) Racial Equity Consultants;³⁹ and 6) Joyce James Consulting (JJC).⁴⁰ Joyce James Consulting is an example of how lucrative this training can be for consultants.

Adam Cahn reported that Austin, Texas Taxpayers are paying \$10,000 per day for "advanced racial equity assistance" to Joyce James Consulting. The training is for the city's police officers. Cahn reports that the contract has

³⁴ <https://stories.butler.edu/2021-state-of-the-university/>

³⁵ <https://compliancetraininggroup.com/courses/workplace-diversity/>

³⁶ Critical Diversity Solutions LLC – Leveraging Diversity Challenges for Equity, Inclusivity and Social Impact

³⁷ <https://www.linkageinc.com/>

³⁸ <https://hackmanconsultinggroup.org>

³⁹ <https://www.racialequityconsultants.com/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.joycejamesconsulting.com>

a maximum of \$580,000 per year. Cahn also reports that Joyce James Consulting has contracts with other city departments. According to PJ Media, JJC currently has contracts with the city for similar services worth more than \$3 million over the next three years.⁴¹

“It’s an easy gig for you,” said left-leaning attorney Adam Loewy on Twitter. “Just say everything is racist in various ways and make \$10k per day.” “Funny how we keep spending more and more on equity undoing (racism, CRT, etc.) but we keep growing racism exponentially,”

another replied.⁴² As said previously, there are hundreds, or thousands of consultants available for DEI training. Color of Change has a directory of hundreds of racial consultants.⁴³ The Boston Foundation also has published a directory of racial equity consultants listing 141 different firms.⁴⁴

It is comforting that so many consulting firms stand at the ready to assist America’s schools, government and private-sector entities in meeting their new found “equity” obligations — for a rather large fee, of course. ♦

⁴¹ Austin Taxpayers Forced to Pay Left-Wing Consultants \$10K/Day for Critical Race Theory Training *Nice work, if you can get it*. By Adam Cahn, July 30, 2021 found at <https://texasscorecard.com/>

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ Directory of Anti-Racist Trainers, Coaches, Evaluators & Consultants found at <https://changeindustries.org/anti-racist-directory>

⁴⁴ [tbfracial-equity-capacity-builders-directory-newest.pdf](https://changeindustries.org/anti-racist-directory)

Keeping Up to Date on the Cancel Culture

Technological advance have made it possible for an individual to get in the habit of avoiding any thought found to be personally objectionable.

Richard McGowan, Ph.D., an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, has taught philosophy and ethics cores for more than 40 years, most recently at Butler University. This is an expansion of essays distributed earlier by the foundation.



Technological Solipsism

Anyone attentive to the news is well aware of students shouting down speakers on college campuses. The incidents at Yale and the University of California's Hastings College of Law are only the latest examples.

Indiana colleges have had incidents, too, but the way IU handled it deserves praise. In 2019, the Provost at IU defended the private free speech rights of a professor while deploring the comments made off-campus by the professor.

That a controversy about speakers exists across higher education can be partially accounted for by the technology today's young people grew up with and older people did not.

When I was growing up on the north shore of Long Island, transistor radios worked especially well at night. During the day, the big, local stations, 77 WABC and 1010 WINS New York, broadcast far and wide. My friends and I could drive anywhere on the island and listen to those big but local stations. However, at night, all sorts of alternative music from tinier stations drifted over from New Haven, home of Yale University.

Regardless, I listened to whatever someone else chose for me to hear, whether I liked the music or not. A vast collection of records was not

an option for hearing only what my friends and I liked to hear.

My college years, in upstate, presented me with the same situation; someone else chose what I heard on the radio. At least the music on Long Island and in upstate New York reflected a young person's mindset. A sort of regional East Coast homogeneity reigned.

When I attended Washington State University's graduate school in the mid-1970s, the music I heard on the radio changed. The dynamics of the situation did not change—someone else chose the songs I listened to but the songs I heard reflected the locale. Instead of rock 'n roll, local radio stations played country and western music. And as my brother Garry drawls, "I like two kinds of music, country and western." In other words, C and W music was alien to me and hard to like. I gave it a chance, though, and now country music among my CDs.

Sometimes people can learn when listening to music they would not choose.

My youthful experience was not atypical. Children in the 1950s, who then attended college in the '70s and '80s, more often than not listened to music other people chose. Those choices were confined locally and regionally. When I traveled east to see my family, I heard a variety of music on the car radio; anyone making that trip by car had the same experience. The music reflected diverse regional and local choices, to be sure, but the music was not personally selected by the travelers.

Advances in technology, though, impacted the delivery of music and the dynamics of listening. Over time, young people had the tools for listening to music that they personally chose. They could drive cars with cassette and CD players, listening exclusively to what suited them. Unlike my generation's experience, young people could go from Los Angeles to New York and hear only what they wanted.

Technological advance made it possible for an individual to get in the habit of avoiding any music found to be personally objectionable. They brought that habit with them into the classroom

and, though the habit curtails diversity, academic leaders ignored that habit.

Music must suit student preferences--and so must speakers on campus, more's the pity.

Plato on Cancel Culture

"Just as in the law courts no person can pass judgment who does not listen to the arguments... so must a person whose task it is to study philosophy place himself in a better position to reach a judgment by listening to all the arguments." — Thomas Aquinas (1224-74)

Like the character, Meno, from Plato's dialogue, I entered college prepared to memorize my way through higher education like I did in high school. That soon changed. Colgate required three philosophy courses, in which I got a C+, D, and C-. I was exposed to ideas that were not my own! Those ideas were wildly different than the world I knew to exist! I did not want to hear them!

There, in a nutshell, is a partial explanation of 'cancel culture.'

Technological innovation has played a huge role in producing insular and solipsistic young people who shout down the voices of others. Certainly, the self-esteem movement contributed, too, since a cacophony of young people do not appear to handle truths or ideas that hurt their feelings. As Harvard's William Perry observed, students "demonstrate the wish to retain earlier satisfactions or securities...and most importantly, the wish to maintain a self one has felt oneself to be." New ideas threaten them.

The character and nature of colleges and universities changed, too. In the 1970s, job descriptions in the Chronicle of Higher Education for college and university presidents began listing M.B.A. degrees as a 'preferred' or 'required' criterion for consideration. Before the 1970s, the sine qua non for a presidential candidate was academic standing, i.e., a Ph.D., some experience in a leadership position, publications, and little else. However, academia slowly became a business, and businesses are beholden to their

customers. As administrative leaders began referring to students as 'customers' or 'clients,' consequences to the curriculum followed.

More emphasis was given to education's practical relevance, i.e., getting a job, rather than the acquisition of broad thinking skills.

The demotion of thinking skills meant the end for required courses in philosophy, the 'perspectiveless perspective,' the discipline that challenged a student's beliefs and identity. Today, students can get a degree without ever taking phil courses.

Unfortunately for my GPA, college curricula 50 years ago followed a model dating to ancient Greece, wherein a student began studies with philosophy, followed by the trivium, composed of logic, grammar, and rhetoric, and then the quadrivium's arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

The 12th century illustration, "Garden of Delights" by Herrad von Landsberg, shows the seven liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium. They surround Socrates, Plato, and philosophy, like rivers that flow from the headwater of philosophy.

Philosophy has always provided the foundation for the arts. The trivium, with its broader and basic courses, preceded the specialized courses of the quadrivium. Students began their college education with a broad and diverse education, then they specialized and declared a major. Now, students enter colleges with a major in mind—accounting, biology, music, and so on—and fit the 'trivium' in when they can. Seniors in my intro to philosophy class told me "I had to take a lib arts course to graduate; yours fit my schedule."

The old curriculum aligns more closely with human development, physical and mental. Swimmers learn the 'doggie paddle' before the freestyle stroke. Kids master throwing, then they learn to pitch a curveball. Kids learn to read first, then they read to learn. Mastery of fundamental skills and knowledge precedes mastery of specialized skills and wisdom. Thinking, basic to any cognitive activity, works the same way.

And the broadest form of thinking involves philosophy, where a person can “place himself in a better position to reach a judgment by listening to all the arguments.” Academic leaders can’t change the consequences of technological innovation, and may not be able to change the boorish, uncivilized behavior of cancel culture students.

But it is within their purview to restore required philosophy classes so students can listen to ideas that are not their own, discuss those ideas, analyze the ideas, and then reach a judgment, instead of behaving like the mob that put Socrates to death.

The likely consequence is more civilized behavior.

How Do Indiana Schools Fare?

Plato, who lived under the Rule of the Thirty Tyrants, understood the importance of listening to others. He wrote dialogues, not monologues. Alexis de Tocqueville, who coined the term ‘tyranny of the mob,’ what in slang has come to be called ‘mobacracy,’ understood Plato’s point. Tyrants and mobs do not listen to other people, typically ignore procedural safeguards, and disregard civil behavior.

While a required class in philosophy could help ameliorate cancel culture’s ochlocracy, the technical term for boorish mob behavior, the vast majority of students in higher education have no philosophy requirement. Even at a prestigious school like Cal Berkeley, only liberal arts students are required to take a philosophy course. Cal Berkeley nonetheless has more stringent requirements regarding philosophy courses than most Indiana colleges and universities.

Purdue requires 30 credit hours in its foundational core curriculum, organized by learning outcomes. Philosophy courses can satisfy the 3-credit requirement for the “Human Cultures: Humanities” outcome, but so can courses such as ‘Ceramics 1,’ ‘Food in Modern America,’ ‘The Movies,’ ‘Society, Culture, and Rock ‘n Roll,’ and ‘The Role of Horses in Human History.’ It is worth noting that ‘Women and Health in America’ and ‘Introduction to Women’s

Studies’ can satisfy the requirement but no ‘Intro to Men’s Studies’ or ‘Men and Health’ was listed.

At Indiana University, “students must successfully complete at least two courses, for a total of at least 6 credits, from the Gen-Ed approved Arts and Humanities courses.” Among the choices are courses entitled ‘Survey of Hip Hop,’ ‘Religion and Sports,’ ‘Sex, Drugs, and Rock ‘n Roll,’ ‘Watching Film,’ ‘Drawing 1,’ and ‘Beginning Guitar Class and Styles.’ Similar to Purdue, IU lists ‘Women and Literature’ but no ‘Men and Literature.’

Purdue, IU, and Ball State University have no required philosophy course.

On the other hand, some Indiana schools do have required philosophy courses. Holy Cross College requires two philosophy courses, Marian University requires one, St. Mary of the Woods requires one—and then there’s Notre Dame.

Notre Dame’s explanation of the first required philosophy class shows awareness of a young person’s state of mind:

Most students come to the University confident that there are truths to be uncovered in mathematics and by broadly empirical disciplines, including history and the sciences. But many students also come to university skeptical that there are any truths about the world to be discovered by reason which go beyond the scope of these disciplines. This leaves questions about the existence and nature of God, ethics, the nature and destiny of human persons, the scope of knowledge, and the existence of freedom of the will—among many others—in the realm of “opinion,” and hence outside the scope of serious intellectual inquiry.

Catholicism has always had a more optimistic view of human reason, and hence has always endorsed the value of philosophy, which is the discipline which attempts to bring reason to bear on questions, like the ones just listed, which go beyond the resources of empirical disciplines. No Catholic education can be complete without the study of philosophy.

Notre Dame's explanation originates in research on cognitive and moral growth by both William Perry et al and Lawrence Kohlberg.

Notre Dame students take a second philosophy "Because almost no students have had any exposure to philosophy prior to coming to the University, a first course in philosophy will typically cover many different philosophical topics rather than focusing on one or two. A second course in philosophy gives students a chance to explore philosophical issues... in more depth."

First-year students are also required to take "A two-semester, graded course sequence—FYS 10101 in fall (one credit) and FYS 10102 in spring

(one credit)." The sequence is designed to inculcate "Critical, Independent Thinking...The course materials present diverse and sometimes controversial opinions and research. Students are challenged to think critically and independently about the readings and viewings of the course, to develop their own opinions, to listen attentively, and to respond respectfully to others."

Notre Dame's explanation of its required philosophy classes follows the science regarding development in the college years.

Requiring philosophy courses is a step toward ameliorating the tyranny of the mob. ♦

Schansberg

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What I learned Running for a Seat in the U.S. Congress

It seems crazy now, but I thought I could win the race for Indiana's hotly-contested 9th District seat for U.S. Congress in the May 3rd primary — if our grass roots spread widely; if my advertising choices paid off; if big money and/or big name-recognition didn't crush; and if God's hand was in it (in terms of delivering a victory). None of these conditions played out in our favor and we only got 3 percent of the vote. In particular, I over-estimated how much money we would raise; under-estimated what others would spend; and didn't understand that big money was absolutely crucial to win a seat in the U.S. Congress.

One implication of this is that governance should be state and local rather than federal, as much as possible. There are other reasons to prefer state/local: it's constitutional in most cases; it leaves less room for bureaucratic excess; it is centered closer to the problem — and thus, in most cases, more able to form better solutions; and so on. But the connection to money is another concern. If big bucks are required, then we end up with a decidedly mixed bag of self-funded, independent candidates — or more often, candidates funded by national interests.

Interesting Characteristics of this Election

First, having an off-year primary was useful, since fewer (marginal) voters turned out. Many people are attracted to the voting booth by the shiny object of a presidential election. Usually, they know even less than the average voter. And

having so many candidates could have been advantageous because it diluted the crowd's impact, spreading it among many candidates.

Second, because we had so many candidates, we only had one significant forum and no debates — both of which would have been helpful to me. (When we had an opportunity to speak, it was usually a 2-3 minute elevator speech — a limited medium for making comparisons between candidates, since it's a short time completely controlled by each candidate.) It was more challenging than normal to arrange for debates, but not prohibitively so. The lack of debates stemmed from poor organization and/or bias in trying to avoid them (by candidates or the establishment).

Third, I ran as an "economics professor," trying to bring expertise on federal public policy (especially in economics) to Congress. Among a wide array of economic policy concerns, my top issue was the national debt — driven by both of the major political parties for the last 20 years. (Hey, wouldn't it be a good idea to have at least one econ prof in DC these days?!)

A few times, people expressed concern about a connection between professor, college, and "liberal." This is a common point of confusion, conflating the Left-dominance of research-oriented (often "elite") universities with the moderation/conservatism of regional schools like IU Southeast. Our faculty aren't particularly Leftist, but even if they were, the market (consumers) wouldn't allow us to exercise it. If you're worried about Leftist dogma or trying to avoid poor teaching at research-focused schools, send your kids to schools like IUS instead.

Fourth, Trump wasn't discussed publicly — in elevator speeches or sadly, even in our few opportunities to answer questions in a forum setting. The candidates were probably not eager to broach the topic, especially with such a short time to speak. And I suspect local party leaders wanted to avoid such a divisive topic.

Trump did come up, toward the end, in terms of advertising. One big-money candidate declared

"pro-Trump" and the others followed. I suspect this was causation: Once someone broke the implied cartel and brought him up, the others had to follow or risk getting left behind. (Our campaign ran into many more people who were anti-Trump than pro-Trump. But this could be a reflection of anti-Trump preferences that were stronger.)

All of these are interesting factors, but none made a significant difference — at least for the small-money candidates. Exceedingly few voters paid attention to us — or were ever going to do so. I wasn't rejected; I was ignored. None of the above (except big money) would have changed this.

Running our Race

I'm glad that I thought victory was possible, because this made it much easier to stay motivated! I was amazed how God strengthened me — and my body/mind continued to wake me up early-AM after 5-6 hours of sleep for weeks on end. (I broke my ankle a month into the race, so I was actually limping for Congress instead of running!) Beyond attending dozens of events, I made 7,000 calls; we mailed out 5,000 postcards; we sent 35,000 texts; and we had 775,000 targeted banner ads on phones and computers.

All of those efforts were spread throughout the district. Our only geographically-focused efforts were hundreds of radio ads on four stations (Christian and news/talk). You rarely know what works in a political campaign. (The only measurables are campaign contributions, volunteers, and yard signs.) In our case, looking at the results, we can confidently say that nothing worked (well), at least in a race against big-money opponents.

We focused on 25K or so of the 32K most-likely (off-year, GOP primary) voters we could reach through the data we had. So, I thought we were making contact with most of the voters. Wrong. Voter turnout was much higher than expected at 58K. (The District continues to trend GOP strongly, since the last off-year primary, so that's probably responsible for much of this gap.) So, my vote total was on the lowest end of my

expectations. And thus, my vote percentage was much lower than the worst I anticipated. Another implication of the turn-out: we advertised to less than half of those who actually voted. Not good.

With my previous campaign experience, there were some important things that I understood relatively well, but other things that I still missed. (One small, odd thing: our JPG banner ads had much higher click rates than the equivalent GIF files.) I made two mistakes: 1.) When I had good phone calls early in the campaign, we sent a handwritten postcard with a note from me. But we should have followed up more than once; we should have cultivated those relationships. 2.) Until Election Day, when I experienced the boring Clark County ballot, I never thought about the potential impact of important local races attracting more voters (e.g., sheriff). With more bandwidth and resources, we might have differentiated efforts based on expected turnout by geography.

I'm happy with how smart we ran with the resources we had. I could have done things a bit better, but not much. I'm impressed with how hard we ran. I haven't worked that much since late in my undergrad years or maybe the first year of grad school. And among our many volunteers, I had four who were work horses: David on the website; Buddy, Mom, and Tonia texting like freaks.

Most important, I'm content with how well we ran, loving the people we came into contact with. We avoided negative campaigning. In our texts and phone calls, we engaged ornery people graciously. We ministered to people who are not yet (comfortable) in the goodness of God's Kingdom.

For me, a big part of this was a) staying balanced in my time with the boys and especially my wife Tonia; b) observing a Sabbath from Saturday evening through Sunday evening; and c) Bible study. In my previous two campaigns, I did daily Bible reading in the Gospels. This time, I mostly kept up with my radio/podcast and Bible teaching schedules.

Two other thoughts on faith. First, it turns out that my teaching schedule included Wednesday nights. Fortunately, the political calendar only had one Wednesday night event, bowing to the common Christian practice of Wednesday night programming. Providentially, my schedule had been determined many months before, allowing me to miss very little political activity because of classroom commitments.

Second, in my elevator speeches, I typically started with biography and then moved to policy (especially federal spending and the national debt). Within my biography, I mentioned our ministry efforts and resources. It never seemed to inspire much interest and I was never asked anything further about it. This is not too surprising, since the folks at these events are approaching politics as something between a serious hobby, a job/career, and a god. Few would be expected to have much if any bandwidth or interest in ministry as a priority, even assuming that they're Christian. (Again, this can't give a Christ-follower much reason for faith in the political process.)

We did best in Floyd and Clark counties — and relatively well in Monroe and Brown. (I'm not sure why on the latter two.) In four counties, I was beat by Bill Thomas — someone who made no apparent effort and ran as a Democrat a few years ago. Then again, Bill beat quite a few of the lower-tier candidates in certain counties. He even finished 4th in Harrison County! (That's apparently where he lives. And maybe a plain/popular name helps a bit — at least on the lower end?)

We can't take any of this personally, since we were rarely judged personally! (The big-money candidates — Erin Houchin, Mike Sodrel, and Stu Israel-Barnes — might lose some sleep over being judged, since they were all actively rejected by a majority of the voters!) Only a handful of voters really considered my candidacy. In a word, we weren't disliked; we were rarely considered at all.

This lines up beautifully with a key tenet of "Public Choice" economics: the nearly-universal "rationally-ignorant voter." Since most voters

have so little to offer the process — a vote and maybe a few bucks — there is little incentive to gain knowledge. Instead, voters typically rely on cheap and reasonably-effective signals (e.g., party, campaign spending, yard signs) to choose.

Labor economists call this "statistical discrimination" — as people stereotype and pre-judge to make decisions with highly-limited and costly-to-obtain information. (Of course, all of us do this every day, in a vast array of contexts!) As such, most voters simply ignored the six small-money candidates — and weighed the three big-money candidates, based on a policy issue, impressions from ads, etc. (All of this ties into my most-recent academic paper in *Cato Journal* on "the limits of democracy.")

The campaign and the outcome

The winner (Erin) had big money and had been a five-term state legislator. Mike had served in Congress in 2004-06; is a long-time truck company owner; and was largely self-funded. Stu had no legislative experience but spent a lot of money. J had one term in the state legislature but only spent \$5K. Erin got 37 percent; Mike got 26 percent; Stu got 21 percent; and J got 3 percent (like me).

I was not able to raise enough money to be a factor. A key economic concept explains part of the problem. Many people may want me to win, but they'd also like to keep their money. This leads to the "free-rider problem," where people benefit from the efforts of others without contributing. Economists call this a "public good" — where consumption is "non-excludable" even if one does not pay. (Sometimes, markets can get around this problem, but provision is tricky, requires creative ways to raise money, and is usually produced at a sub-optimal level.) This problem was exacerbated since I was trying to raise money from people who aren't particularly fond of government in the first place.

Another potential money-raising angle is PAC's. All three of the big-money candidates got help from national groups. The House caucuses were bidding into the process, looking for winners

who would help them fund-raise in the future. This story describes a crypto-CEO supporting Erin. I might have had a shot at this, given my views — if I'd been above the radar. And I had hoped Americans for Prosperity would get behind me. But I wasn't a player and getting involved wouldn't make much sense to them with so many candidates in the field.

Unfortunately, big money was required to have a shot. (Three candidates spent at least a half-million dollars, including help from PAC's.) After that, the quality of the campaign and the perceived quality of candidates were decisive. In local and state races, diligent effort can substitute. But there's not enough work in the world to make a difference at the federal level.

Fortunately, the best (big-money) candidate won. Objectively, Erin ran the best race. She was specific in describing both her past record and her plans for the future. She has the best resume; she raised big money; she connected with the establishment; and she had a good ground game. Her margin of victory in Lawrence Co. (not her home county!) was enough to beat all of us, even if she didn't win another county.

Even better: The most-likely-to-be-conservative (big-money) candidate won. Erin seems to have a solid and broad conservative record as a state legislator. My only concern is her (rapidly) increasing connections with "the establishment." But hopefully, she won't compromise. Mike was reliably conservative when he was in Congress on everything except fiscal matters. (See: his grades from the National Taxpayers Union. See also: being average in a big-spending Congress can't be considered fiscally conservative.) Stu might be conservative, but has no record and his promises were too vague to inspire much confidence.

It's probable that gender discrimination — for and against Erin — played a small role. I'd guess that there was anecdotal negative and significant positive, but not enough either way to change the race. From Republicans (compared to Democrats), I'd expect a bit more negative

discrimination and less positive discrimination toward women. (Of course, one would hope for no discrimination at all!) It's interesting to speculate here, but it's all a guess; we can't estimate the impact of these empirically.

Jim Baker "won" among the small-money candidates, earning 5 percent. He spent the most money among the six of us. And I suspect that he had the strongest ground game: more contacts across the district from his business connections — and thus, the ability to use/distribute yard signs. Another interesting factor (h/t to fellow candidate, Brian Tibbs): being first on the ballot is usually helpful. (There is some academic research on this!) The effect is (far) larger in down-ballot races, where voters have even less information than usual. But it probably gave Jim a little boost.

J Davisson did well in his state legislative district — a small subset of the congressional district. (This probably pulled a bit from Houchin.) Jim, Brian, and I all did relatively well in Clark and Floyd — not surprising, given our connections here (including Brian's state rep race in 2020). The three of us probably pulled a bit from Sodrel, but not nearly enough to make a difference. And we all would have needed to drop out to help him at all, since we were pulling from each other to a large extent. (Interestingly, Jim and Brian both have significant connections to DC: Thoroughly Equipped — our discipleship curriculum. Jim hosted the first DC group in So. IN at his office. Brian's church used DC a ton and were the inspiration for what started as DC for Students and later became Getting Equipped.)

Earned media was of marginal (or no) importance. As expected, local radio and TV barely covered the race. The newspapers in the district have become far less active since I ran in 2006-08. (I saw the trend in dramatic trends from 2006 to 2008 in Bloomington. But all of the newspapers have faded in terms of political relevance since then.) The Indy Star was active but seemed biased — with an early puff piece for Houchin, 1.5 (legitimate) pokes at Sodrel and Barnes-Israel, and a juicy topic they never raised.

Still, their impact was probably even less than mine.

Related: It was interesting to learn that appearances on Fox/MSNBC and national talk radio are probably bought. (What are those prices? What is the role of third parties in facilitating these trades?) Stu appeared on FoxNews and one often hears candidates on talk-radio shows. It also makes one wonder about larger newspapers. With journalism and journalistic integrity fading over the past few decades, would/did they take money for stories? (Ironically, we could use some investigative journalism to figure this out!)

Newspapers didn't print (or report on) press releases — even those of substance. For example, all of the big-money candidates (and at least two of the small-money candidates) openly supported a three-term (six-year) limit on tenure in the U.S. House. In contrast, I can support a longer term-limit, but understand that term limits are a mixed-bag approach, a distraction from larger issues, and a terrible idea if so short. Why? Well, imagine a one-term limit: it creates lame ducks immediately and it would transfer more power to an unelected bureaucracy. Of course, a three-term limit is not as bad, but it's not much better either.

Here's the kicker: a six-year limit would maximize the number of people who receive the Congressional pension (which kicks in after...wait for it...five years). Hilarious! So, instead of term limits, I committed to refusing the Congressional pension — something only done by Ron DeSantis, Ron Paul, and Thomas Massie. You'd think that'd be "news" — both the policy analysis of term limits and the pledges that we'd taken. But no.

The candidates were mostly collegial — and always so with me. I really enjoyed my time with J, Jim, Brian, and Dan Heiwig (whose effort faded down the stretch). Of the big-money candidates, Stu and Erin were friendly to me — although it was easier for me to talk with Erin than Stu (not sure why). It was most awkward with Mike. We have some history from the 2006/08 races — no big deal to me, but perhaps something from his

perspective. Then again, he seemed to be awkward with most/all of us.

It was all friendly within the lower-tier, because we didn't take ourselves or the process too seriously. With one ironic exception, it was friendly enough between the tiers, because we were no threat and everyone was nice enough. It got a bit chippy in the ads between those in the upper-tier, so they didn't talk much in public. But the ads didn't seem especially brutal; this was simply par (or even birdie) for an often-unfortunate course.

The county political events were generally well-run. Almost all of the local party leaders are volunteering a ton of time/energy and doing a commendable job. As a group, they were passionate, hard-working, competent, engaged, kind, and impressive. The interest group activity (federal, state, and local) was decidedly more mixed, ranging from professional and balanced to incompetent and corrupt. Their power is another tenet of Public Choice economics: the incentives are well in place for these folks to pursue concentrated benefits through government activity. But it's another reason to have even less faith in the political process.

One anecdote stands out to me. I had a Zoom call with the Climate Change Lobby — an environmental group with branches in Bloomington and New Albany. I didn't anticipate much common ground. But I'll listen to anyone (for a while) and I'm happy for opportunities to teach as well. To my surprise, we were in nearly-complete agreement, since they were free-market environmentalists! So that was cool, but here's the sad part: none of my GOP colleagues met with them. Ideally, we'd have representatives in Washington who can listen and speak—not just as a reliable GOP vote, but as a thoughtful, civil, conservative voice in DC.

Sadly, the process was quite a bit more sterile than my general election runs in 2006 and 2008. First, the timing was tight and the pace was blistering. We only had 13 weeks to put everything together. Second, most of the efforts were

concentrated among political types — given the pacing, the paucity of off-year primary voters, and the need to vet and promote candidates for many different offices. Third, because you weren't going to talk with many people, it put more weight on short encounters and impersonal advertising.

It was good times, all in all. I was called to run, but I wasn't called to win. Good news: I can return to my wonderful, purpose-filled, normal life! I won't run again—unless God bangs on my door, something strange happens, or you know folks who can help me raise at least \$250,000! (I might do something at the local level, where money is not crucial, but I'm not particularly interested in state policy.)

We learned that big money is essential in national politics. This doesn't bode well for the future of the country. I wasn't optimistic about turning things around with respect to federal spending and the national debt—a dangerous, immoral, and undemocratic bipartisan effort. But with the power of money and “the establishment,” I'm less excited about the ability of Congress in general, and the GOP in particular, to take us where we ought to go. It's a good thing we have greater things in which we should place our trust.
— *May 20*

Five and Dime — and Dollar, and More

Dollar Tree was in the news last month, announcing that its standard price will increase from a \$1 to \$1.25. It's a sign of the times that “dollar” stores (including Family Dollar and Dollar General) are moving beyond a mere dollar to higher prices.

This isn't a new phenomenon. Have you heard of “five-and-dime” stores? They were the “dollar stores” of their day, with common prices of a nickel and a dime. Woolworth's was the original, but they've been gone for 25 years (transitioning into one of its later endeavors, Foot Locker). Ben Franklin is the only company remaining among the early versions of these stores. But we still remember Kresge and Walton's, at least in their modern-day forms: Kmart and Walmart.

Why did prices rise from a nickel and a dime — to a dollar, and now beyond? Inflation: a sustained increase in the general price level throughout an economy. Low inflation has been the norm in modern economies. But high inflation was a problem in the 1970s and again now. Either way, the result is a depreciating currency — slowly at times and quicker at others.

Inflation always erodes the purchasing power of money, harming those with fixed incomes the most. Even worse: Uncertainty in inflation can be devastating to an economy, since it makes contractual arrangements risky. (If you agree to pay or accept dollars in the future, what will they be worth?)

It doesn't require a Ph.D. in economics to understand the basics. Higher prices can come from an increase in demand or a decrease in supply. With higher demand, more money is chasing goods and services, putting upward pressure on prices. With lower supply, there are fewer goods and services, also encouraging higher prices.

Sometimes, this is caused by natural or economic forces. For example, a freeze in the orange crop would increase the price of oranges, orange juice, etc. But that's not significant enough to impact inflation in the macroeconomy. In contrast, if you change the price of oil, this is big enough to ripple throughout the economy. Likewise, wide-ranging supply-chain problems during Covid have made it difficult for firms to get inputs and to ship their goods, increasing costs and prices.

Sometimes, it's a result of large-scale government policy. Higher taxes and increased regulations drive up costs, putting pressure on prices. Policy responses to Covid-19 have also given us some good examples. Expanded unemployment insurance (paying people not to work) reduced labor supply — increasing wages, costs, and prices. And we've seen repeated government efforts to stimulate demand through massive cash payments and government spending.

Continuing inflation is not caused by sunspots or greedy businesses. (In competition, outside of cost problems, businesses find it exceedingly difficult to increase prices. And remember that inflation requires sustained price increases.) It's caused by expansionary fiscal policy (as government spends too much money) or expansionary monetary policy (if the Federal Reserve allows too much money into the economy).

Here's the bigger concern: Will we follow the pattern from the late 1970s as we fix our inflation

problem? The result in the early 1980s was the worst economy we've had since the Great Depression — with double-digit unemployment rates. In other words, the buzz is not that great and the hang-over can be terrible. Worst of all: if fighting inflation leads to a recession, this will make it more difficult for the federal government to deal with its massive spending and debt problems. But that's a different essay for a different day. — [March 4](#)

Morris

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Sensationalizing Tragedy Is no Solution

(May 30) — Vietnam was the first war brought to our living rooms by television, so I always thought it interesting that the movie about the war moving me most was a made-for-TV film.

“Friendly Fire” stars Carol Burnett and Ned Beatty in the true story of Iowa farm couple Peg and Gene Mullen trying to cope with their son’s death in the war. With the help of journalist C.D.B. Bryan, on whose book the movie is based, the couple learn that their son was killed not by enemy fire but by an accident of human error on his own side.

Until Bryan’s involvement, the Mullens had been frustrated and embittered by the indifferent and often misleading responses of an entrenched bureaucracy just doing its cold, efficient duty.

The journalist foolishly thought that learning the truth — there were no villains to hate, no gross incompetence to punish in the inevitable casualties of war — would give the couple peace and allow them to move on.

It did not. The Mullens were too consumed by grief and too angry to accept the truth. There was no happy ending.

It should be obvious as we move on from another Memorial Day celebration that the divisions in this country revealed in that war and depicted in that movie are still with us and more pronounced than ever. And the two sides do not talk to each other about their differences. They merely shout slogans across the great divide.

Those slogans are never louder, never less thoughtful, than when we are confronted with another horrific mass shooting like the one in Uvalde, Texas, that claimed the lives of 19 children and two adults. We look for villains to hate and gross incompetence to punish, but our anger and bitterness keep us from actually engaging with one another to find any real answers.

Just consider the inevitable “gun debate” that always follows a shooting. There is the usual forlorn hope that “moderates” can hammer out a “bipartisan” plan for “common sense” gun control measures. But such efforts always collapse under the weight of partisan rhetoric.

Each side has its script, and they stick to it, no matter what, reading the lines they have rehearsed so well.

For the gun rights side, any reform, however slight, is seen as a foot in the door. Give the zealots one little thing, then they’ll demand more and more, and the first thing you know, the Second Amendment will be abandoned, and there goes the country.

For the gun control side, there can never be enough laws, never mind that those who misuse guns don’t obey the thousands of laws we already have. Even if new regulations won’t work, there is some therapeutic value to “having done the right thing.”

And while we’re spinning our wheels on guns — until the furor dies down and we move on — there is so much more we aren’t talking about, such as:

How to harden school defenses without making students feel like they’re trying to learn in a war zone.

How to neutralize those whose mental illness is likely to turn violent without stigmatizing all those with mental illness.

How to stem the tide of fatherless families from which so much pathology is generated without demeaning the heroic efforts of single mothers.

How to stop sensationalizing tragedy without depriving the public of the information it needs to make informed decisions.

That last point, it should be noted, suggests there is a First Amendment issue at least as worthy of debate as our Second Amendment dilemma, whether media advocates are willing to admit it or not. Even something considered a fundamental constitutional right can be deployed to harm. That is the nature of freedom.

Like the Vietnam War, mass shootings are beamed into our living rooms in nearly real time. TV, now augmented by social media echo chambers, can show us the horror and feed our grief and anger.

Help us toward a solution? Not so much.

Who Is Replacing What?

(May 23) — Let you in on a little secret: Non-European, non-white voters are flooding the polls, boosting prospects for the Democratic Party and relegating Republicans to permanent minority status.

That is not rabid paranoia from the fevered imaginations of rightwing conspiracy nuts. It's a boast from Democrat and liberal journalists, academicians and politicians, including Joe Biden, who just a few years ago were claiming that population shifts in the United States would dramatically alter voting patterns.

There were even books about it — “The Emerging Democratic Majority” in 2002 and “Brown is the New White” in 2016, which argued, according to one reviewer, that “hope for a more progressive political future lies not with more advertising to middle-of-the-road white voters, but with cultivating America’s growing, diverse majority.”

Such demographic drivel is bad enough on its own, plodding along in the intellectual shallows. But it can also be misused in a couple of significant ways, if “misuse” is the right word to deploy for something so worthless on its face.

One way is that it can be adopted by violent psychopaths who feel the need to espouse a

“philosophy” when they go on killing sprees. Throw in a few references to the “evil Jewish cabal,” add some nonsense about race purity, and soon you have a manifesto for a revolution of one.

The Buffalo shooter hated African-Americans. The man who shot a Republican congressman and four others hated conservatives in general and Donald Trump in particular. The Unabomber hated technology. Violence springing from hate is their common bond.

The other way is that it can be sent forth to discredit one side of the political debate.

Just ignore any liberal contribution to replacement theory and brand it a conservative fantasy with roots in Hitler’s Germany and a more modern French radical movement and allow for no nuance or degrees of acceptance.

This is extremely useful when it comes to a subject such as immigration. Try to argue that allowing millions of people to flood across the border unvetted is an insane public policy, and you’re apt to be labeled a racist, nativist xenophobe, deathly afraid of losing white privilege. It’s that repugnant Great Replacement Theory, and you might as well be handing guns to your fellow Make America Great Again reactionary bigots.

I have my own replacement theory.

The primacy of the individual — the idea this country was founded on and the beacon of freedom in a totalitarian world — is being replaced by loyalty to the group. As just one human, you are nothing. Your worth is defined by your membership in a race, religion, sex or currently favored assemblage of quirks.

This is no accident but rather the active goal of statist elites who see themselves as benign philosopher kings, maintaining power by accumulating debts of dispensed favors. To them, tribalism is the desired result, not an unfortunate byproduct of a progressive agenda.

Sometimes, I worry they will succeed. It is hard to be free, morally responsible individuals and live with the results, good and bad, of our decisions. It

is so much easier to melt into the crowd and let someone else take the risks.

But at times there are glimmers of stubborn autonomy.

Many of those non-European, non-white voters – Asians, blacks, and Hispanics especially – are starting to pull the Republican lever when they enter the voting booth.

We could probably come up with a grand theory of why this is happening. But could we just grant all those individual Americans the dignity of voting their own consciences and perhaps recognize a simple truth in the process?

Demography is not destiny.

The Sport of Kings (and Others)

(May 16) — It's probably sacrilegious for a Hoosier to admit this, but I find auto racing the dullest of spectator sports.

Watching cars go around and around a track endlessly, lap after lap, until a winner is finally declared just before my bottom falls asleep? Counting the raisins in a box of cereal would be about that exciting to me.

At least I can only say that auto racing bores me. It incenses my sister. As a resident of the Circle City, she is inundated with wall-to-wall TV coverage of the Indianapolis 500 weeks – and lately, even months – before the actual event. It's finally almost upon us, so her long personal nightmare is almost over.

And as long as I'm slighting diversions near and dear to Indiana hearts, I might as well confess that I'm not that crazy about basketball, either.

Oh, I flirted with college hoops for a few years when Bobby Knight was Indiana University's head coach. But at least half the fun of watching the team was wondering if this was the game in which Knight would at last go totally bonkers and be dragged off the court in chains, foaming at the mouth.

Ultimately, I decided the game was just too fast for me to follow. Run and shoot. Run and shoot.

And if basketball is too fast to follow, baseball is too slow. Sometimes, the pitcher and catcher

spend so much time signaling each other and trying to psych out the batter that I feel the need to drop the crossword puzzle I'm working on and yell, "Just throw the ball already!"

Football gets it about right. Not too fast, not too slow, just the right amount of offense and defense, a good mix of brute strength and patient strategy.

Alas, I can't see a semi-pro football game in Fort Wayne – just basketball and baseball. I could go see a semi-pro hockey game, but, come on – hockey to me is like soccer on ice. I don't understand where the lines are or whether the players are violating the rules or not, and, frankly, I don't care enough to learn.

You know what I'd like to see here? Horse racing. Now, there's a sport to get a spectator's heart pumping. There's a nice buildup with good suspense. You get to hang out with the whole spectrum of the human race – suave gentlemen in linen suits and elegant ladies in outrageous hats, alongside drunken carousers and degenerate gamblers. Then – boom! the starting gun – the race is on, just like with autos, but it's all over in two minutes, and we can all go home.

Did you see the Kentucky Derby? The winner, Rich Strike, was not only an 80-to-1 long shot. The horse was also the 21st entrant in a 20-contestant field and only got in the race because of a scratch the night before. Furthermore, its trainer had almost quit the profession a few years ago.

This is the stuff of legends. It almost gets into the Seabiscuit category of magic, when Americans in the depths of the Great Depression were enthralled by the most improbable of Triple Crown winners. (By the way, thank you, Laura Hillenbrand, for one of the greatest sports books of all time.)

Could an auto racer, or even a football player, grip an entire nation? And champion horses don't wallow in squalid public scandals or ever try to impress us with droll Twitter accounts.

I guess I am a bad fan, too nitpicky to just sit back and cheer like a good little spectator. It is the job of the appreciative crowd, after all, to be

passive and enjoy while we forget about little things like the world falling apart.

Do you know what the Roman satirical poet Juvenal was getting at when he coined the phrase “bread and circuses”?

There is a broad misconception that he was criticizing authorities who tried to lull the public with diversion, keeping people passive by satisfying their basic need for food and entertainment. In truth, he was lampooning that public, which allowed itself to be lulled and gave up on its historic commitment to civic duty.

And while those citizens slept, Rome was transformed in just about 100 years from a free republic to an autocratic empire.

Wow, that took a bad turn, didn’t it? Yellow flag, there’s a crash on the curve ahead.

A Very Human High Court

(May 9) — All the pro-choice advocates in my circle are in a “mad as hell and won’t take it anymore” mood, nearly apoplectic with rage at the leaked Supreme Court draft opinion suggesting an overturn of *Roe vs. Wade*. How dare this politicized court take the radical step of upending 50 years of settled jurisprudence.

But 50 years ago, it was the pro-life crowd aghast at the direction of a politicized court issuing a radical opinion. *Roe vs. Wade*, after all, found a fundamental right to an abortion nowhere mentioned in the Constitution and usurped debates that were taking place in state legislatures across the nation.

And so it goes.

Liberals today are furious because, thanks to President Trump’s three appointments, conservatives will be able for a couple of generations to turn to the court with their agenda, accomplishing judicially what they can’t get done legislatively. They choose to forget that such militancy is a reaction to the liberal activism that saw a progressive agenda move around the legislative branch for a couple of generations. Anyone recall those “Impeach Earl Warren” billboards that once littered the landscape?

The plain truth is that Supreme Court justices are not superhuman. They are subject to the same flaws and prejudices as the rest of us. They might pledge loyalty to the Constitution or feel allegiance to a principled philosophy, but they cannot be unaware of public opinion, social trends and the political climate in which they operate. They might like to pretend they are above reality, but they cannot escape its effects.

And, yes, the court has too much power. It always has, almost from the beginning.

Blame that on William Marbury, a politically connected businessman named a justice of the peace by Federalist President John Adams on his last day in office. But Marbury’s commission papers were never delivered, so incoming Democrat Republican President Thomas Jefferson ordered Secretary of State James Madison to withhold them.

Marbury sued, and the case went to the Supreme Court. In a master stroke, Chief Justice John Marshall in 1803 denied Marbury’s appointment, saying the court did not have jurisdiction, but did assert the court’s right to rule on the constitutionality of all legislative activity. Like it or not, our-day-to-day lives have existed in the shadow of that decision ever since.

And the court has never been afraid to flex its muscles. Justice William Brennan was said to be fond of showing his hand, five fingers spread out, and saying something like, “If I get four people to go along, I can do anything.” He was apparently speaking in jest, but he wasn’t wrong.

For now, the court’s enormous power will remain, with one side complaining and the other cheering, depending on whose ox is being gored at any given time. Perhaps one day, there will be a decision so obviously wrong that both sides will reunite in an effort to curb that power.

To do what? Establish term limits for justices? Make it easier for the Constitution to be amended? Super pack the court, with say two justices appointed from each state? (If it insists on behaving like a legislature, perhaps it should actually be like one.)

I don't know, which means I am violating a cardinal rule of opinion writing, which is: If there is no solution, there is no problem.

But in the meantime, if *Row vs. Wade* is indeed overturned, the issue will be where it should have stayed in the first place, with legislative bodies.

Blue states might go too far one way, allowing unfettered access to abortion right up to the moment of birth. Red states might go too far the other, making laws so restrictive that women will be afraid to seek doctors' advice on problem pregnancies.

But the power of legislators is limited in a way the court's power isn't. They aren't appointed for life, with five of them able to do whatever they want. They preside over the chambers where both your enthusiasm and your rage must be taken into account.

'Forgiving' Student Loans

(*May 2*) — My heartfelt congratulations to President Biden. He is proposing an idea so bad that it replaces the No. 1 choice of worst federal government scheme of my lifetime.

My guideline in judging federal programs is whether they honor the fundamental relationship between the government and the governed — that of government as a servant of the people — or attempt to flip that relationship by making people the servants of government.

Using that criterion, federal income tax withholding is the gold standard of government gone bad. By taking a little of our money at a time from each paycheck instead of hitting us with one gigantic bill, the government lulls us into complacent acceptance. Furthermore, the whole concept of "withholding" resets the default from "this money is mine, and the government must make the case for taking it" to "this money is the government's, and I must make the case for keeping it."

But that was before my lifetime.

The worst policy implementation I witnessed as a horrified voter was President Nixon's revenue-sharing plan in which the federal government dispensed money to local units of

government with few of the usual strings attached. It was free money — some \$85 billion doled out during the program's 14-year history — and there was jubilation in the land.

Of course, the money given to local units had been taken from local taxpayers in the first place. We were being bribed with our own money, and the idea of Washington as the great benefactor was further solidified. President Roosevelt would have been delighted.

There will always be new ways for Washington to assert its dominance. Here comes Biden with his wonderful student-loan forgiveness pledge, perhaps up to \$10,000 per borrower, perhaps \$50,000 or even more. The move, it is said, would free a certain group's money anxiety in a time of great economic turmoil.

It would also add a bit to the national debt, which is but one part of the plan's shortcomings.

It would be a slap in the face to those who have already moved heaven and earth to pay back their loans. It would insult all those Americans who never even dreamed of going to college. It would give people who should not dream of it the notion of giving it a whirl anyway, on somebody else's dime. It would make other debtors, such as homeowners, start to wonder.

And, such real-world results aside, the plan fails on the very concept it is built upon: Do any old thing you want, and do not fear the potential negative consequences because the government will be there to pick up the pieces. All that's asked in return is for you to put yourselves in its care forever.

But of course, that means the government chooses the winners and losers, and though it may decide in your favor today, it might just turn against you tomorrow. Living or dying by the whim of the ruler — isn't that why we got rid of kings?

I admit to not being a disinterested observer here.

My parents could not afford to send me to college, so I came up with a brilliant way to get the government to send me. I joined the Army, then got my education by way of the G.I. Bill.

All it cost me was three years of my life.

Perhaps the government would like to cancel that debt for me. All it has to do is add three years to my life. And I don't want three more affliction-prone, senior citizen years. I want three more youthful, zest-for-life years.

Do you think my expectations might be too high?

Well, whose fault is that?

Preparing for the Primaries

(April 25) — *Res ipsa loquitur*.

That's a useful Latin phrase meaning, "The thing speaks for itself."

It's a legal tactic commonly used in negligence cases. It claims that the guilt of the defendant is so patently obvious that little evidence need accompany the charge. In a case of medical malpractice, for example, who else but the surgeon could have taken out the wrong body part or left behind a sponge that caused an infection?

So, *res ipsa loquitur*, and the burden of proof suddenly shifts from the plaintiff to the defendant.

I think as voters we should deploy a version of that principle when it comes to claims of political malpractice.

We tend to be mostly trusting in our relationships – how could we live day to day and stay sane otherwise? It's usually a rare exception when we allow a scoundrel to stay in our inner circle. "Oh, Luther's OK. Just take everything he says with a grain of salt."

So we have the same amount of faith in our public servants when they are accused of miscreant behavior. You've heard the charges:

Governor so-and-so and his entourage took an extravagant trip at taxpayer expense. Mayor what's-his-name awarded a lucrative bid to the contractor who just happened to be a huge campaign donor. Candidate I'm-your-pal moves from a million-dollar home to an efficiency apartment just in time to seek office in the district the apartment is located in.

We hear the claims and give the defendants the benefit of the doubt, waiting for the accusers to provide proof of their claims.

And that is backward. Surely if we have learned anything in our 246-year experiment, it is that putting the burden of proof on the politician is the only way to keep the scoundrels a rare breed.

Governor, show us the economic development your trip was supposedly in search of. Mayor, demonstrate the usefulness of that contract to taxpayers. Candidate, convince us you are not just an opportunistic jerk.

I don't mean to suggest our officials are a lesser breed. I hope I never become quite that cynical, and I have, in fact, known more than a few sincere, dedicated public servants.

But they live in a different world.

They won office by being better than the other candidates at telling the voters what they wanted to hear. Now, they are members of a club whose members thrive best when making the best deals with competing brokers of influence. A promise to them is not a sacred vow but something between a card to be played and commodity to be traded.

We have to judge them on their terms, not ours, and to do that requires looking beyond what they say and even what they do, and trying to figure out who they are at the core.

It's the "primary season" now, and I've become almost numb to the onslaught of TV commercials for candidates. "Oh, I used to be disgusted, and now I try to be amused," to quote Elvis Costello.

The most amusing commercial so far this year is for the candidate who had himself filmed smoking a joint – in Illinois, you know, so he was not breaking the law, unless you count federal law, which most people apparently don't. Poor William F. Buckley – he had to sail outside the U.S. territorial waters to stay legal.

If the candidate were being honest with us, he would have filmed himself after he smoked marijuana, so we could see the kind of thought processes he might employ in the legislature. But that would have knocked him off my list,

assuming he moved into an efficiency apartment in my district.

I no longer listen to what the candidates vow to do or not do. I ignore the so-called philosophies they fervently espouse. I pay no attention to the “ordinary people” in their ads who look as if they’d rather be anywhere else.

I just try to determine two things about every candidate. Would they, 1) stumble across the right thing occasionally and otherwise do minimal damage, and, 2) be able to step up and be responsible if a crisis hits?

And I am guided in this by another useful Latin phrase:

Caveat emptor.

Beware ‘The Next Big Thing’

(April 18) — I’m so old that I remember when the Establishment set the rules and rebels tried to break them. Now, we seem to be embarked on a great experiment in which the former rebels are in charge and determined to get rid of all the rules.

Sometimes, I think the experiment is to see how outrageous the elimination of norms can get before the public stops going along and says, “Enough!”

It makes me wonder what the next big push will be for. A few come to mind:

Plural marriage. This is the easiest one to predict because we’re already so close. Loving vs. Virginia merely extended the traditional right of marriage to mixed-race couples. Obergefell vs. Hodges nullified the traditional definition of one man, one woman by extending the right to same-sex couples. Since that limitation was removed, there is nothing to prevent marriage from being expanded to cover almost any living arrangement. Using the logic and language of Obergefell, try to argue against, for example, the right of a bisexual to enter into a marriage with both a man and a woman. It can’t be done.

The right to die. To avoid the perception that this is an attempt to clear the decks of aging baby boomers with their costly medical needs, we will be instructed not to use the terms euthanasia or

physician-assisted suicide since they have acquired such negative connotations. Instead, we will be treated to essays on such topics as personal autonomy and the right to say goodbye with dignity.

So long to the First Amendment. This part of the Bill of Rights is clearly too problematic in a modern, pluralistic and diverse society. The so-called right to free speech fosters hateful and hurtful commentary, and the free exercise of religion clause is too often used to justify actions obviously designed to thwart the majority’s needs.

The end of federalism. Speaking of the majority, the limitations placed on the will of the people by the Constitution’s misguided efforts to limit power have to be eliminated. Federalism must be replaced by a pure democracy in which a vote of 51 percent always carries the day. Also needed will be the removal of confusing edicts coming from different levels of government. One set of rules from the central authority will suffice.

Redefinition of crime. The reason this country has so many lawbreakers is that it has too many laws. First, we must scrap all victimless crimes, such as prostitution and the use of all drugs (not just marijuana). Then, any so-called property crimes must be examined for the root causes that might lead the victimized to strike back at the privileged. This movement might well be accompanied by a call for the:

Elimination of prisons. Incarceration is clearly an archaic practice that does not work – just check out the recidivism rates. Once we have reduced the number of “criminals” to a manageable few, it should be possible to place them in halfway houses scattered throughout various suburban enclaves. The neighborhoods used for these rehabilitation units will be chosen by lottery.

The citizenship façade. It is finally time to examine this barrier to full participation in all that America has to offer. It is not enough to erase the artificial borders that surround America and lobby for giving voting rights to anyone residing in the country. A human being is a human being, and each one should have the same universal rights as

any other. Once we set the example, the rest of the world will surely follow.

What is child “abuse”? The only reason children are traumatized by loving relationships with adults is that we treat it as something shameful instead of a learning experience on the way to adulthood. We should follow the wisdom of the ancient Greeks, whose open approach to this dynamic was so much more civilized than modern society’s attempts to vilify it.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. In fact, the Next Big Thing might be something we’ve never even dreamed of. The only certainty is that, once it appears, it will almost overnight become the most important topic on the agenda and to oppose it would be to risk being shunned as a reactionary enemy of all that is good and decent.

And if you think this whole exercise is preposterous, overly cynical or a misguided attempt to be humorous, you have not been paying attention.

We Can Trust Ourselves

(April 11) — In the current political context, I am more traditional than progressive, although with a few liberal skeletons in my conservative closet.

But in my philosophical soul, I am a libertarian, with a fervent belief in individual rights and a tolerance for only the minimum government necessary to protect those rights.

A libertarian, not an anarchist, though it can be an admittedly fine line between them, a line I swear the government is making every effort to drag me across.

That is the thought uppermost in my mind as I note the disappearance of the Great Covid Epidemic from the news. Have you noticed that, after two years of raging like a blazing inferno, Covid is now drifting away like the smoke from a dying campfire?

Certainly, one reason is the relentless onslaught of newer fascinations and anxieties. At home, we have spiraling inflation and our race and gender struggles; abroad, there is a war with

global implications and real heroes and villains to admire and despise,

But there is also an element of crisis fatigue. We can keep our alert level only so high for so long, so finally we just let it go. Those still dying from Covid will no longer be icons, just victims, like those succumbing to the flu or perishing in one-car accidents on a rural road at night.

We finally just got tired of the whole thing. At least I did, since I should be careful not to project too much.

Tired of being lied to. Tired of being manipulated. Tired of being treated like a child one day, a prisoner of war the next, and a pawn on a chess board every day.

My respect for authority, marginal at best, was stretched to the breaking point. The government, always citing the unchallengeable truth of the great god science, issued contradictory edicts we were all expected to follow. The economy was upended, our schools crippled, lives lost or damaged not by disease but by stupidity. And when the mistakes in judgment became obvious, those in authority doubled down.

And the press, which we should have been able to look to for objective reporting and analysis, took sides and became just another player in the circus. Covid became one more manifestation of the red state-blue state battle to the death, angry mobs inflamed by media cheerleaders.

So, the question we should all be asking in this soon to be post-Covid world, is: What will we do next time? When there is an even greater crisis – and there will be one, perhaps with the survival of humanity in the balance – to whom should we give our trust?

The answer is what it has always been, forgotten though it may be. We should trust ourselves. We take in all the information we can from every source available, process it based on our own knowledge and experience, and use our own best judgment.

That’s the foundational principle of the United States, is it not? We are not ruled by the majority, nor by the wisdom of our best and brightest. We

give public servants the ability to use their best judgment, and limit the authority they have in myriad ways, because we know that power is the greatest threat to individual autonomy, and the protection of individual autonomy is the only way to thwart tyranny.

We won't find our salvation in our groups, whether they be defined by race, sex, gender identity, religion or even political-opposition-in-exile advocacy. One tribe's advance is often another tribe's retreat, with those in power defining the favored tribe of the moment.

Rights inhere in the individual. That is the great truth that makes our Constitution the greatest document of freedom in history. And it is the truth we were in danger of abandoning even before Covid and that seems almost beyond reach today.

And we have to get it back. Without a firm belief in ourselves as individuals, we cannot summon even the minimal trust we must give the government, so we will forever cross another of those fine lines, from skepticism to cynicism. Even libertarians cannot survive long in that arid environment.

A New Fun Fact for Indiana

(April 4) — Here is a fun fact for your amusement, which I just invented: The Grand Canyon is seven miles longer than Indiana.

OK, I didn't "invent" it. I discovered it. You do that by taking two discrete pieces of information and putting them together in a way no one else has considered and – voila! – a new fun fact is born.

(Fort Wayne used to have a mayor who tried to impress people with his erudition and kept saying things he didn't really understand, such as, "Viola!" Getting an expression wrong is amusing to word snobs like me. A reader responding to my most recent column accused me of ignoring facts and evidence and relying instead on "antidotal" evidence.)

What happened was that I was trying to find something silly and diverting for this week's

column. My last several had been so grimly serious, and I needed a break.

I first considered "the slap heard round the world" involving Will Smith and Chris Rock. What is more diverting than a stupid feud between two Hollywood darlings we will never meet in real life?

But it appears we have reached the point in our society where we can't even talk about something that inconsequential without dragging race and the culture war into it. So much baggage. So not amusing.

And then I stumbled across the tidbit that the Grand Canyon is 277 miles long and thought, "Boy, that is one long canyon. My sister was not entirely accurate."

She had told me about "seeing" the Grand Canyon. But the truth is that she took a day trip on her Las Vegas vacation and saw a tiny piece of it. It would take days to see all of it.

For some reason, that made me think of Indiana, probably because it is one of our vertical states, as opposed to the horizontal ones, squarish ones and funny-shaped-because-somebody-slapped-somebody-over-a-border-dispute ones.

And I discovered that the Hoosier state, from Lake Michigan all the way down to the Ohio River, is a mere 270 miles, which is a little bit humbling.

It wouldn't do to carry the analogy too far, however. Indiana still wins the square footage sweepstakes, being a whopping 140 miles wide, compared with the Grand Canyon's mere 18.

And the canyon, of course, is up to a mile deep in some places. Indiana is much shallower. There is a joke in there somewhere, but it's mean spirited, and this is supposed to be a light column.

Anyway, it would be a mistake to say you "know" Indiana just because you know your part of the state well or even if you've taken a day trip or two.

Northwest Indiana takes its spirit of urban vibrance from nearby Chicago. Southern Indiana mirrors the bucolic leisureliness of Appalachia. In between are a trove of hidden treasures and awe-inspiring wonders. If you seek diversion from the anxieties of the daily news, you could do worse

than spending a few weekends exploring the flyover territory around you.

You could start by seeking out the under-appreciated gems in your own town. The Sunken Gardens if you live in Huntington. The Bluespring Caverns in Bedford. The Labyrinth in New Harmony. The world's largest ball of paint in Alexandria.

Here in Fort Wayne, it's the Ardmere Quarry. It's not exactly a grand canyon, but it is a mighty big hole. Standing on the observation deck, you'd swear you were looking at part of the set for "Jurassic Park." Is that a dinosaur peeking around the corner?

Once upon a time, it was called May Sand and Stone. It's the first place my father worked when we moved here from Kentucky, and sometimes I'd go with him when he had the Sunday guard duty. It was the first time I ever heard my father curse, when he hit his thumb with a hammer. I won't tell you the word but can report that he pronounced it perfectly.

Ooh, did you know – another fun fact – that Fort Wayne has roughly the same latitude (about 41 degrees north) as Istanbul, where the Russia-Ukraine peace talks are currently going on?

There's probably a joke there, but we should let it go.

The Holcomb 'Trans' Veto

(*March 28*) — I was a little taken aback a few days ago on reading of praise for Governor Holcomb's "conservative" approach in vetoing a bill that would have banned transgender girls from competing on girls sports teams.

He said he was taking the action because, "[T]he presumption of the policy . . . is that there is an existing problem . . . that requires further state government intervention," a presumption he disagrees with.

Legislatures should be careful not to legislate just because they can. They should determine, first, that a situation requires some action and, second, that their involvement is appropriate.

That is indeed the conservative approach to governance, if the facts warrant it.

But do they in this case?

Government top to bottom is already heavily involved in the issue, from Washington's linking of transgender athlete rights and federal funding, to local elected school boards' implementation of transgender policies. Can the state alone just sit on the sidelines and observe?

And it may be true that there is no existing problem over the issue in the state, but it would be foolish to suppose there won't be. Transgender athletes are overwhelming girls teams in several states, and trans participation in the Olympics is an ongoing controversy around the world.

Furthermore, greater urgency will soon attach to the topic. The International Olympic Committee, which sets the standards used by most organizations down the line, including the NCAA and, therefore, high school governing bodies, started out requiring sex reassignment surgery as a standard. It now uses hormone levels. But the clamor today is to consider how an athlete "self identifies" as the sole criterion for participation.

So, in the current environment, is a legislature's appropriate response to just let events unfold as they will or to try to influence them?

There is another element to conservatism not considered by the Holcomb cheering section.

A principal tenet of the movement, going all the way back to the seminal writings of Edmund Burke, is that we should not recklessly abandon fundamental values and traditional institutions. The goal is neither to blindly support the status quo nor to reflexively oppose all change, but rather to ensure that, in our headlong rush to the future, we keep the foundations necessary to support civilization.

Is there anything more fundamental to our understanding of humanity than our essential sexuality? Men and women, that is the pith. XX and XY – there are no other choices. Does the governor believe that? Or is he being bullied by

the shouting from those in the soft sciences of psychology and sociology as they try to overwhelm the hard science of biology?

With a notable exception or two, conservatives have decided to ignore the culture wars for at least a couple of generations, to their detriment. They constantly have to fight from defense instead of offense. Attacks on tradition that could have been argued against from the beginning as fringe radicalism were allowed to grow and multiply into mainstream tolerance, to the point that to challenge them is now seen as the extreme position.

The question of transgender athletes participating in competitive sports is just a small part in the overall effort to turn everything we know about humanity upside down. Until just a few years ago, we argued about the different roles and expectations and experiences of men and women. But with blinding speed, we have moved to a place where we must now defend our belief that there even is such a division.

So today we have Florida sensibly deciding to ban the teaching of subjects such as gender fluidity to kindergartners through third-graders, outraging members of the progressive establishment, including, alas, even the supposedly family-friendly Disney Company. And we have a Supreme Court nominee who refuses to say what a woman is. How in the world can she vote on anti-discrimination cases if she can't even define who is being discriminated against?

If this were just about those who truly struggle with their sexual identities, this would not be a particular concern for society or its elected officials. Only about .6 percent of the population identify as transgender, and they deserve the same right as anyone else to find their own way without fear that any of us are threatened by it. But they have been drafted as the latest victim group with which to attack the evil, oppressive majority, so that is a battle that affects everyone.

There have been lively discussions, both inside and outside conservative circles about what that philosophy actually entails. It has never meant, and should never mean, "Let's sit this one out."

World War III, Yes or No?

(March 21) — Someone at the gym last week asked me what I thought about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and I said, "I'm firmly on the side of those against World War III."

Yes, that was a pretty glib answer, but it was a defensive response masking my uncertainties.

Just the week before, I'd scoffed at the idea of the governor and the General Assembly expounding on the conflict — Indiana now presumes to have a role in foreign policy? But I should be more empathetic — it's one of those issues of such global concern that everyone feels compelled to weigh in, whether or not having anything meaningful to contribute.

My particular two cents of opinion — and it's certainly worth no more — is that: 1) Ukraine is not now nor ever likely to be a threat to the United States, 2) Russia has long been and long will be a threat to us, so, 3) it is in this country's interests to support Ukraine, especially given that the invading country's leader is a brutal thug in control of the world's largest nuclear arsenal.

Interestingly, opposition to that support seems to be a position that some elements of both the extreme right and left can embrace.

Some on the right are getting downright isolationist, arguing that America First means to hell with the rest of the world. Some on the left have taken the deplorable position that Americans care about Ukraine only because its victims are "white like us."

But most people here — liberals, conservatives, middle-of-the-roaders — see Russia as the bully and Ukrainians as the heroic underdogs. If there is anything that can unite Americans, it is rooting for the underdog.

It would be nice — unlikely but nice — if that newfound unity could be galvanized into an appreciation of this country's exceptionalism, not only its role in supplying material support for the cause of freedom around the world, but its standing as the moral beacon for the very idea of freedom.

It would be even more gratifying if our unity helped us remember how fragile was the moment of our founding, how perilously close we were to not becoming the most remarkable democratic experiment in history.

There were more supporters of Britain in the colonies than there are supporters of Russia in Ukraine. About a third were advocates of independence, a third were sympathetic to the Crown, and a third didn't really care one way or the other. After the first burst of patriotic fervor, volunteers were scarce, so both bribery and conscription had to be brought to bear. George Washington was not a brilliant strategist, and there were several battles that could have spelled our doom.

It wasn't until France went all in on our side that the scales were tipped, and it's fair to say America might never have come about without that country's aid. Of course, France had its own reason for supporting us – a to-the-death struggle with Britain. We were in a sense the proxy in a war of superpowers.

As Ukraine is today in the clash between freedom and oppression that has always raged and is still with us. Now, as then, the world is more interconnected than most suppose or wish. So many countries are involved, providing support for Ukraine of one kind or another, because they know the stakes are high for them. As France was with us, they might be allies for their own reasons, but that doesn't make their support unimportant.

As bullies do, Vladimir Putin is drawing lines and daring us to cross them, taunting us with his deliberate unpredictability.

Which lines do we cross and which ones do we avoid? Can the world bog him down and thus discourage other bullies with expansionist appetites? Or do we risk giving him an excuse to go nuclear? Is this all giving China and North Korea ideas? What about Iran, for God's sake?

I don't envy the leaders of the free world right now. I wish they were smarter. But I suppose that is another lesson of our founding – we must do with the leaders we have.

On second thought, maybe my remark about World War III wasn't so glib after all.

DST? You Can Thank Mitch Daniels

Up in the mornin',
Out on the job
Work like the devil for my pay
But that lucky old sun
Got nothin' to do
But roll around heaven all day.

— *Beasley Smith, Haven Gillespie, 1949*

(*March 14*) — If there is any justice in this world, the kind that makes public officials have to live by the rules they set for others, Purdue President and former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels will have stumbled to work this morning unshaven, bleary eyed and not quite sure where he was or what he was supposed to do.

That's the way I felt on Sunday morning when I lost an hour of sleep due to the annual "spring forward" idiocy of Daylight Saving Time. Of course, I didn't actually lose it. It went as it came in the fall, with a diktat from clock-watching functionaries. What the government giveth . . .

It was Daniels who, back in 2006, used up most of his political capital and a great deal of Hoosier good will to narrowly push DST through the General Assembly after the most contentious session since the great fistfight of 1887 over who would be seated as Senate president.

There is the suspicion that the governor merely wanted Indiana to cease being an outlier on at least this one issue and that making us the 48th state to go daylight crazy would give him some national standing – so, go pound sand, Arizona and Hawaii. But he did advance a couple of justifications:

By taking away an hour of daylight before the work day started and adding it to the end of the work day, it would save on energy by keeping people outside and the lights off longer.

It would improve commerce by keeping our businesses in sync with those in big DST-observing metropolises.

Yeah, about that.

A University of California study of the Indiana economy found that switching to DST actually cost Hoosier households an extra \$8.6 million a year in electricity bills. It found that the reduced cost of lighting in the afternoons was more than offset by higher air-conditioning costs on hot afternoons and increased heating costs on cool mornings.

And a study from Rose-Hulman found that, although DST did not create an economic bonanza in Indiana, it did result in a “small but statistically significant” increase in monthly employment levels. I don’t know what constitutes “small but significant” levels, but I suspect they have become smaller and less significant in the intervening years of e-commerce expansion.

And, oh, by the way, Daylight Saving Time can screw up your health. Doctors say the hourly back and forth and the resulting body clock confusion can be linked to a number of health risks, including heart attacks, obesity, cancer and even car accidents.

So, bad for energy use and therefore the environment. Bad for your health. So-so for commerce. Turning ordinarily placid people into seething psychopaths for a few days twice a year. With all that going against Daylight Saving Time, naturally it is a federal government edict.

The only way out for states is to petition to go to year-round standard time, which requires petitions, studies and a mammoth compliance procedure, or to hope Washington comes to its senses. Going to DST year-round is not an option, but so far at least 30 states have passed legislation or resolutions supporting the idea or are considering it, just in case there is a rare burst of intelligence in Washington.

Indiana, alas, is not one of them. Don’t want to mess with Mitch’s legacy, I guess. There is also the added problem here that “standard” time is either Eastern or Central depending on which part of the state one lives in.

On the, um, bright side, a congressional committee is now debating whether to end the twice-yearly clock shifting, which polls show 63 percent of Americans would approve, with 21 percent unsure and only 16 percent opposed. It is being said that lawmakers and experts generally agree a change is needed but aren’t quite sure how it should proceed.

Could there be hope from Washington after all? What is that brightness I see? Is it the light at the end of the tunnel? Go into the light!

Oh, wait, it’s just the sun.

Still there, after all this time. ♦

Franke

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The Past Is Prologue

(June 1) — People consider me old fashioned, even medieval, in my thinking and outlook. I plead guilty.

As I observe what is happening in our society, my fears for the future only intensify. That's why I look continually to the past for a useful insight into the future.

How would you describe our political system? According to the Constitution, we are a republic or representative democracy. Democracy is the ideal form of government yet my reading informs me that Athens, the birthplace of democracy, ended in an orgy of ostracism, executions and tyranny of the mob.

Then a republic must be the better form. Our Constitution was modeled on Republican Rome, or at least what those Enlightenment thinkers believed about Rome's governance in the centuries before Christ. Apparently they ignored the bloody civil wars, demagogic oratory and mob violence, ended only by a dictatorship of the strongest military commander in town.

We do tend to look at the past through rose-colored glasses, a type of halo effect within our memories. I am guilty of that, to be sure, insisting on a romantic recollection of my childhood years in the 1950's. Ike was president, his grandfatherly image engraved indelibly in my mind. No drugs in my neighborhood, no 24-hour news channels, no social media. What could be better than that?

But back to my question. What political term best describes the America of 2022? Fortunately the Greeks thought deeply about this and coined a plethora of words.

They knew about mobocracy, having observed it up close and personal. Their word for this is ochlocracy. This is a Darwinian, survival of the fittest approach to politics. Power resides with whichever group yells the loudest and disrupts normal life the most. That sounds to me like today's America, at least on my bad days.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we have several terms: aristocracy, the rule of the best; plutocracy, the rule of the richest; oligarchy, the rule of the few; and finally autocracy, the rule of the one. I would argue that we are devolving downward into aristocracy, but a self-appointed aristocracy. The cultural, educational, media and political elites are aristocrats, mostly because they tell us they are. Pardon me if I beg to differ. Give me the commonsense philosophy found among residents in rural areas, small towns and blue-collar suburbs any day.

Are we simply following a historical imperative that all governments descend into despotism at some point? The Roman historian Polybius thought so as he saw a circular relationship among the forms of government, which each moving onward to the next stop.

Which brings up a more philosophical question. What is the march of history? Does it move in a straight line toward some dystopian future such as Aldous Huxley envisioned? Or is it moving toward the perfection of mankind as the nineteenth century progressives believed? Of course the human race has been quite a disappointment to our modern progressives by refusing to be dragged kicking and screaming into this unwanted nirvana.

Perhaps it is more of a circular movement, always returning to some starting point in a recursive manner. What goes around, comes around as the old saw reminds us. A quick survey of historical eras lends credence to this view. Consider northern Italy and the history of its city-states from Roman domination to republicanism to oligarchy and so on.

My sense is that these two theories should be conflated into a spiraling pattern, consistently moving circularly back to its starting point but

each time further along toward its destiny. That destiny is not what the progressives expected; I don't look for any perfection of mankind. In fact, I expect quite the opposite—a degradation of ourselves and our society until we have returned to barbarism. Tour our major cities if you find this incredulous.

I am not without hope. I just wouldn't bet on things getting better. That does not mean we should give up and retreat to a mountain hideout; our children and grandchildren must live in this world. We owe it to them to try to make things better or, at a minimum, mitigate the evil.

That's why I look to the past, to find evidence that things can get better even if only for a short time. Actually, I just don't look to the past; I run there as fast as I can. It does not always prove comforting but a study of history does suggest alternatives to the cable news narrative. It doesn't have to be all bad in the short run and in the long run we will all be dead, as Keynes quipped.

An ancient Chinese proverb goes something like this: It is better to light one little candle than to curse the darkness. Our world needs more candles.

Yogi Berra Would Have Something to Say

(May 18) — “We just agree different.” Yogi Berra

I had an unofficial undergraduate minor in philosophy. I studied the greats — Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Hobbes and Locke — and learned how they informed Western civilization and provided the philosophical foundation for the culture bequeathed to us today.

Of course this was before the Orwellian Newspeak censors retroactively applied their puritanical sensibilities on all these white European males from the past. It seems I wasted my formative years thinking deeply about democratic government, moral law, natural rights and liberty. Instead I should have been repenting my birth defects of gender, color, national origin and religious faith.

My background hardly prepared me for this. I grew up in Waynedale, a small independent town with the misfortune of being smack dab in the middle of the highway route between Fort Wayne and its airport. It was only a matter of time before we were conquered by the evil empire to the north. I believe the legal term was annexed, but no matter.

Rule us, tax us, regulate us as they willed, yet our culture never changed. We were a working-class town of skilled and unskilled laborers, many employed at those now-closed giant industrial plants on the south and east sides of Fort Wayne. I think the only white-collar workers in Waynedale were the pastors and the teachers at the local churches and schools.

So how does Yogi Berra enter into this? When we got our first television in the 1950s, the “Saturday Game of the Week” was always the New York Yankees or the Brooklyn Dodgers. Carl Erskine from Anderson was a star pitcher for the Dodgers but, to my six-year-old disappointment, he never pitched on the Saturdays the Dodgers were televised. But Mickey Mantle was on display with his monstrous home runs — enough to cement a lifelong loyalty from this young fan.

As I aged, I never lost my love for Mantle and what joy he gave in my childhood. But then, adulthood is a more reflective time and I eventually realized that the greatest Yankee of all time must be Yogi Berra. Yogi has 10 World Series rings, the most ever, and three Most Valuable Player awards. He was called “my assistant manager, Mr. Berra” by none other than Casey Stengel. He has his own museum in New Jersey, which I hope to visit one day. I have driven past his boyhood home on “The Hill” in St. Louis.

Yogi was not just a baseball great; he remains a folk hero to those with blue-collar backgrounds. He is a philosopher for all times, someone a boy from Waynedale can listen to and understand exactly what he means.

In the last several years, I have read four biographies and five ghost-written books by and about Yogi. He grew up working class, persevered despite the ridicule of other players and kept his

cheerful demeanor regardless of the taunts and insults. He is much more enjoyable to read than Thomas Hobbes.

Which brings me back to the quote above.

I wonder if Yogi were alive today he could even understand what is going on with our national discourse. He certainly wouldn't approve of the vitriol which is passed off as legitimate debating. Rage is standard operating procedure for too many today. Yogi never exhibited rage unless it was when Jackie Robinson was called safe at home in the 1955 World Series.

We have all experienced it. I have, to my regret. I have seen otherwise rational, good-humored people become apoplectic at the merest disagreement. It is not a matter of talking through a difference of opinion over some policy or philosophy and then moving on. The other must be vilified as stupid or evil, or preferably both. Intelligent people of good will may not, must not, disagree on even the most marginal of points. I have seen friendships end and families broken apart over political differences.

Can two people see the same problem but come up with entirely different solutions? Not anymore. Opinions are no longer just that; they have become doctrine, a new orthodoxy which brooks no doubt.

And let's be clear. The rage is nearly all from the far left, those who claim to be woke. Can anyone recall a liberal Supreme Court justice's home being picketed? When was the last time a conservative student group demanded that a left-wing speaker be "disinvited" or shouted down if allowed to speak? Has any Republican president called those who voted for his opponent part of "the most extreme political organization that's existed in American history"?

Conservatives are not without blame but they are more sinned against than sinners in this instance. All we can do is respond with verbal temperance and attitudinal sobriety. Someone must. Yogi would expect it of us. And who needs Plato when you have Yogi?

Does the Constitution Have a Loophole?

(May 11) — I suppose I can be forgiven for relapsing into occasional geezer mode, given my advanced age and deteriorating mental capabilities. Then again, there really is no excuse for letting it happen too often — or even at all.

It helps to look for what is still positive in our rancid, rage-driven society and such positives can be found. I was reminded of this several weeks ago when I was privileged to serve as a judge in the American Legion's National Oratorical Contest.

The Legion has multiple emphases for its programming. One is Americanism, under which this event falls. This is how the contest works: High school speech teachers are asked to encourage their students to write and deliver ten-minute speeches on some aspect of the United States Constitution. Local American Legion posts help publicize the contest and sponsor their local students in regional competitions, thirteen of these occurring in Indiana. Students compete at two regional levels and then at the state level for the opportunity to represent Indiana against other states at national.

At each level the contestants deliver their ten-minute prepared speech and then are given a blindly selected topic, usually based on one of the Amendments, with five minutes to prepare an extemporaneous, five-minute speech. They know in advance which Amendments are in play but not which one will be drawn for them.

Students are judged on both substance and style. Did they present their argument coherently and convincingly? Were they easy to follow, with appropriate voice characteristics and physical gestures? Did they meet the time limit? Was the Constitution prominent in their speech?

At the national contest I helped judge two speeches by each of 12 contestants. These kids know their Constitution, certainly the sections they addressed. There was only one instance when I questioned a fact used in support of an argument.

The range of topics for the prepared orations was extensive and covered some topics not usually addressed. For example I heard a defense of property rights as guaranteed by the III, IV and XIV amendments. Property rights are denigrated by many today as a barrier to the left's concept of social justice so this was encouraging to hear from a young person.

Another student argued for the importance of citizen juries as required by the V, VI and VII amendments. She cited James Madison as equating the duty of jury service as important as voting. Her contention that as much as 90 percent of jury calls result in no-shows in some jurisdictions is hard to believe but my subsequent research provided nothing to gainsay her regarding either Madison's quote or the no-show statistic.

Perhaps the speech that has stayed with me the longest, for good and for bad, was one on the inherent self-destructive potential of Article V. This is the "how to amend the Constitution" article, one that theoretically can be used to destroy our democracy in favor of a dictatorship by a small, temporary majority.

I learned from the speaker that this ostensive flaw was discovered by Kurt Gödel, a logician who called this an "inner contradiction." His theory now bears his name as the Gödel Loophole. Unfortunately Gödel never got around to proving this theory so speculation continues.

What did Gödel discover? Some believe Article V could continually be amended to weaken itself to the point of irrelevancy. Others fear the calling of a constitutional convention of the states, the other method for amendments, could fundamentally alter American liberties. Recall that the first Constitutional Convention quickly abandoned the idea of merely amending the Articles of Confederation and composed a new document out of whole cloth.

Why was Gödel worried about this? He was an immigrant from Austria after the Anschluss with Nazi Germany. He cited the Enabling Act of 1933 used by the Nazis to suspend the constitution, a

constitutionally legal ploy but one with disastrous effect.

Can that happen here? Of course not, or so I tell myself. But then I have seen things in the last several years that I never imagined could happen here either.

Judging the contest took a day of my time but I came away with renewed respect for these young people and their willingness to undertake the work required. These kids all spoke positively about the Constitution and its importance and relevance today. Sure, they knew their audience—veterans and their families—yet one could not but observe their sincerity. I can hope, with good reason, that their study of the topic instilled a love of country rooted in our founding document.

All participants received scholarships, with more than \$200,000 being distributed. These kids will head off to college in the next year or so and should serve to leaven the loaf of wokism running amok on campuses today. That alone is worth the American Legion's scholarship money.

In Defense of a Truly General Education

(May 4) — A colleague at the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, Professor Richard McGowan, recently wrote a column bemoaning the lack of required philosophy courses in today's college curricula. Perhaps lamenting is a better verb due to its classical connotation.

McGowan reviewed the general education requirements at Indiana's major universities and found them lacking. Perhaps they are explanatory as to our inability to carry on an intelligent conversation for more than 30 seconds without resorting to epithets.

First, a word about what colleges call general education. This had its roots in the sixties and seventies as colleges reduced degree requirements almost to the point of irrelevancy. It was the protest era, after all, and we undergraduates thought we already knew everything important. Why study dead languages, dead philosophers, dead poets, etc., when our parents' generation needed instruction from us?

This was followed in short order by a careerist focus within higher education, with professional degrees predominating. There were fewer and fewer slots in these program requirements for outside courses. Getting graduates placed in good jobs was paramount, certainly in the minds of these graduates and, at the more exclusive colleges, in the minds of their parents. After all, they just spent tens or hundreds of thousands to guarantee that result.

This is my somewhat jaundiced view of higher education, having spent a career on the administrative side of it. Since I had no input into curricular decisions as an administrator, I could wash my hands of this mess, Pontius Pilate style, except for the unpleasant truth that I was cheering it on when I was a student.

Enter general education, “gen ed” as we called it. This was a well-intentioned effort to restore the foundation of a college education by requiring courses across a multitude of disciplines outside one’s major. It wasn’t exactly a return to a liberal education but it moved closer to it.

It didn’t quite work out as intended, as McGowan points out. Entrepreneurial academic departments, being driven by the need to increase enrollments in their courses to maintain funding, quickly discerned that these disinterested students needed to be attracted with sexy course names. Department chairmen were only responding predictably to the incentives presented to them. No free-market economist could fault them for that.

In spite of my best efforts to avoid any and all gen ed courses, I still ended up with a reasonably broad liberal education. Truth be told, this was partially due to my changing majors nearly every semester. Still, I found that philosophy courses were actually interesting. I ended up with an unofficial minor in philosophy, unofficial because of all the changes of major I foisted on my long-suffering academic advisor.

In addition to the obligatory survey course offered to freshmen, I took courses in ethics, political theory and logic. The ethics course was interesting, with every student other than me

buying into situational ethics. That course reinforced my belief in universal truth and morality which can’t be modified to meet the mob’s current demands. Based on what is going on today, I feel justified in my undergraduate insight into this. Sadly, it may have been the only time I showed any common sense in those days.

Even though I have forgotten nearly everything I learned back then, I still remember enough to grab an old textbook or go to Wikipedia to research a current question. For example I recently called on my symbolic logic course to help me work through a difficult theological question which had perplexed me for some time. I still don’t understand it fully, but I feel comfortable with the point of comprehension reached.

This love of deep thinking about things has stayed with me ever since. Fortunately, I have found several releases for my reflective instincts. One is my involvement with the Indiana Policy Review Foundation. Another is the proximity of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne.

The seminary granted me guest auditor status which allows me to attend classes with the professor’s approval. I am currently enrolled in a graduate class on St. Augustine, one of my favorite philosophers and theologians. The other students are all fourth-year seminarians, about to be granted M. Div. degrees and sent out on their first pastoral assignments. Another student is in a Ph. D. program.

Even though I am not required to write the assigned papers, I have attempted to do so. The professor has granted me dispensation to diverge from the prompts because I don’t have four years of theological education like my classmates. I had to admit that I don’t know the difference between exegesis and hermeneutics, an expectation for the first paper. No matter; I wrote the paper anyway.

The class has been thoroughly enjoyable and intellectually stimulating thanks to all those philosophy courses I took as an undergraduate. Richard McGowan is correct; our current young people are being cheated out of the best of western civilization. And America is poorer for it.

Baseball Is Back (for Better or Worse)

(April 20) — Baseball is back, finally. It seems the winters here in northeast Indiana get longer and longer, or maybe it's just that I am getting older and older.

I watched several major league baseball (MLB) games on opening weekend and last week attended my first game of the Fort Wayne TinCaps. I should be exhilarated with the start of the new season, but I am beginning to develop a love-hate relationship with my favorite sport. I should explain that my love for the purity of the game is being tempered by my increasing irritation with those who seem determined to bury America's pastime in a grave of irrelevancy.

First, my list of things and people getting under my skin.

Rob Manfred — I used to think Bowie Kuhn was the worst commissioner of all time. Recall how he forced Hoosier Charley Finley to divest himself of a winning franchise at a fire sale price. Then he decreed that all post-season games must be played at night, regardless of late fall weather and time zone issues. Manfred's knee jerk decisions such as moving the All-Star game out of Atlanta are causing me to look back kindly on Kuhn.

The time needed for games — Games in my youth were two hours or so, with pitchers going the distance as often as possible. Now they average well over three hours, still with only 27 outs per side. How many pitching changes can we tolerate? Apparently an unlimited number, as most clubs started the season with 16 pitchers on their rosters. I am not impressed with Manfred's handwringing about this problem. The solution is simple: Just tell the pitchers to throw the ball, the batters to stay in the batter's box and the managers to keep their butts on the bench. To prove my point, the TinCaps completed a game in under two hours last week using a pitch clock.

Price of tickets and concessions — Can any family take a summer outing to a MLB game? Not without applying for a second mortgage. The last MLB game I attended pre-Covid cost \$150 for the

seat and \$15 for a beer. You won't see many kid-filled station wagons pulling into major league parking lots at these prices. And I shudder to think what parking costs.

The loss of all strategy — Unless you consider deciding how to best use eight pitchers per game, there is no strategy. Remember hit-and-run? How about sacrifice bunts? "Get 'em on, get 'em over, get 'em in"? It's home run or strikeout, thank you. And apparently our current crop of athletes can't adapt to obvious opportunities, such as bunting to an open third base in the face of an over shift.

Money — Now I am a free-market classical liberal so normally I would not criticize someone for trying to maximize profits. But please tell me, if you can, how a bunch of billionaires arguing with hundreds of multimillionaires over splitting the revenue earned from closed ballparks is maximizing profits. Ratcheting up ticket prices at the slightest provocation is simply reducing total tickets sold, as attendance data shows. I seem to recall an economic principle about price elasticity of demand. Aesop and his goose that laid the golden eggs come to mind as well. How many corporate sky boxes can they sell to make up for all the Joe Sixpacks who can't afford even the cheapest bleacher seats?

Baseball cards — My bete noire Manfred and the union representing the wage slaves who play the game decided to send Topps packing. No more Topps cards to take a kid's entire weekly allowances? No pink, concrete-like bubble gum? No doubles to put in the spokes of bike wheels? Just one more tradition from my childhood passing into obscurity.

I do feel better now even though nobody cares what I think, at least no one in MLB's Manhattan corporate offices. And to end this column on a high note, here is my all-too-short list of what good remains in baseball.

Radio — Baseball is a game made for radio. I realize Vin Scully, Red Barber, Harry Carey and Ernie Harwell are gone. Still, I feel like John Sterling and Suzyn Waldman, announcers for my Yankees, are close friends. I even switch to their broadcast when watching the game on TV.

Big innings — That is, those innings marked by multiple hits and aggressive base running and not by one home run and three strikeouts.

Defense — Great glove plays and running outfield catches are all that is left of athleticism in baseball, at least to my jaundiced eye.

A lifetime of memories — Even Rob Manfred can't take those away. I will always be that youngster walking into old Comiskey Park for his first major league game. Or going outside to the backyard each spring once the snow finally melted with his lovingly oiled glove in hand.

That may be what saves baseball: Its ethereal capability of unifying generations around a symbol of what America once was and can be again . . . unless they succeed in totally spoiling it for us perpetual kids.

Passion Week and Unholy Passions

(April 10) — We are in Holy or Passion Week, the most significant eight days on the Christian calendar. It is a week of remembrance of the original Passion Week which occurred nearly 2,000 years ago.

The week proceeds along a very emotional roller-coaster ride for Christians. It begins with Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem amidst a crowd of exuberant worshippers, no doubt made even more enthusiastic with the news of the raising of Lazarus just days before.

While the excitement dies down over the next few days, there is still tension throughout the week as Jesus teaches openly in the Temple against the wishes of the elites of His day. It reaches its quietest point on Maundy Thursday evening in the solemn and contemplative Last Supper in the upper room.

Then things get really bad, really fast. His arrest and secret nighttime trial ends with a horrific execution in a manner never equaled in human history for its state-invoked cruelty.

But then, after a day of uncertainty, the week concludes with the glorious miracle of the Resurrection.

That's how the week proceeds for Christians. What, if any, lessons can it provide to Christians and non-Christians alike?

Whether one believes Jesus of Nazareth to be God Incarnate, His life provides an example for us all in how we deal with our fellow man. Did He ever shout someone down, preventing him from speaking in public? Hardly. Instead He engaged opponents in the open, leaving them in wonderment sometimes and extremely frustrated other times. His approach was to combat wrong ideas with superior ones and win the day by persuasion rather than by a show of verbal or physical force.

He was opposed constantly by his religious and political adversaries yet He never once demanded they lose their positions. He didn't organize any mass protests or incite a mob to "cancel" anyone. Even though He was right — He was God after all — He patiently confronted their attitudes and behaviors without devaluing them as human beings.

There was no double standard. He never exhorted anyone to do what He Himself would not or could not do. "Do what I say, not what I do" is not the lesson to be learned from His teaching and action. Compare that with today and our openly hypocritical public officials who embarrassed themselves during the Covid shutdowns. But it also includes the rest of us, too often comfortable in our cocoons of self-righteousness at the expense of others.

Can one even imagine Jesus dividing people into groups of greater and lesser worth based on purely external and visible characteristics? He could condemn sin, and make no mistake on this, He always condemned sin yet without irredeemably condemning the sinner.

In what may be the most misunderstood and misapplied of all the Gospel accounts, the story of the adulterous woman in John 8 stands out. "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone" is misquoted on a quick draw basis whenever someone tries to escape being called to account by others. But the story does not end with that admonishment. Instead, Jesus looks at the

adulterous woman and commands her in no uncertain terms: “Go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11 KJV) This was not “I’m OK; You’re OK” pop psychology.

Then there is His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. Jesus did not shun her for her birth as a despised Samaritan but still caught her in a lie about her husband. One more sinner was called to repentance for her action, not cast out due to her superficial identity with an unfavored group.

The examples are clear and challenging to us today if only we would listen.

Perhaps the hardest lesson to learn from Him lies in His first words from the cross. “Father, forgive them . . .” Forgiveness? For those who railroaded his conviction and execution? Well, He was . . . is . . . God Incarnate but the world would be a whole lot better if we all learned from Him to practice more forgiveness and less payback.

We live in awful times, the worst in my seven decades of life. I am sure things were much worse in past centuries but it still rankles that so much of our current woe is of our own making. We have an exemplar from 2,000 years ago if we would only humble ourselves to learn from Him. But can we? Or is our profane passion driven by hateful prejudice toward those who disagree with us rather than the unbounded love of our fellow man which caused His very real passion of intense suffering? Even non-Christians should see the wisdom of this great teacher. And faith enlightens us believers even more.

“When the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:8 ESV) Good question.

It’s Primary Season Again

(March 23) — It’s primary season in Indiana. I know this because my mailbox is beginning to fill with postcards from current elected officials bragging about their record as well as challengers bragging about what they will accomplish as an improvement over the incumbents.

Even though the above generalization sounds cynical, I have not lost all hope for our representative democracy. We have not yet

descended into Dante’s third circle of hell with its warning to abandon all hope, so maybe the adjective discouraged better describes my mental state.

“The more things change, the more they stay the same” is an old saw that fits American and Hoosier democracy, at least if I listen to myself in one of my all-too-frequent brooding moods. Does it really matter whom we elect each November? Does anything ever change come January when the newly elected idealists take office? Remember Donald Trump’s pledge to “drain the swamp”? Last time I checked, the swamp not only is still there but occupied by an even greater number of especially vicious political alligators.

Still, hope springs eternal . . . at least for rookie candidates.

Last week I attended a “meet the candidate” function at the home of some close friends. The guest of honor is running for an open seat against several other candidates in his party’s primary election. It’s a safe seat for his party which makes this the important election. This is his first campaign so he needs to get his name out among the party faithful, those who go to the polls in May and not just in November.

He trotted out the usual conservative principles of pro-life, anti-tax, pro-freedom and pro-family values one would expect from a Republican in northeast Indiana. And as best I could discern, he was sincere in his convictions. I can say this with confidence as he is a professional with a lucrative salary, one that will get reduced when he forgoes income-producing time to serve in Indiana’s part time yet time-sucking blackhole of a legislature.

He understands how sausage is made in Indianapolis yet he honestly thinks he can change that. He has supporters who have advised him how the party caucuses work to enforce party discipline and protect leadership’s power over the backbenchers. He is girding his loins for the struggle with a naïve optimism that he can make a difference.

One can’t but help cheer people like him on, hoping against hope that he won’t become

disillusioned too quickly. Or worse, co-opted by a political establishment which enforces the rules through the distribution of campaign contributions.

One becomes accustomed to hearing complaints about the amount of money involved in election campaigns and its pernicious influence after the election. At least we used to hear that from liberal organizations until the Democrats took Congress and the White House. I guess the influence is still there but no longer pernicious.

So should we be hearing from conservatives now about too much money in politics? Actually we are but from an unexpected source.

Jason Arp, a Fort Wayne City Councilman and colleague at the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, has constructed a database which focuses on state legislators' voting records on a carefully selected subset of issues — those attacking property rights through increased governmental regulation, taxation and intervention in the free market. Arp and I share classical liberal principles, although he is rather more libertarian than I and he is much more sophisticated with data analysis.

What his data show is that while Republicans in the General Assembly are more friendly to property rights than Democrats, they are mostly middle-of-roaders in terms of their voting records. Given that Arp's database is finely tuned for one aspect of conservative philosophy, it ignores social issues that are dear to many conservative hearts and therefore isn't meant as comprehensive conservative-liberal scale. Still, his scorecard can't be pleasing to dozens of Republican legislators who consider themselves solidly conservative but are graded as moderates.

How can that happen, given the basic conservative ideology of these politicians? Arp has the answer. Yes, it's money. It seems the Republican caucus leadership is quite adept at enforcing party discipline — a polite way of describing tactics to get the rank-and-file to vote the way the leadership wants. And their muscle? Control of candidate fund-raising activities and

allocation of contributions to candidates who vote the party line.

Arp's data analysis was distributed yesterday in advance copies of the Indiana Policy Review's spring journal. It is unsettling while validating what everyone has always believed about politics: money matters. But money is only the tool to get well-intentioned legislators to vote against their self-proclaimed principles.

What concerns me most is why they are being told to vote that way. Who is influencing the party leadership? The other bogeyman in politics as we hoi polloi see things is lobbyists.

Who are the most effective lobbyists with the Republican leadership? I will leave that to someone else to enlighten us. Although I do have my suspicions . . .

Polling and 'the Big Sort'

(March 9) — Journalist Bill Bishop coined the term "the Big Sort" to describe an increasing propensity among Americans to sort themselves into clusters of like-minded groups. One would think this is only natural as people tend to gravitate toward others with similar interests, lifestyles and affinities.

Take housing. To a large extent we tend to buy houses in neighborhoods that attract us, not least due to housing costs reflecting our income levels. We buy as nice a house as we can afford and that puts us among others of similar economic status.

The same occurs in the organizations we join. Churches, civic groups, veterans organizations and volunteer opportunities all tend to find us with others sharing these same interests and values. This hardly makes us automatons in our thinking but it does influence us as we find much in common within our group. Yet it can become self-reinforcing, a type of closed loop feedback, especially when we get addicted to a cable news network.

What Bishop observed way back in 2004 was its unintended consequence to induce homogeneity to the point of insularism, my term not his. We not only become more ignorant of how others think but lose the ability to

understand them. Empathy goes out the door right behind sympathy.

I doubt that Bishop could foresee how prescient he was. Who would have thought things would become this polarized this quickly? It's not just a matter of red and blue states; break the voting down by county or congressional district and the polarization becomes even more pronounced. We have become two nations of residents who don't talk to each other, let alone respect each other. *E pluribus unum* has become an unfunny joke.

The S-word, secession, is edging its way into our discourse and not just by disgruntled crazies. F. H. Buckley has proposed a "secession lite" in which the Constitution's original goal of federalism returns as the law of the land — or the laws of the various lands — as states and communities create their own cultural environments that attract like-minded transplants from other, different cultural polities. Think back to the early decades of our nation before the federal government, particularly the executive branch, subsumed all in its path. Imagine the Ninth and Tenth Amendments back on the judicial table.

Maybe I am regressing to irreversible cynical geezerdom but I can't be that wrong, can I? Fortunately for my sanity if not for my optimism, the Hoover Institute's annual survey of American opinion on political and societal issues validates my cynicism . . . to a degree. Hoover's "Vital Signs" poll is designed as "an attempt to determine the extent to which polarization and partisanship impede constructive policy making and political leaders' ability to find common ground in confronting the most pressing issues facing the nation."

Good luck with that, especially after reading some of the results.

There are 132 questions in the poll and not all present a bleak outlook on our future. Yet several questions focus on the issue Bishop raised 18 years ago and confirm his hypothesis. The "best friend" question responses skew as one would expect — Democrats hang out with other

Democrats and Republicans hang out with other Republicans.

More than half the respondents said that most of their friends are of the same party, but around a quarter said their friends are evenly split between the parties. It may result from the fact that about 40 percent report that they rarely or never discuss politics. More encouragingly, better than three-quarters say they don't feel pressure or intimidation from others to avoid speaking their minds. I found it interesting that when asked if friends keep their views to themselves to avoid conflict, the responses were evenly split among yes, no and don't know.

So maybe things aren't as bad as they seem. Perhaps we can remain civil with each other and even maintain friendships across party and ideological lines.

I can't help but wonder, though, if the Hawthorne Effect was at play in this survey. This theory, which I was required to study in several business school classes, suggests that people adapt their behavior when being observed. That's an oversimplification but it may explain why polling data doesn't seem to track so well with reality. Remember all those polling fiascos that occur each November?

A New Yorker columnist wrote in 1972 that she knew only one person who voted for Richard Nixon, an election in which he carried 49 states. She probably doesn't know anyone who voted for Donald Trump, that lone Republican holdout having either repented of his sins or decamped to a red state. Sadly, she is not alone among East coast elites or Midwestern deplorables. We all must plead guilty to having sorted ourselves.

I am encouraged by the myth of Pandora's box. After all the evil escaped, one thing remained. Hope. ♦

Backgrounders

Jason Arp, for nine years a trader in mortgaged-backed securities for Bank of America, was reelected last year to his second term representing the 4th District on the Fort Wayne City Council. He is the designer of the legislative scoring system, IndianaScorecard.org, and an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation.



Punishing the Recalcitrant

(May 4) — The 2022 legislative ratings have been released at IndianaScorecard.org, an independent measure of votes on bills affecting private property and personal liberty. Although the results can be read as encouraging, the political control of the establishment remains terrifying. The overall scores in the house shifted upwards from an average of 38.0 to 50.6, the Republicans improving 13.1 points to 56.4 as the Democrats moved up from 10.7 points to 35.0.

Again, while the scores improved, the control of the Republican leadership grew more assertive. The vote distribution of Republican members tightened to a remarkable 6.6 point standard deviation from the previous 9.3 points. This puts the two high scores over four standard deviations above the mean. (A fuller discussion of scoring is in the current issue of *The Indiana Policy Review*.)

In yesterday's primary, those who dared vote differently from the GOP caucus were challenged by the House Republican Campaign Committee (HRCC). John Jacobs, a first-term incumbent and the high scorer on our scorecard his first two sessions, was targeted with a well-funded primary challenge in a district that had already been dramatically redistricted by his fellow Republicans. Jacobs, who represents a portion of south Indianapolis, faced a challenger who received half a million dollars of direct funding from the HRCC. Jacobs got 36.1 percent of the vote yesterday.

Facing similar opposition was Curt Nisly, a representative from the Warsaw area who was

put into a district with another incumbent. Nisly scored second highest on IndianaScorecard.org the last two sessions after leading for a several years. Nisly's signature bill allowing Hoosiers to "constitutionally carry" firearms passed this session after seven years of introductions and floor fights. His challenger yesterday received a quarter of a million from the HRCC. Nisly got 26.9 percent of the vote.

What is clear is that the GOP establishment will not tolerate dissent and will try to ideologically cull its herd. The fact the House Republican Caucus is willing to spend three quarters of a million against two of the state's most conservative legislators should be of concern to Indiana voters.

There were two dozen challengers in other house races running under a "Liberty Defense" banner. Of those, only a couple were successful. Lorissa Sweet defeated longtime incumbent Dan Leonard in the district that straddles Wabash and Huntington county. Fred Glynn in the Carmel area won in an open primary.

At the end of the day, we learned that money may not be able to buy you love but it can buy an election.

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The Glory of Small Towns and Marching Bands

(May 20) — For many years I had listened to the recitals and drills occurring in the distance, at the High School, just two blocks from my home. It was in the evenings, of course, after school, with the sun setting, glittering twilight fading into inky darkness, and the often chilly temperatures of early autumn descending upon the tormented students, marching stoically if not deliriously into the long night.

I heard the truncated blasts of the winds, the blares of the brass and the staccato of percussion,

loud and abrupt, stopping and starting, shifting and adjusting in interminable reiterations, in some manic pursuit of an unattainable vision, to pluck the platonic ideal from the ethers, and magically transform this rabble into a silvery, mellifluous, marching band; it seemed a Sisyphean task from which no good could emerge, only frustration.

Above the din was a voice from Mt. Olympus, emanating from a Zeus-like figure, the director, ensconced upon a mechanical perch, as if upon some cloud encrusted peak, hurling flame and thunder, scolding, hectoring, commanding his young minions to hasten or slow, play louder or softer, demanding yet better performance from his weary foot soldiers in the quixotic quest of excellence.

I came to observe the maneuvers on many occasions, lured by the sound and fury, the evolving (and, yes, improving) renditions, the glorious misery of the students shivering in noble endeavor, with my two young children at the time, 10 years ago, convinced that I would never subject them to such chaos and tribulation, when they came of age.

I could not imagine then what possible reward could justify the prolonged agony, the incessant exercises, the competitions and recitals, the unending bus rides, the grand effort and machinery and force of numbers required to produce so elaborate a display. Little did I realize then that, as ineluctably as summer passes into fall, that, indeed, my young children would too blossom into adolescence and join the ranks of their storied colleagues, to participate in one of their town's most historic and splendid institutions, one even serving as drum major for two years.

Or that my wife and I and two other young children, the same age more or less as their older siblings when I had foolishly indulged my knavish skepticism earlier on, would attend slavishly its every performance, fascinated, uplifted, now drawn to it, to marching band, awe-struck and rapturous, unable to resist its spell, deny its charm, more than an enthusiast or fan, rather a

zealot or fanatic that simply could not get enough.

I too now found myself preparing burgers at district and football games like other band parents. I too involved myself in fundraisers. I too followed the progress of the band, the weekly report from the principal, the bombastic rumination of its quirky but beloved leader (the band director), marking my calendar, and checking my schedule, my life no longer my own but an appendage of the marching band, to which I swore unflinching fealty.

I monitored the steady evolution of the program, the tightening and refinement of the execution, the wondrous integration of music, marching, and sparkling color guard, the ordered, frenetic, but poetic movements, the shimmering flags and leaping butterfly figurines, the exquisite and soothing musical interludes interwoven with triumphant crescendos, the ever changing contours of the marchers and guard, converging and reforming in dazzling shapes, angles, and textures, darting and dividing artfully, like black and gold estuaries merging and separating in perpetually evolving archipelagoes, resisting the entropic tendencies, and channeling the energy, sound, and motion, into a glorious synergy, a magnificent unity infinitely greater than the sum of its rapidly shifting parts. What exaltation!

Their performance at State was its best. I was convinced of their inevitable triumph. Then, I watched in despair when, in an inexcusable lapse, two judges on the field delivered unto our lions a fourth place rank, falling behind bands our team had defeated handily only a week before. The disappointment was profound. I had become identified with the band. Their unjust loss was my own, and, in truth, I am still in mourning.

Yet the memory of the season, the exhilaration of the band's performances through the year, lingers. Indeed, I find myself reliving the moments through videos and photos, as if unable to relinquish it, almost wishing it could go on, despite my many other obligations. I no longer cared. Such had become my attachment to the

hardships and travails of the band. I had come full circle.

There really is nothing like it. The effort required to render order, symmetry, and beauty from some 175 odd teen-age marching musicians and dancers, delivering some eight minutes of unparalleled joy, mixing magically the subtle and the flamboyant, the nuanced and the majestic, the lyrical and the resounding, is nothing less than inspirational.

Marching band brings forth the best of republican virtues: initiative, discipline, teamwork and devotion to a cause greater than oneself. It is from such high-minded pursuits that great citizens emerge. I applaud the Jasper Marching Band, its students, band-parents, staff and band directors.

It is, perhaps, in our small towns, tossed and scattered across the heartland, where we have our greatest opportunity to salvage the American republic. Here, we hold fast to the formerly mainstream verities of hearth and home, faith and family, God and country. Here, we cling to the customs and mores of a commercial republic, based on the principles of liberty, limited government, and private property rights. We uphold such quaint notions as sacrifice, dedication, and the pursuit of one's dreams, all nurtured in an ambience steeped in the Judeo-Christian ethos, family, church, civic associations, and community.

We recoil from the sixty-year assault on our culture and civilization by the Left, and its noxious ideologies such as critical race theory, radical feminism, and transgenderism. We shudder at the horrendous damage and moral anarchy that has culminated in widespread illegitimacy, dysfunctional families, welfare dependency, drug addiction, and criminality. We are aghast at the relentless indoctrination of our youth in our entertainment, films, social media, and, especially, our schools and woke churches. Yet, there remains an appetite to stand athwart the cult-Marxist wave and preserve our way of life.

At the national level, it appears we are broken, hopelessly divided between two competing visions, but we may succeed on a local level, and, perhaps, at a state level, in certain red states. It is locally, though, where we can attend school board meetings, petition our county commissioners, and lobby our city councils. Locally, we are best positioned to defend our beliefs, and preserve the sanctities and traditions that bind a community and a society, and allow a people to thrive and flourish. Here, we can best defend American values and Western civilization, and begin the long march through our institutions – to retake them – or create new ones. The spiritual rot is deep, the chaos profound, and surely it begins at the head, but there remain shoots of life, sprigs and seedlings of truth, beauty, and goodness across the vast expanses of the continent, and, yes, they flourish in small towns like Jasper, Indiana.

Against Modern Day Pharaohs

(April 21) — With spring on its way and the world moving on from COVID, I was looking forward to attending the Passover Seder at the temple my family and I have attended for some 30 years. We have been less involved as the children have gotten older, but I wanted to reunite with old friends and celebrate our Festival of Freedom together.

Before committing, however, I inquired if the temple required masks. Happily, it did not. Alas, there was another catch: all Seder attendees needed proof of vaccination, meaning that the celebration was off-limits for my family.

Passover is one of the central holidays of the Jewish calendar. At Passover we celebrate the Exodus, the event in which Judaism's greatest prophet, Moses, was called by God to deliver His people, the children of Israel, from Egyptian bondage after 400 years of slavery. We recall the 10 plagues God imposed on Egypt and its ruler, Pharaoh, to break his will and force him to let the Israelites go. Yet in the midst of our great Festival of Freedom celebrating release from the harmful edicts of Pharaoh, the temple was imposing its

own misguided decrees upon those who wanted to celebrate the holiday with fellow Jews. It seems they have joined with other modern-day Pharaohs.

Today's Pharaohs shut down our economy, destroyed businesses and jobs, locked our children out of school and forced us to social distance, quarantine, test and mask. They censored and canceled those who disagreed, they stole our medical freedom and suppressed therapeutics that could have saved lives. And as my experience with the temple demonstrates, they have also pressured us to take a risky vaccine.

Much has been written about the vaccines, their experimental nature, their emergency use authorization, and their questionable efficacy, especially as the virus continues to mutate. The adverse events associated with the vaccine — including death and serious life-threatening conditions concern many. Since the vaccine was released in December of 2020, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) credits nearly 27,000 deaths, more than 217,000 serious injuries, and some 1.2 million adverse events as a result of the vaccines. Even with these disastrous outcomes, we are still accounting for only a fraction of vaccine-related injuries, because of underreporting. All this from a vaccine for an illness with a survival rate of 99.95 percent — or less than the seasonal flu — for healthy individuals under 70.

Despite these vaccinations and their subsequent boosters, many are still infected by the virus, spread it, require hospitalization and ICU admission and die of COVID. International numbers paint a particularly dismal picture. In the United Kingdom, 77 percent of COVID deaths in those over 70 are triple-vaccinated, while 80 percent of severe cases in Israel are among the fully vaccinated.

By contrast, the continent of Africa has a low vaccination rate (11 percent) but far lower rates of COVID deaths than the U.S. and other advanced nations, all of which are heavily vaccinated. Nigeria, for example, has vaccinated roughly 8 percent of its 200 million population. It has a

COVID death rate of 15 per million, while the U.S. has a death rate of more than 3,000, one of the worst in the world.

Then there is the matter of natural immunity, which is far more durable and robust than the weak, transient immunity obtained from the vaccines. More than 40 percent of Americans — including my family — have already had the virus. Given this information, one wonders why the temple would require previously infected individuals to have the vaccine before attending.

Another important point to consider is that the vaccine is still experimental, rushed through the approval process in the midst of a pandemic and without the benefit of long-term studies. It generally takes four to six years to bring a vaccine to market. What safeguards were bypassed in the rush to produce a vaccine for COVID? Early release of the data from clinical trials by the FDA (initially to be hidden for 75 years until reversed by a court order) showed that there were more than 1200 deaths in the Pfizer trials, among other significant issues. That alone should have prevented the vaccine from ever being released to the public.

We know that the original COVID viral strain that likely emerged from the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China—with funding from our own National Institutes of Health — has mutated multiple times. The current COVID strain is several generations removed from the original, making the vaccines outdated and ineffective against Omicron. Indeed, they may have negative efficacy.

But even if the ineffectiveness and harm of the vaccines wasn't an issue, there is still the critical matter of medical freedom, bodily autonomy and the right of individuals to choose which medicine or treatment people wish to take. This is particularly so under the circumstances of an experimental vaccine. Does not the temple agree that individuals, made in the image of God and blessed with powers of reason, should have ultimate authority over which medicines or gene therapies they introduce into their bodies? One would think that, given our knowledge of the

medical experimentation carried out on fellow Jews in Nazi death camps by Josef Mengele, it would be considered immoral to mandate individuals take any medicine, vaccine or gene therapy as a condition for attending a religious service.

Finally, I asked my temple what Moses would say to today's Pharaohs. How would Moses respond to a temple that mandated a vaccine as a condition for attending a Seder?

"Let my people go," Moses would say, as he said to the Pharaoh. "Let my people go to our Festival of Freedom, our feast of unleavened bread, to celebrate our redemption, our liberation from slavery and tyrants, at our Seder with fellow Jews, free of mandates, lockdowns, closures, and wicked decrees." Let my people go were the words of Moses and have been the words of the Jewish people since.

We all should embrace those words.

Adina Moss attends Vincennes University in Jasper Center and will be transferring to Indiana University in Bloomington to major in Media Studies.



With Malice Toward None

(April 13) — Was Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address the greatest in our nation's history?

Robert Schlesinger ranks it among the top five. In his list, he also included Thomas Jefferson's first (1801), Franklin Roosevelt's first and second (1933, 1937) and John Kennedy's (1961). James Lindsay places Lincoln's first (1861) and second (1865) in his list of best inaugurals. Other addresses he included were by Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt (1905), Franklin Roosevelt's first, John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan (1981). Jeff D'Alessio ranks Lincoln's second inaugural as first in his top five. He included in his collection Thomas Jefferson's first, Abraham Lincoln's first, Franklin Roosevelt's first and John Kennedy's.

We observe a general agreement among writers as they include many of the identical addresses. But while the same names appear, there is also consensus among historians that Lincoln's second inaugural was the greatest.

Why would that be?

Since George Washington gave the first such address, on April 30, 1789, there have been a total of 59 inaugural addresses. Many were given at troubling times in our nation's history. Washington gave his in 1789, our nation's first, at the dawning of a new constitutional republic. He noted the "shared responsibility of the President and Congress to preserve the sacred fire of liberty and a republican form of government." Jefferson gave his during the first peaceful transfer of power between different parties, in 1801. "But every difference of opinion," he stated, "is not a difference of principle." John Kennedy's inaugural was given at the height of the Cold War, when he famously called upon fellow Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

Although all of the orations were delivered at times of grave peril it is Lincoln's second inaugural, delivered March 4, 1865, that deserves the highest regard. It offered solace and inspiration for a wounded and divided nation in the midst of its bloodiest war.

With the Union forces victorious, the slaves freed and the Civil War coming to an end (April 9, 1865), Lincoln was not triumphalist but conciliatory. He sought healing and unity not retribution or punishment, even as he acknowledged slavery as the cause of the war, and a grave evil that the nation had to expunge. He sought divine providence and guidance, quoting from the Bible four times, invoking God's name 14 times and summoning prayer three times.

"Woe unto the world because of offenses," he said, acknowledging the wickedness of slavery and the punishment of war that came in its wake. In some 700 words, he comforted the nation, including his fellow countrymen in the South. "But let us judge not, that we be not judged," he said, seeking not to condemn the South but to

offer friendship instead. He called for his countrymen “to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.” At a time of profound suffering and devastation, he sought healing when he appealed to all to “bind the nation’s wounds.” Again, using biblical reference, poetic language and metaphor, Lincoln strove in this speech to unite the country at a time of immense tragedy and division.

Inscribed in the Lincoln Memorial along with the Gettysburg Address for all generations to ponder, the inaugural is a reminder of the eloquence and compassion of this historic figure whose life was taken only five weeks later (April 15, 1865) in an assassination. It is well argued that no speech has had greater impact or is more highly regarded.

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Richard McGowan, Ph.D., an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, has taught philosophy and ethics cores for more than 40 years, most recently at Butler University.



Is a Pregnant Woman a ‘Mom’?

(May 10) — The Supreme Court appears prepared to visit the abortion question again, as well it should, for *Roe vs. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood of PA vs. Casey* are linguistic nightmares with serious implications for the viability of abortion. The Court’s language in both cases shows the Court’s confusion, or perhaps its ignorance, regarding the procedure of abortion.

A person need only read the first sentence of the syllabus for *Roe vs. Wade* to see the Court’s confusion: “A pregnant single woman (*Roe*) brought a class action challenging the constitutionality of the Texas criminal abortion laws, which proscribe procuring or attempting an abortion except on medical advice for the purpose of saving the mother’s life.” Did the Court in 1972 understand that a “pregnant single woman” is not a mother yet? In fact, what is precisely at stake in *Roe vs. Wade* is a pregnant woman’s not becoming a mother.

By using the term “mother” in referring to the plaintiff, *Roe*, the Court suggests that pregnancy itself means a pregnant woman is ‘with child,’ as the popular expression has it.

The Court’s use of “mother” instead of “pregnant woman” was not isolated to the syllabus describing the facts of the case. The Supreme Court held that “State criminal abortion laws, like

those involved here, that except from criminality only a life-saving procedure on the mother's behalf without regard to the stage of her pregnancy and other interests involved violate the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which protects against state action the right to privacy, including a woman's qualified right to terminate her pregnancy." Again, the use of the phrase, "mother's behalf," implies that the entity in the womb is a child — and children have rights, most importantly, the right to life.

The Court also held that "For the stage subsequent to viability the State, in promoting its interest in the potentiality of human life, may, if it chooses, regulate, and even proscribe, abortion except where necessary, in appropriate medical judgment, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother." Once more, the Court suggests that a pregnant woman is a mother. Maybe the Court is confused about the procedure of abortion, which, as everyone knows by now, prevents a pregnant woman from becoming a mother.

Planned Parenthood vs. Casey reaffirmed Roe's holding that "subsequent to viability, the State . . . may, if it chooses, regulate, and even proscribe, abortion except where it is necessary, in appropriate medical judgment, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother." If a pregnant woman has an abortion, though, then she is not a mother. The Court's language is wholly inappropriate for the procedure of abortion.

The Court upheld Roe by adding "Furthermore, it cannot be claimed that the father's interest in the fetus' welfare is equal to the mother's protected liberty." But in what does a pregnant woman's liberty consist? In not becoming a mother, though the Court does not appear to notice that. Anyone who reads the two cases attentively might be left wondering if the Court's members understand the difference between a pregnant woman and a woman who has given birth to a child. However, there is little to wonder about regarding the Court's implicit message that a pregnant woman, a "mother" in the Court's lexicon, is carrying a child.

The Perspectiveless Perspective

"Just as in the law courts no person can pass judgment who does not listen to the arguments . . . so must a person whose task it is to study philosophy place himself in a better position to reach a judgment by listening to all the arguments." — Thomas Aquinas (1224-74)

(April 12) — Like the character, Meno, from Plato's dialogue, I entered college prepared to memorize my way through higher education as I did in high school. That soon changed. Colgate required three philosophy courses, in which I got a C+, D and C-.

I was exposed to ideas that were not my own! Those ideas were wildly different than the world I knew to exist! I did not want to hear them!

There, in a nutshell, is an explanation of "cancel culture."

Technological innovation has played a huge role in producing insular and solipsistic young people who shout down the voices of others. Certainly, the self-esteem movement contributed, too, since a cacophony of young people do not appear to handle truths or ideas that hurt their feelings. As Harvard's William Perry observed, students "demonstrate the wish to retain earlier satisfactions or securities . . . and most importantly, the wish to maintain a self one has felt oneself to be." New ideas threaten them.

The character and nature of colleges and universities changed, too. In the 1970s, job descriptions in the Chronicle of Higher Education for college and university presidents began listing M.B.A. degrees as a 'preferred' or 'required' criterion for consideration. Before the 1970s, the sine qua non for a presidential candidate was academic standing, i.e., a Ph.D., some experience in a leadership position, publications and little else.

However, academia slowly became a business, and businesses are beholden to their customers. So as administrative leaders began referring to students as "customers" or "clients," consequences to the curriculum

followed. More emphasis was given to education's practical relevance, i.e., getting a job, rather than the acquisition of broad thinking skills.

The demotion of thinking skills meant the end for required courses in philosophy (phil), the so-called "perspectiveless perspective," the discipline that challenged a student's beliefs and identity. Today, students can get a degree without ever taking phil courses.

Unfortunately for my GPA, college curricula 50 years ago followed a model dating to ancient Greece, wherein a student began studies with philosophy, followed by the trivium, composed of logic, grammar and rhetoric, and then the quadrivium's arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.

The 12th century illustration, "Garden of Delights," by Herrad von Landsberg, shows the seven liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium. They surround Socrates, Plato and philosophy, like rivers that flow from the headwater of philosophy.

Philosophy has always provided the foundation for the arts. The trivium, with its broader and basic courses, preceded the specialized courses of the quadrivium. Students began their college education with a broad and diverse education, then they specialized and declared a major. Now, students enter colleges with a major in mind — accounting, biology, music and so on — and fit the trivium in when they can. Seniors in my intro to philosophy class told me "I had to take a lib arts course to graduate; yours fit my schedule."

The old curriculum aligns more closely with human development, physical and mental. Swimmers learn the "dog paddle" before the freestyle stroke. Kids master throwing, then they learn to pitch a curveball. Kids learn to read first, then they read to learn. Mastery of fundamental skills and knowledge precedes mastery of specialized skills and wisdom. Thinking, basic to any cognitive activity, works the same way.

And the broadest form of thinking involves philosophy, where a person can "place himself in a

better position to reach a judgment by listening to all the arguments."

Academic leaders can't change the consequences of technological innovation, and may not be able to change the boorish, uncivilized behavior of cancel culture students. But it is within their purview to restore required philosophy classes so students can listen to ideas that are not their own, discuss those ideas, analyze the ideas, and then reach a judgment, instead of behaving like the mob that put Socrates to death.

The likely reward is more civilized behavior.

A Half Century of Title IX

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."
— Title IX

(Feb. 1) — The March 10 Wall Street Journal featured a celebratory picture whose caption read, "Tennis legend Billie Jean King helped mark the 50th anniversary of Title IX civil-rights law." The picture was a reminder of how much things have changed.

It also reminded me of my friend, Hannah, whom I met at Washington State University in the early 70s. She had hoped to attend WSU and become a veterinarian. During the interview process for admission to the vet school, Hannah was asked, "Why do you want to become a veterinarian? Why don't you marry one?"

At the time, I thought the question was insulting and rude. I still think that. If anyone wants to pursue a career in veterinary medicine, and the person has the brains and drive, then pretty close to everything else is irrelevant for admission. But things change.

College campuses change. In 1972, when so many young men were dying in Viet Nam, more men attended college than women. Colleges were concerned about the imbalance and worked to change it. They succeeded. With the change,

women stood a better chance of attending those prestigious schools, like Colgate University in upstate New York. Women seized the opportunity so much that female undergraduates outnumbered men by 1988. It has stayed that way every year thereafter. These days, unlike the imbalance in 1972, undergraduate enrollment is about 58 percent female to 42 percent male. Things change.

Indiana colleges and universities also worked hard to include women; they also have a higher percentage of undergraduate female students. For instance, IU-South Bend, which boasts that it is the largest public university in the region, has an undergrad population that is 65 percent female. The school has a women and gender studies major, though it has no men and gender studies major.

In that regard, IU-South Bend is typical of Indiana colleges and universities. IUPUI, with 61 percent female students in 2019, has a similar major whose first, required course is entitled “Gender, Culture, and Society.” The course description says the course provides an “examination of the international emergence of the field of women’s studies; the achievements and limitations of scholarly work exploring oppression and discrimination based on sex and sex differences; . . . and the relevance of changing understandings of the term ‘culture’ for the study of women, gender, and/or sexuality . . .” The absence of the word “man” or “men” suggests that

men need not be included in such a course; they can be opaque to themselves.

Failing to include men in such a course might mean ignoring 80 percent of the suicides in America, many of them military veterans who have done the fighting on America’s behalf. The course might ignore data on deaths of despair (in which suicides are counted). Men are about 2½ more likely to suffer a death of despair. Men would have more self-awareness were men’s studies courses offered.

And several Indiana colleges and schools have women’s centers or women’s health centers but no corresponding centers for men. How is that different from 1972, when women were by and large ignored?

This essay began by lamenting the treatment my friend Hannah received at the hands of Washington State University. It is worth noting that the only veterinary school in Indiana does indeed include women. In fact, about 85 percent of Purdue’s vet school students are women. Title IX has indeed changed the educational landscape.

However, the changes appear to exclude men, just as women were excluded in 1972.

Unless men are included in Title IX’s application, Title IX represents unprincipled legislation.

And uneven, unprincipled laws are not worth celebrating. ♦

The Bookshelf

How the World Really Works

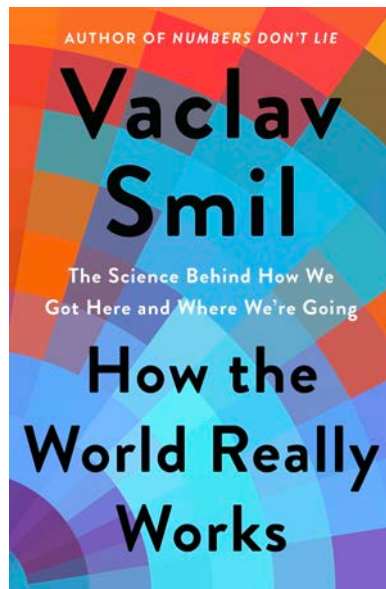
Get real. How often this response was heard back in the day when someone, oftentimes yours truly, suggested something that was impractical to the point of fantasy. These brilliant ideas might work in some feverish brain but never in the real world.

Getting real is the underlying theme in Vaclav Smil's "How the World Really Works: The Science Behind How We Got Here and Where We're Going" (Viking 2022, 229 pages plus notes, \$20 hardcover). Smil, a distinguished professor at the University of Manitoba and a prolific author of scientific studies, makes a compelling case for getting past the hyperbole and sensationalism surrounding much of what we hear and read about global warming and the intrinsic evil of everything and anything involving fossil fuels.

Smil sees two extremist and thereby unhelpful positions advocated in response to this "crisis." One, with which we are bombarded daily by the twenty-first century's version of yellow journalism, he labels the "catastrophists" due to their shrill predictions of impending doom within the next decade or two. Think of that teenager in Sweden with anger management issues.

The other he calls, rather cleverly, the cornucopians. This group assumes our modern science will simply invent something to make the problem go away. Perhaps the silliest of their notions is that we all just move to Mars to escape our ruined planet.

Given his purpose of debunking all this pseudo-science, Smil doesn't seem worried about being slandered as a "denier," the epithet catastrophists hurl at anyone who questions anything in their creed. After all, he has the research and publication record to establish his bona fides in this field.



I found his most important contribution to the debate is his identification of four significant products used in our world to sustain and improve life. He calls them the pillars of modern civilization: ammonia, cement, steel and plastics. Each in its way is essential to most everything we rely on to support our quotidian existence. Note that he does not include silicon, cellular networks or their ilk; his focus is on the material world.

He includes chapters on risk assumption, globalization and environmental changes. His data

suggests that globalization is in retreat as international trade accounts for a lessening portion of the world's economy. I liked his presentation on risk assumption in which he refocuses us on more accurate calculations of true risk by taking into account incidence of exposure to those risks. He also instructs us to differentiate voluntary from involuntary risk and respond accordingly.

He presents the catastrophists with an unpleasant truth: The only way to eliminate fossil fuels in the production of electricity is to convert to nuclear energy. Choose your poison, he tells them. And he takes on the vegans/vegetarians by arguing that the portions of the world at greatest risk of starvation (sub-Saharan Africa for the most part) need more meat and milk in their diets, especially the children's. He is chock full of bad news for the radical left.

There are things we can do to affect this on the margin. Americans waste vast quantities of food, nearly a third of consumption by Smil's calculation. Cutting back on our wastage would release more for the rest of the world. He also criticizes Americans for our penchant to drive gas-guzzling SUVs, whose higher gas consumption negates all the expected savings coming currently from electric vehicles. And then there is China, the

real environmental culprit in increasing global fossil fuel usage to power its economic expansion.

Yet, and this is an important point, Smil writes that we can achieve the artificial emission goals set by politicians and elitist activists only if all affluent nations drastically cut their standards of living and condemn (my word, not his) the developing nations to a future of backwardness and poverty.

Smil makes a point of making no predictions. He simply presents data and draws reasonable and likely expectations from these data. All he asks is that we look at climate change as a scientific and not a religious issue. True science must not have an agenda, this coming from a true scientist who is distraught over the politicization of science.

He calls the media's coverage of these issues "hysterical" and "outright apocalyptic." Smil's book is his attempt to bring thoughtful debate to the forefront of our public discourse. Good luck.

Recommendation: A science book which can be understood by non-scientists. Loaded with common sense alternatives for addressing climate issues without impoverishing ourselves.

Lincoln's White House

The White House has been called the People's House but try to get admitted these days. The iconic two-story building can be seen from a distance with east and west wings and who knows how many sub-basements. It wasn't always that way, as James R. Conroy instructs us in his "Lincoln's White House: The People's House in Wartime" (Roman and Littlefield 2016, 248 pages plus notes, \$27 hardcover).

The book begins with a floor plan of the White House at the time, just the rectangular central building. Lincoln's offices and his personal quarters shared the second floor while the first

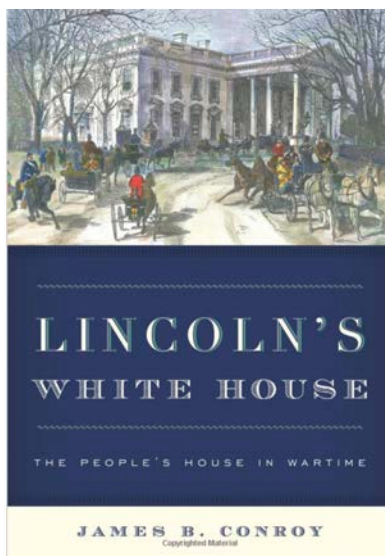
floor, then as now, was mostly ceremonial. The Lincoln family and his two official secretaries, one budgeted to him and the other seconded from a governmental bureau, lived there while a small office complex occupied half of one end. Such would have made filming the TV show "The West Wing" much simpler, requiring only one or two cameras to cover it all.

And it was open to the public. Honest Abe was also Accessible Abe, probably too much so but that was the standard back then. There was a doorkeeper but no security, the outside sentry's box being unoccupied when Lincoln moved in. In addition to the mandatory twice weekly receiving lines, office-seekers by the thousands filled all the hallways in Lincoln's first few months. How he got anything done is beyond me. Imagine the President of the United States pushing his way through a crowd to travel from his lunch up the stairs to his office.

The mob decamped in a stampede when the war started and Confederate troops were spotted directly across the Potomac. The first floor was turned into a barracks for a scratch militia unit quartered as the capital's only defensive force. Military drills took place in the East Room, then as now the largest and most formal of the lower-level rooms. I guess that isn't so bad when compared to its use as a laundry room by Abigail Adams.

There was no telegraph in the White House so Lincoln needed to walk over to the War Department building to get war news. He walked unescorted. He all but ignored the other governmental departments once the war started and understandably so. William Seward and Salmon Chase didn't complain about the lack of attention; they took advantage of this benign neglect.

Conroy devotes chapters to Lincoln's secretaries and to Mrs. Lincoln. John Nicolay was

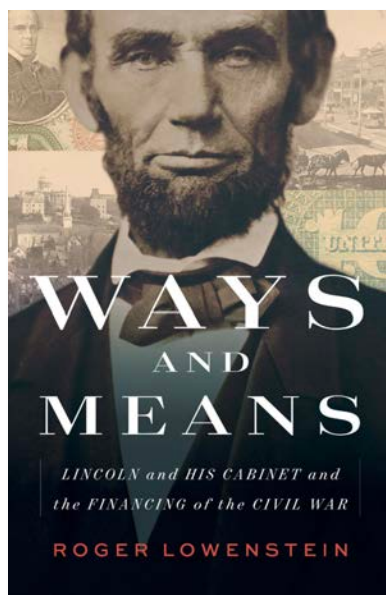


the official secretary with an office adjoining Lincoln's but John Hay soon became acknowledged as important as Nicolay. They shared a bedroom on the second floor across from their office. A third unofficial secretary eventually was seconded from the Patent Office and served as a combination of bodyguard and doorkeeper on the second floor. All three men intimated after the war that Lincoln was a hard but fair taskmaster and easily dropped into informality with them as well as other White House staff.

The chapter on Mrs. Lincoln was enlightening. I was aware of her unpredictable temper and neurotic behavior but Conroy details her extravagance in spending official White House funds as she pleased. Accounts were falsified to cover unauthorized purchases but she still was short when the bills came due. This may be hard to envision from a First Lady, but she actually sold the manure from the White House stables to raise funds to pay off debts. The permanent staff loved the President but had quite different emotions regarding Mrs. Lincoln. Eventually Congress appropriated funds to cover her budget overruns, which simply proves that the more things change the more they stay the same.

Eventually the war required a change in White House staffing and protocols. A fourth secretary was provided through a budgeted line at another governmental agency and a 24-hour cavalry guard was provided. Lincoln, like most presidents since, chafed at the security arrangements' restraining his freedom of movement. His assassination concludes the book, perhaps as a final argument about inadequate security.

It is nearly impossible for a twenty-first century American to conceive of a White House always open to the public. Anecdotes about visitors cutting pieces of carpet or drapery as souvenirs boggles the mind. What began as a



shabby executive mansion seemed to get worse during Lincoln's administration, so perhaps one can forgive Mary Lincoln's extravagances in decorating overruns.

Recommendation: An easy read and a fascinating one. Conroy's "insider" approach makes it all the more enlightening as to the challenges Lincoln faced in trying to run a war and reunite a nation.

Ways and Means

With inflation ratcheting up to Jimmy Carter levels and with the blame, as any good Friedmanite knows, belonging to the trillions of dollars printed by the Federal Reserve to cover government deficits, one can't help but look to the past for similar situations. We've been here before, but usually there was a war behind things.

The American Civil War was one such time. How monetary policy was handled in the North and the South is one of the key contrasts in Roger Lowenstein's "Ways and Means: Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War" (Penguin Press 2022, 335 pages plus extensive notes, \$25 hardcover). Lowenstein's focus is primarily on the North with Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase as the key character.

The federal government was not organized for a war. There were only 2,000 federal employees in the nation's capital (compared to nearly 300,000 there now) and the main source of federal revenue was import duties collected at the nation's ports. There was no central bank, therefore no ability to manage the money supply, and nearly no ability to borrow. Paper money was printed by small, local banks and all federal business was transacted in specie.

Lowenstein provides a simple and understandable primer in governmental finance. The Lincoln administration had three options: increase taxes, a difficult proposition at any time; borrow, either through international bond

markets or through the issuance of small denomination notes sold domestically; or print paper money.

If Lincoln had his fiscal problems, Jefferson Davis' were even worse. The South was an agricultural, illiquid economy with its assets mostly land and slaves. It did have one commodity that was almost as good as money—cotton. And this is where the Confederacy lost the war before it ever started. They embargoed their only cash crop, eliminating all flow of foreign currency into its economy. That must rank as the dumbest economic decision made in modern times.

Enter Salmon Chase. He and Lincoln were political rivals, to the point of political disloyalty on Chase's part. But he was a financial genius, perhaps the best since Alexander Hamilton. His was the job to sell bonds and eventually to sell the Congress and the states on creating federal paper money. He strong-armed the largest banks, the depositories of the nation's gold supply, to use their gold to purchase federal bonds. He also designed an early version of U. S. savings bonds, called five-twenties, that could be bought by common people.

Finally, though, he had to crank up the printing presses. He convinced Congress to authorize paper money as legal tender, meaning mandatory acceptance by one in all in the course of business. Known as greenbacks due to the ink color on their backsides, these instruments differed from the five-twenties by being non-redeemable, non-interest bearing and non-expiring. Even though they did depreciate during the war, they still circulated freely even inside the Confederacy to both governments' chagrin.

While the South experienced debilitating inflation causing hunger and other deprivations, the North got through with minimal disruption to normal economic activity. While Lowenstein doesn't come right out and say this, he hints at a velocity of money answer. Banks lent to the government, which used these funds to purchase war materiel, which resulted in bank deposits.

Hence a limited amount of gold was adequate at this level while the citizenry dealt in greenbacks.

Lowenstein deals with issues beyond government finance. There are chapters on slavery and the plantation economy, rampant corruption within almost anything done by the government and the centralization of government activity in Washington. The latter is an interesting discourse on how "these United States" became "the United States" under Lincoln's Whiggish principles, including his support for federal activism in infrastructure and the promotion of "the general welfare."

Since I am from Fort Wayne, I feel compelled to remind readers that the first Comptroller of the Currency was Fort Wayne banker Hugh McCulloch. While limited to several cameo appearances in the book, Lowenstein does acknowledge McCulloch's successful rollout of greenbacks.

I also learned that the reason the South was known as Dixie was due to the \$10 notes issued by a New Orleans bank imprinted with the French word "dix" or ten. These notes were valued much more highly than those issued by the CSA government.

Lowenstein concludes with a quick history of southern economic development after the war. Or, lack of southern economic development. He blames several policies and practices, such as the Jim Crow laws and inconsistent federal government programs. It was the civil rights era that finally unleashed the southern economy in his view, allowing both poor blacks and poor whites to succeed.

His most significant conclusions, in my view at least, are those related to the profound changes the war caused in the federal government. It was Lincoln's "Whiggishness" that underlies these expansions of federal power. The most significant were the public acceptance of a federal paper currency, a centralization of banking under federal control, significant federal expenditures for public works and a tax structure that included personal incomes. For better or worse, we are

living with the ramifications of Lincoln's vision today.

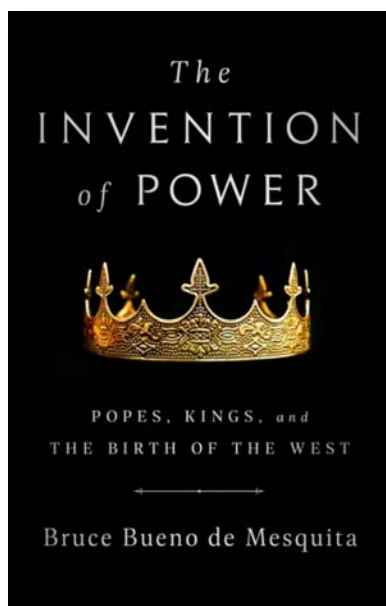
Recommendation: Interesting in large part due to his panoramic inclusion of things not economic to give perspective. A good study of Lincoln the politician, inexorably moving toward his vision for a modern United States.

The Invention of Power

While it can provoke apoplectic reactions among progressives these days, the term "Western exceptionalism" is heard frequently. One need only look at a map to see that the most democratic, most educated, most productive nations in the world tend to center on Europe, northern and western Europe specifically. Move outside Europe and the most successful nations have their roots in European colonialism, with the English-speaking world leading the way.

Not so fast, says Bruce Bueno de Mesquita in his "The Invention of Power: Popes, Kings, and the Birth of the West" (Hachette Book Group 2022, 292 pages plus notes, \$22 hardcover). There is no such thing as Western exceptionalism, he claims. Europeans are no smarter, harder working or culturally superior to any other area of the globe. And certainly our religion cannot claim superiority. Still, the facts speak for themselves so Bueno de Mesquita proposes a different cause for this.

He points to the Concordat of Worms of 1122 between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor as the key historical event that divided the successful from the mediocre. First, some background. The Investiture Controversy, arguably the most important political battle of the High Middle Ages, was fought between Pope and Emperor over the appointment of bishops. Don't think that Henry IV's kneeling in the snow outside Canossa solved things; it merely gave the



combatants time to reorganize for the next battle. Eventually, all parties realized that a state of perpetual confrontation was benefiting no one.

The Concordat stated that henceforth bishops would be nominated by the Church but approved by the secular ruler. While the see was vacant, all revenues stayed with the secular ruler. While this might seem to provide incentives for the secular ruler to delay or refuse confirmation of the nominee, in reality it exposed him and his subjects to ecclesial discipline such as interdiction, the denial of sacraments and religious rites in that territory, should he prove recalcitrant.

Bueno de Mesquita developed a database of bishoprics during this period and sorted them out according to a methodology he terms the "the Concordat game." He sorted the churchmen into two categories: those who supported papal policies and those who supported the local ruler's policies. Over time, the secularized sees tended to become wealthier than the sacred sees and he has a theory as to why.

According to the Concordat game rules, the most contentious sees were those furthest away from Rome and on major trade routes. A lot of tax revenue was at play in these dioceses so the secular ruler had greater incentive to take on the Pope for control. The Papacy responded by keeping the most strategic sees, those closest to Rome and the Papal States, relatively poorer so as to stay under the radar of revenue-hungry rulers in a sort of reverse economic development strategy.

Over time the areas in northern European nations under the Concordat (Germany, France and England) experienced economic growth at higher rates than others. This also resulted in a higher probability for these areas to move toward more democratic government and greater

protection for property rights and other liberties. Bueno de Mesquita offers a lot of graphs to support his conclusion visually.

The Concordat worked just fine until the Avignon papacy ended its usefulness to France and the Reformation made it irrelevant in Germany. Even so, it had some lasting effects such as the elimination of nepotism as a key strategy for papal authority and promotion of secular art. The author also claims it advanced tolerance, accountable government, freedom and prosperity even if not uniformly.

But here is the salient question to my way of thinking: Did the Reformation bring about increased wealth and prosperity in Protestant lands or did the increased wealth in these dioceses make possible the Reformation? Bueno de Masquita asserts the latter by showing increasing wealth during the fifteenth century allowing for significant secular independence of Rome.

The book is somewhat technical but readable. The author goes into substantial detail to support each contention. He concludes his thesis by pointing to the modern world. Today's poorer nations are either too religious, such as the Muslim states, or too secular, such as those once under communism.

Is he correct in his assertion that there is no such thing as Western exceptionalism? I think not. In fact my reading of his book tells me that he supports it even though he doesn't want to. Why not point to the existence of the Concordat itself as one more argument for a Western exceptionalism which advanced liberal ideas in Europe ahead of all other continents? He admits there was no equivalent development elsewhere.

Recommendation: Not an easy book to read but can be skimmed to understand his argument. The graphs help. Decide for yourself whether his premise holds. Read Dan Hannan's "Inventing Freedom" for a different take.

Books I Didn't Finish

"Vision or Mirage: Saudi Arabia at the Crossroads" (I. B. Tauris 2021, 257 pages plus

notes, \$22 hardcover) by David Rundell is actually a worthwhile book to read. I simply ran out of time, and this is a book which demands plenty of it. The first half of the book recounts the history of the al-Saud family as it struggled across two and one-half centuries to unify the Arabian Peninsula under its lordship. Rundell explains how King Abdulaziz, founder of today's Saudi Arabia, used practical diplomacy to gather key tribes under a religious banner, one which we incorrectly call Wahhabi today. I found this history fascinating, even if confusing in trying to understand the Saudi naming conventions for branches of the family, all 45 sons and hundreds of grandsons. The al-Saud have used internal family negotiation to keep all branches loyal, happy and rather wealthy from oil revenues. The second half of the book, the part I did not finish, discusses the current disruption in al-Saud rule as King Salman and his crown prince son Mohammed try to modernize the kingdom, generating resistance within the family as royal princes are removed from the government and the Wahhabi clerics become less influential. Rundell calls this the fourth Saudi revolution, the first two having been short-lived and the third—Abdulaziz's—now being transformed.

"Princes of the Renaissance: The Hidden Power behind an Artistic Revolution" (Pegasus Books 2021, 512 pages, \$25 hardcover) by Mary Hollingsworth is a fascinating book...if you are really into 15th century Italy. I borrowed it from the local library to help me sort out all those Italian city-states and the powerful families which ruled them. It helped with that, particularly by providing family trees for most of them. It goes into far more detail of the political and military shenanigans they got up to than even I cared to know. Hollingsworth's thesis, that these princes were the prime movers behind the cultural Renaissance, may or may not have been developed as I didn't read enough to find out. But her one hundred plus full-color photographs of artwork and architecture are well worth the time to page through the entire book. Just don't quiz me on which family ruled which city-state during

which decade; these dynasties are even more convoluted than the Byzantine imperial ones.

“The Eternal Decline and Fall of Rome: The History of a Dangerous Idea” (Oxford University Press 2021, 242 pages plus notes, \$26 hardcover) by Edward J. Watts impressed me with its title and the inside cover flap synopsis. Then I read the introduction. The book’s premise is that too often politicians and others want to blame Rome’s fall on issues similar to what we are facing today or have faced in the past 1,500 years. Who are these demagogic politicians? The first one quoted in the introduction is Donald Trump. Of course. So I jumped to the concluding chapter focused on contemporary America. And this time the evil genius is Ronald Reagan. I did skim several of the historical chapters and found them interesting, just not enough to work through 200 plus pages of this. And it does pain me to put down a book that deals with my favorite historical entity and period—the medieval Holy Roman Empire. The author is entitled to his opinion...but not to my time.

“Persians: The Age of the Great Kings” (Basic Books 2022, 432 pages, \$32 hardcover) by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones is meant to be a history of the Achaemenid dynasty told from its perspective and not biased by the ancient Greek historians and modern Western imperialists. So claims the author but my only goal in borrowing it from my local public library was to, once and for all, sort out the Medes and Persians. I know enough about the Persian invasions of Greece and Alexander’s conquest of the Persian Empire to last a lifetime but I still get all those mountain tribes mixed up. Llewellyn-Jones does a nice job of putting them into time and geographic relationships. Cyrus the Great, the first of the great kings, was actually half Mede and half Persian so no wonder the confusion. “One man’s Mede is another man’s Persian,” quipped George S. Kaufman. How right he was. ♦



Thomas Hoepker, Sept. 11, 2001

The Outstater

The New Boondoggles

(June 7) — The new riverfront park with the landscaped hiking trails, the downtown renovation, the convention center, the sports stadium with the attached garages and a mixed-use apartment complex — has it ever crossed your mind that they are all boondoggles?

Of course it has.

Economists have a nicer term for it. They speak of “rent extractions,” referring to the ability of officials to squeeze payments (seek “rents”) for favorable legislation. We call it press-release economics.

Whatever you call it, state and local governments spend more than \$30 billion each year on economic development (eco-devo) incentives intended to influence location, expansion or job-retention decisions of private sector firms and to garner the subsequent political credit.

Russell Sobel of the Citadel and two other economists have surveyed decades of research on how that \$30 billion a year is spent. Their conclusion:

“At best, these incentives are found to be weakly effective at job creation, but inefficient due to the distortions, secondary effects and increased rent-seeking they encourage with little public accountability.”

Wait, do we understand that right? All those billions didn’t create that many jobs?

It gets worse:

“Once a state begins offering substantially larger development incentives, our results show that total organizational campaign contributions increase by approximately \$1,067,500 in the average state. The gains come from construction and organized labor, business advocacy groups, and lobbyists and lawyers. These sectors either stand to directly benefit from the awards or represent firms in the political process. We also find a sizable electoral benefit for incumbent politicians; their median margin of victory increases by 7 percentage points after the large economic development incentives become commonplace.”

The Indiana Policy Review several years ago analyzed the filings for the four-year cycle leading up to a typical Indiana mayoral election. We identified the individual contributors as well as the owners or officers of companies that contracted with the city during or after that period.

Within industries, there was a strong correlation between the dollars contributed and the dollars paid in city contracts. Engineering companies, for example, had an R-squared value of 59 percent with a standard deviation of only 16 percent from the linear regression line.

The point is that these eco-devo projects are designed to reward politicians and their supporters. They aren’t designed to succeed as businesses — and they don’t.

Because the “profits” are distributed on the front end, it can take 20 years before a development falls flat on its face. A working example is the touted Circle Center Mall, a public-private partnership covering two square blocks of what should be prime real estate in downtown Indianapolis.

Twenty-five years ago, the \$307.5-million, four-level mall was promoted as the magnet that would reinvigorate the city. But the development, politically managed and built on municipally owned (subsidized) land, has gone through

refinancing and a string of owners and now is without an anchor or any serious tenant unless you count the Indianapolis Star offices.

The current owners describe their situation as “complicated” and are calling for more “public support” to avoid civic embarrassment. That means they will need more good public money to throw at a clearly bad business plan.

Ryan Cummins, an adjunct of this foundation and a former appropriations chairman for the Terre Haute Common Council, describes this as “painting the white elephant green” with yet more money borrowed from future tax revenue.

“The green slowly wears off over the years and they have to repaint it again and again,” Cummins quips.

At some point, silent partners might step in to buy the rolling disaster. They might pay, say, one-third of what the city and the other dupes have put into it. The rent extraction or boondoggle is thereby complete and the search begins for a new mark.

A poster boy for this economic strategy, Mike Pence’s director of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, filed last week in the GOP primary for governor. Yes, the corporation is the arbiter of the state’s rent-extraction schemes. And yes, the election is almost two years away.

By the time we get there we’ll be lucky if our choice isn’t reduced to who can waste the most money “saving” our cities and towns.

More Gun-Control Sanctimony

“Much of the social history of the Western world over the past three decades has involved replacing what worked with what sounded good.” — Thomas Sowell

(June 1) — There is a rationale for gun control that says private ownership of firearms is unnecessary because the police will be there to protect you. That sounds good but some of us have lived long enough to offer sad testimony to the contrary.

As a police reporter, I covered dozens of murders in both small towns and big cities. The

police never got there in time. It wasn’t their fault, they just couldn’t as a matter of routine.

A friend, my photographer on many breaking news assignments, was shot through the head driving his car. He was responding to a report on his police scanner of a sniper on a downtown hotel rooftop. A real first-responder, he beat the cops to a scene one last time.

Other friends have been murdered in their homes by intruders. In one case it was a father, mother and son, and in another it was a single mother. They were bludgeoned and strangled by strangers. Calling 911 would not have saved them. Outlawing guns would not have saved them. One of those 9mm handguns so maligned by Joe Biden *would* have saved them.

Finally, my neighborhood was strafed with full automatic fire early one morning. In several homes, shots hit only feet above the beds of sleeping children. Those without weapons took cover, laying prone on the floor in the dark in fear that they might hear the shooter at the front door. A single sheriff’s deputy arrived 20 minutes after the 911 call. He would not get out of his car. It was a “live-fire incident,” he told us. A public relations officer came around a week later to discourage those who wanted to organize an armed neighborhood watch, a militia if you will.

We were never told who was responsible. Rather, we learned that it is not the job of the police to protect us unless we are in their custody. “The Constitution does not impose a general duty upon police officers or other governmental officials to protect individual persons from harm — even when they know the harm will occur,” says Darren Hutchinson, associate dean at the University of Florida School of Law. “Police can watch someone attack you, refuse to intervene and not violate the Constitution.”

So much for that. What about the argument that the Constitution is obscure on gun ownership?

The Second Amendment is pretty straightforward: “A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be

infringed.” But as with all words those can get twisted and confused with the passage of time. Nonetheless, we choose to read them as a noble attempt to *absolutely* prohibit future governments from meddling in the right to defend ourselves, our property and our country.

And know that registration and restriction historically have preceded confiscation. Nor can the means of self-protection be meted out or retracted whenever events seem to dictate, as Congress is now contemplating.

This we know for certain: However much it may be wished otherwise, government cannot be trusted with a monopoly on power. Your eyes will fail long before you finish reading the continuous accounts, ancient and modern, of regimes abusing a disarmed or underarmed citizenry. And every mass killing, internment, extermination, starvation, expulsion or enslavement was ordered by a warranted authority under force of arms, be it a warlord, a king, a parliament or a legislature.

So it was with only measured gratitude that we congratulated our Indiana legislators and governor for allowing non-felonious Hoosiers to carry a concealed handgun without their expressed permission.

Those who have studied the matter will tell you that this practice is the single best protection against the mass killings the nation is now experiencing. Few crazies, and we include terrorists in that category, have the courage to execute their evil when they cannot tell who is armed and who is not. They prefer gun-free zones at weddings, airplanes, birthday parties, shopping centers, churches, marathons, Christmas parades and, yes, elementary schools.

By the way, does the FBI keep records of attempts to rob gun stores? That would be interesting.

Whatever, you can bet that human beings, being what they are, will continue to try to rob, rape and kill wherever and whenever. The maddest of them will try to massacre random innocents. But that understood, a well-armed citizenry is a mitigation and not a perfect solution.

That concession touches on the true motivation of the gun-control movement, a sanctimonious effort having little to do with saving lives and only incidentally to do with the inanimate objects we call guns (as opposed to knives, tire irons, baseball bats, SUVs). Its adherents, some of them living in gated communities protected by private security, see themselves as preserving the fantasy that human beings are perfectible — here and now or at least just around the corner.

In their view, gun ownership and related liberties compete with that vision of the perfect man and the perfect society. Self-reliance is somehow seen as an impediment to the human progress they claim to be engineering.

Well, we see no such progress or any prospect of such progress. Indeed, a mature reading of human nature and the daily news is quite the opposite. The wise are arming themselves accordingly.

Holcomb Hits the Big Time

(May 25) — Gov. Eric Holcomb reached a career pinnacle this week in being asked to speak at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. It marked him as among the brightest of the bright, the most powerful of the powerful, one of the men and women who make the world go around.

OK, let’s grant him that. Such recognition seems important to him. Back here on the ground in Indiana, though, we have some questions — mundane, perhaps, but sincere.

Holcomb represents the refinement of an Indiana economic development strategy crafted by his mentors, Mitch Daniels and Mike Pence. “In Indiana, we’re finding more ways to partner globally to ensure the economy of the future is prosperous, equitable and sustainable,” he told the Davos *haut monde*.

Equitable? Sustainable? Aren’t those political words, not economic words? And indeed that is what Indiana’s economic-development policies are based upon. The last three Republican governors have shuffled various federal and state

economic grants and dealt them out to politically favored regions of the state.

They call it job growth. We call it press-release economics. That is the term coined for us in a 2010 article for *The Indiana Policy Review* by Tad DeHaven, former deputy director of the Indiana Office of Management and Budget.

If anyone had been listening, DeHaven blew the whistle early on what was to become the establishment's game, institutionalized as the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). He noted that there is no independent audit of whether the tax money to the IEDC actually creates any jobs — or any jobs that would not have been created anyway. Let DeHaven explain:

“Because a governor will get credit for creating jobs, businesses know they can extract taxpayer money from the state for these subsidies. After a company reaches an agreement with the IEDC, the administration issues a press release. For the high-profile deals, it arranges a choreographed ribbon-cutting ceremony at the company's facilities. The company helps fulfill its end of the bargain by telling the press that the administration's support sealed the deal. Witnessing this charade from inside the administration led me to coin the phrase, ‘press-release economics.’”

When an Indianapolis television reporter tried to visit some of the companies celebrated in IEDC press releases, he found empty fields, vacant lots and deserted factories. “As many as 40 percent of statewide jobs listed as so-called economic successes have not happened — and most of them never will,” he reported.

The editor of the Marion newspaper told us he had been to three IEDC ribbon-cutting ceremonies . . . at the same manufacturing plant.

Examples are cropping up throughout the country. One of the most edifying is from Kansas City, which sits on the divide of two states competing in the press release economics olympics. A company need only threaten to move across town to set off a bidding war between the

Kansas and Missouri versions of Holcomb's economic development corporation.

“If subsidies worked,” a local there quipped, “then Kansas City would look like Dubai on the Missouri River.” In fact, according to Kansas City's Hall Foundation, the two states have lost a combined \$335 million in tax revenues to accomplish nothing more than shift the city's commuting patterns.

How does that make sense?

We have more questions for Gov. Holcomb. Why is it assuring for him to announce after each of his dozen international trips that all expenses were paid by private donations to the Indiana Economic Development Foundation? Are we to believe that one or more of those donating couldn't make it known to the governor that they paid for his trip? If so, wouldn't that be a thinly disguised bribe?

Somebody should ask the World Economic Forum to look into that.

Paradise Lost (but Sustained)

(May 13) — Raised in rural America, I admit to romantic views of small-town life. And later as a young journalist I wandered around the Midwest passing through the iconic courthouse squares, stopping in the once ubiquitous downtown cafe with the “Eats” sign to sample the coconut cream pie and read the hometown paper. Ah, and the pool halls that served beer in iced mugs . . .

I know, I know, those days are gone. Still, it is important to remember that those were places, circa 1940-1970, from which came the men and women who won our wars, molded our arts and culture and filled the executives suites of perhaps the greatest job-creating engine in history.

I argue that America's accomplishments can be credited not to big-shots in cities but to small-town people with big dreams. Is it important that Nancy Pelosi is from Baltimore, Joe Biden is from Scranton and Ronald Reagan is from Tampico?

I think so.

Anyway, there's something about a distant horizon that spurs achievement. I read some years

ago that the U.S. Navy had commissioned a study finding that its best combat officers came from small towns in the Great Plains. The man who founded the New Yorker magazine, the publication that defines urban sophistication, is from a town of 265. And don't make me recite the hometowns of our first astronauts or I'll make you spell Wapakoneta. Hollywood still remembers a rebel from Fairmount, and Spring Wells, Michigan, may no longer exist but the Ford Motor Company does.

So it has been painful these last three decades to have watched as Indiana towns waned. It seemed that crack houses got more sympathetic attention. I have asked in vain in columns over the years why Hoosier politicians, who must pass through these sad towns on their get-me-reelected travels, rarely speak up for this forlorn, vanishing constituency.

Now they have spoken, but you might wish they hadn't. Gov. Eric Holcomb addressed the issue yesterday and it sounded disturbingly like what Reagan called the most terrifying words in the English language: "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help."

Holcomb, a city boy from 3,000-student Pike High School in Indianapolis, wearing what he might imagine was outstate mufti, was interviewed by the staff of something called the Indiana University Center for Rural Engagement. He offered this:

"As we invest in enhancing quality of place and space through programs like READI (Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative), we're empowering our rural regions to become even more magnetic places to call home, visit, move, build a business or raise a family."

Trying to save you from acronym overload, I followed the governor's "empowering," "acceleration," "development" and "initiative" to the center's web site in search of something that would actually restore my beloved small towns.

There were catchwords galore: sustainable growth, coalition building, asset mapping, gap

analysis, reimagined relationships, pathways to partnerships and of course equity in resources and staffing.

But I was looking for history-reversing incentives that private investors would find "magnetic," something to encourage small shops, family farms, hometown banks and, yes, coconut cream pies. Missing were the classic economic remedies of removing taxes and regulations and generally getting government not just out of the way but over-the-horizon out of the way.

My impression instead was that Indiana University and the governor are working a racket. They have figured out a way to cash in on Indiana's love for hometowns by dispatching heavily credentialed agents to the four corners of the state to show the locals how it's done — a tweak here, a research grant there, and some tax increment financing over here, and pretty soon "Main Street" would be humming again.

Too late. There are no "locals" left, no authentically viable main streets. There's no there there. The band instruments will never arrive.

Only 17 percent of so-called rurals are directly or indirectly employed in traditional agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, says the American Community Survey. The rest are ex-urbanites, people with big-city jobs who like the idea of living in the country — lawyers, architects and the like.

This explains why rural incomes are 95 percent as high as urban ones, with purchasing power possibly higher if you consider housing and other costs.

Wait, these are the people the government is here to help? They resemble nobody more than Eric Holcomb and his academic friends at Indiana University, or at least after they have drawn their last government check and settled into retirement on a scenic Indiana hillside.

Not a bad plan, really, but they left out the coconut cream pie.

A Vindictive Supermajority

(May 11) — Setting aside what the Indianapolis Star copy desk might think is “far right,” a reader of the newspaper’s May 6 headline could assume that Republican voters in last week’s primary election were following the narrative being spit out by our journalism schools, to wit, that wokism is winning.

Don’t bet on it.

There is another explanation. It is that the Supermajority has held together long enough now to mark the cards in favor of Statehouse power and control rather than any preference of everyday Republicans. Power tends to corrupt, Lord Acton taught us more than a century ago, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

The missed story, then, the man-bites-dog story, was that the primary defeat of two incumbent conservative legislators who bucked the Statehouse leadership was the result of impossible disadvantages both in redistricting and funding — disadvantages that were engineered by the Republican leadership independent of the particular district’s constituency.

The message was meant not for ad hoc first-time candidates but for veteran Republican legislators: “Cross us and we will bury you.” It will be easier to keep the GOP caucus in line this next session, and wokeness will have nothing to do with it.

Once but not any more, seasoned Statehouse reporters and grizzled publishers spoiled this game by reminding voters of the role democracy plays in a constitutional republic. Citizens are primarily responsible for keeping themselves informed on issues and policy positions, political parties playing only a secondary if not corrupting role.

The rule should be that the candidate with the most yard signs is not necessarily the best representative of your viewpoint. And the corollary is that whatever today’s corporate newspaper tells you need not be taken all that seriously.

You are on your own.

How Campaign Money Is Spent

(May 5) — Here is what we learned from Tuesday’s election about how the political system works — for Indiana Republicans anyway.

First, you need to imagine for a moment that you are among the most effective Indiana Republicans, that is, that you are wealthy. And presume that as most Republicans your political values generally follow those of the Founding Fathers, that is, a respect for private property and personal liberty.

That means you are proud that you live in a country where wealth can be earned and managed in ways based on productivity rather than the ability to cage special favors. You are not, however, fanatical about it. You have a business to run and a family for which to care.

Nonetheless, you want to do something to help ensure that your children and grandchildren also will live in such a country. You are told that the best way to do that is support a political party, and you have found someone, a Republican running for a House seat, who promises to share your values. He asks that you donate \$10,000 to his campaign.

Now, you are right to be curious as to what happens to that ten grand, your money, and here is where things begin to get ugly.

The first thing will be that if your donation becomes public you will be characterized by the corporate media if not your hometown newspaper as a political extremist. Nobody in the GOP leadership will stand up for you, nor will you be able to repeal this judgment no matter how clear you make your ideological position. You and your family will have to live with it.

Second, a great part of your donation will be absorbed by a private and somewhat mysterious entity called the House Republican Campaign Committee (more about that later). That money can be used to support whomever the committee deems worthy.

Please know that who is deemed worthy may not conform to the values that motivated your donation. In fact, in this week’s primary election,

dollars such as yours — three quarters of a million worth — were used to drive out the two most conservative state legislators. One of them initiated arguably the most principled bill of the Supermajority Era, allowing Hoosiers to carry a firearm as a matter of constitutional right rather than administrative permission.

The two were high scorers on IndianaScorecard.org, an independent measure of Indiana House and Senate votes that affect private property and personal liberty. For comparison, the Speaker of the Indiana House, who represents affluent central Indiana suburbs, does not break 50 percent on the scorecard.

Also know that all of this will happen regardless of whether your candidate fulfills his promises to you — a rare outcome — or even contacts you again until the next fundraising campaign. That means, of course, that your entire donation could be for naught.

Worse, your campaign donation might be used to send a warning to the representatives of other Indiana districts, to wit, that if they consistently vote on absolute principle rather than the recommendations of leadership they will be kicked out and their constituencies in effect disenfranchised. And if this week's primary is the rule, that is not a threat, it is a certainty. Who can overcome being both redistricted and a 5:1 funding disadvantage?

Anyway, now comes the important part: You will want to know who made those decisions on the use of your money.

Tough luck. Nobody can tell you — not for certain, not during any given session. The House Republican Campaign Committee, better known as the HRCC, is a private political campaign group that operates as a PAC under Indiana state law. Its funding is funneled — some would say laundered — through the members of the Republican Caucus of the Indiana House of Representatives.

Members are introduced to donors at events conducted by the HRCC, which instructs the contributors to make their payments to their candidates' individual campaign accounts. However, the legislators are subsequently billed

by the HRCC for half of the take. Additionally, members can be required to make contributions to the HRCC from donations they arrange on their own. Even more money may be generated by events featuring the Speaker of the House or some other member of leadership who interests lobbyists.

These different payments to the HRCC aggregate to over \$10 million each election cycle. The money is theoretically there to defend Republicans representatives in general elections against challenges from Democrats. Increasingly, they have been deployed in primary races, and as we just saw this week against incumbent Republicans who fall out of favor with leadership.

How can this be? Since the HRCC has relieved its members of the drudgery of fundraising, it can command legislators to vote for the programs it is running. Outside money from an amorphous and for practical purposes anonymous collection of lobbyist and shielded interests is piped into the system through the Speaker or the various leaders, whips and committee heads. The point is to make sure the GOP caucus members are working together all along the line to accomplish what these special interests have in mind.

In any particular session, that may be for more highway funding, Sunday alcohol sales or an expansion of the state's economic development corporation. Nobody knows. It depends on who has the most intense interest in gaining government favor — rent-seekers, the economists call them. All you know for sure is that it is unlikely to have much to do with anything that prompted your donation.

Your representative, his constituents be damned, will maneuver overtly or covertly to go along with the scheme since it nearly guarantees him the thing he wants most (re-election) at virtually no cost or effort.

I know, I know. What did we think, that politics was tiddlywinks? Still, all of this considered, you might do more good next time throwing your money into the street.

Primary Day Rumination

(May 2) — With Indiana primary elections set for tomorrow it is a good time to remind ourselves that, theoretically at least, we do not live in a democracy but rather a constitutional republic.

That means that when we vote it is not to determine how we are governed (the Constitution's job) but merely to determine succession — and that in a way only arguably better than the guillotine.

And we say theoretically because since the invention of the microprocessor it is commonly understood that democracy, now technologically augmented with anyone and everyone being able to jump on Twitter, Facebook, etc., and speak their mind, is a great improvement over that old, boring set of adjudicated rights placing the individual over the state. Much easier to access.

We will soon see the folly of that, however, when Elon Musk fails to “free” twitter in a meaningful way and mass media is left with some degree of moderated speech that is anything but democratic. An Internet columnist who signs himself “The Z Man” has as good a take on this as we have read:

“The war to prevent Musk from opening Twitter back up will put an end to the democracy business. Even the dullest civic nationalist can plainly see that the people in charge have zero interest in letting the public decide much of anything. Their revealed preference is for authoritarian control.”

He concludes that “we can stop pretending that we will talk our way out of the catastrophe that is liberal democracy; the death of free speech means the death of democracy and the fantasies that sustain it.”

So where are we now?

Well, you just finished reading the good news: that the techno-religious belief that Internet free speech will somehow save democracy is being abandoned. The bad news is that we are ruled by men and not by laws — that is, by tyrants, despots, oligarchs, authoritarians, corporate editors, woke CEOs, presidents and ex-presidents,

congressional leaders, campaign fundraisers, superintendents, governors or whatever you want to call them.

The Constitution, written to protect us from such men, has ceased to be a factor.

Tomorrow would be a good day to start correcting that.

Give Rokita Some Credit

(April 29) — Considering the smart that is the Holcomb administration, this may be grasping at straws. Nonetheless, we witnessed this week a sign of actual political courage. The Indiana Attorney General is suing for documents that prove or disprove how Black Lives Matter (BLM) here says it used \$90 million in charitable donations.

“The Civil Investigative Demand seeks information and documents held by the entity (Black Lives Matter) relevant to the ongoing investigation to ensure transparency to donors and guarantee funds donated by Indiana residents are used for their intended purpose and not for the personal benefit of BLM directors,” the office of Todd Rokita said.

The irony is that Rokita, a conservative Republican, is suing on behalf of people, fellow Indiana citizens, who presumably would oppose him politically. That is, he is suing on behalf of people who gave to the ultra-liberal Black Lives Matter hoping it would somehow bury the careers of people like himself but who may have been scammed in the process.

Let us pause for a moment and consider whether in this toxic cultural brew it is ethically possible for a white official to question the veracity of a Black activist — for any reason, including the deception for monetary gain of those who support the activist's activism.

The answer is absolutely not. Rokita will be dismissed as a “racist,” which deflects attention from the serious issues surrounding the management of Black Lives Matter, issues nobody wants to talk about. And here to demonstrate exactly how much they don't want to talk about

them is the Indiana Democratic Party and its response to Rokita:

“Todd Rokita’s lawsuit against Black Lives Matter has little to do with the law itself and more to do with a national partisan agenda. If Rokita really did care about the rule of law, he wouldn’t have supported the Indiana GOP’s effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election AND he would hold Republican leaders accountable for breaking election laws.”

If you understood that, you also understand why justice cannot be administered until someone of exactly the right identity mix comes along to administer it. A police chief, for instance, cannot affect the policies necessary to keep young men from killing each other unless his melanin count, ethnic culture, hair style and political instincts are matched with the killers.

That is not the way civilization works. It is the way civilization disintegrates.

Indiana citizens of all races owe Todd Rokita credit for pointing that out, and if we hadn’t given him credit here we cannot imagine where he would have received it, including and especially the upper reaches of his own political party.

Defund the Regulators

(April 25) — Could it be that the resentment and envy that is Black Lives Matter, Defund the Police and Racial Reckoning have run their course? If so, there are solid options from which community leaders could choose, options that open up neighborhoods to commercial opportunity.

But somebody will have to fight for them. The experts in urban renewal will stand in the way, telling us it won’t work. And yes, that is encouraging, for these are the same experts who have been managing our cities for the last few decades.

To start, we can stop constructing unsustainable showcase projects in the underdeveloped quarters. Economics by press release, a friend calls them. The author Joseph Epstein claims they are built by “the Good-

Intentions Paving Company.” Whatever, they have been thoroughly tested and have failed miserably.

A shopping mall was built in south Fort Wayne in 1969, duplicating almost brick for brick the successful north mall. The political class, steeped in the new social justice, pushed the project. The gesture, however well-meaning, had to be bulldozed — literally.

Even as their mall was reduced to rubble, the city brain trust was gathering up other people’s money to try it again. This time with a subsidized subdivision (looks just like a real subdivision) and a government-run grocery store (looks just like a real grocery store).

And naming bridges and streets after George Floyd in places with half the average household income and twice the chance of getting robbed hasn’t worked either.

Instead, community leaders can try what could be called indigenous commercial gumption. They can go to city hall and stand in front of the appropriate democratic representatives until they are afforded their rightful opportunity to start a business in a neighborhood that has been freed of crime, oppressive regulation and ludicrous zoning.

Going further, they can ask that that freedom be extended until their neighborhood gets on its feet — enterprise zones, they use to call them. It makes no sense to “regulate” businesses that do not exist, that do not exist in part because of the regulations themselves.

In Indianapolis, here is what the Institute for Justice says it takes to start even a restaurant:

- As much as \$22,600 in fees for licenses, permits and registrations.
- The involvement of 14 different agencies.
- Seventeen in-person compliance appearances.
- Twenty-two forms.
- Ninety-two regulatory steps.

If you want to stand up and say that is necessary for the safety and well-being of the citizenry, you are some kind of comedian.

Assuming the will to control crime — a big assumption — alleviating regulatory costs and zoning prohibitions for neighborhoods like Martindale, Concord, the Westside and near Northside would allow those there with smarts and energy to own a business, particularly small grocery stores, restaurants, flower shops, greenhouses, hardware stores, etc. These define the character of a neighborhood. Again, government should not require permits to create jobs and services where there are no jobs or services.

Won't that be unfair to other more prosperous neighborhoods, prejudicial even?

Absolutely, but the others can fend for themselves, make their own plea for regulatory relief. It is a matter of urgency. Meridian-Kessler doesn't need more investment right now or a more effective police presence; Martindale and Concord, they do.

Purdue's Ethics Expert

(April 20) — We aren't experts here on the ethics of politics, although we grant that there may be such a thing. Politics and ethics seem too juxtaposed in the journalistic firmament for us to manage the intellectual span.

Andy Downs, however, is such an expert. He is the director of the Center for Indiana Politics at Purdue University Fort Wayne. The bright and affable Downs is routinely — reflexively, even — quoted by the mainstream media as the premier authority on Indiana political impropriety.

But the expertise is, as they say, skewed. The Democrat Party predictably falls just inside his ethical boundaries, more about which later. In short, if there is a news story questioning the ethics of a Republican, you can bet Andy Downs will be quoted recommending that the poor sap be put in the stocks.

So we were not surprised some years ago to read that Downs, being quoted as the state's ethics expert, could not bring himself to absolve a GOP legislator on the presumption of a corrupted vote. That was so even though the legislator waived his commission on a title insurance deal that he

dutifully reported, all of which was back in the news this week in connection with a trial over legislative links to casinos (you could have knocked us over with a feather).

Now, there's a lot to worry about these days but a legislator who openly conducted a title search for a regular customer is low on the list.

Indeed, the Center for Economic Accountability says that companies making more secretive campaign donations than that are four times more likely to get "economic development" tax breaks than those who do not, plus the subsidies are more than 60 percent larger on average.

And if Downs, the ethics expert, would drive the few blocks from his office to the Fort Wayne City Hall he would find the names of two dozen or more architects, engineers and lawyers who quietly gave to his mayor's reelection fund and then received municipal contracts (sometimes they had a "cousin" make the contribution.)

Did I mention that the mayor is a Democrat, who, incidentally, appoints all three members of the city's ethics commission, one of whom, the city attorney, he suddenly fired this week for undisclosed reasons?

That would seem to be grist for an ethic expert's mill.

On other matters, Downs could look up the legislative leadership on IndianaScorecard.org and compare their campaign donations with their votes (if he could figure out from where exactly the donations originated). And he could ask why the Speaker of the House needs to raise nearly a half million dollars for an easy reelection campaign. Or he could help our Margaret Menge dig into what is going on with Indiana voting machines.

Perhaps Downs would like to examine how the legislative campaign committees work, that is, why a donor cannot be certain where, how or by whom their donation will be used or who in a given session makes those decisions. And, considering the risk to election integrity, do we really need absentee balloting and why do some oppose tightening voter identification?

And what do Indiana governors do on those summer trips overseas when they say they are looking for jobs for us — really?

Finally, Downs could design polls that actually predict election outcomes. He missed the Trump phenomena by a mile (Downs might not know any Republicans), predicting that Ted Cruz would win 45 percent of the primary vote here and Trump 29 percent. In fact, Trump defeated Cruz so decisively in Indiana, 52.8 percent to 36.7 percent, that Cruz suspended his campaign and took himself out of the running nationally.

Downs, though, never has to take himself or his \$77,000 salary out of the running. And that of course is the mark of a true expert.

The ‘Envy Thesis’

“Proverbs in many languages agree that the greatest damage done by the envious man is to himself.” — Helmut Schoeck, “Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior”

(April 16) — A noted law professor said something outrageous last week, outrageous even in this age of daily outrages. She said that the politics of American blacks was motivated by unbridled envy.

Amy Wax, 69, of the University of Pennsylvania, says blacks harbor “resentment” over Western achievements, that is, those of whites. “I think there is just a tremendous amount of resentment and shame of non-Western peoples against Western peoples for Western peoples’ outsized achievements and contributions,” she said.

She described it as an “unholy brew” of envy.

Surely, the exposition of Dr. Wax, a woman of exceptional achievement from a family of immigrants, was necessarily compressed by the interview format. But her comments, as they stood, were an example of the all too common painting of groups with a single brush, and can be condemned for that reason. It is even more troublesome when someone presumes to know the motives of a single individual let alone an entire community.

And finally, it assumes that any of us is free of envy, the important question being whether we allow it to overrun our lives and poison our relationship with others.

In sum, Dr. Wax’s comments were based on an observation leading to a premise, one with which almost everyone I know would quarrel but one that can be tested and if found faulty dismissed.

Of course it would not only be Black politicians who insist on policies that hurt their constituencies. But the redistributionism disaster that is the Great Society is well documented. And then there are the demeaning and futile affirmative-action formulas kept in place for five decades now by the Democratic Party, for which blacks vote in near unanimity.

But where the puzzle falls off the table is at the local urban level. It is there that blacks have gained political representation or at least leverage and are most in charge of their own fate. As Thomas Sowell has said, racism isn’t dead but it is on life support, “Kept alive by politicians, race hustlers and people who get a sense of superiority by denouncing others as ‘racists.’”

Jackson, Mississippi, which is 82 percent Black and is represented by Black elected officials from bottom to top, has a crime rate higher than most undeveloped countries. Check out Baltimore or Philadelphia. There are parts of Hoosier Indianapolis with a higher murder rate than Capone’s Chicago.

How, then, do we explain Black politicians who insist that crime control be “equitable” in that the absolute number of arrests be comparable in all sectors of a city? Where crime is rampant, this makes public safety and what Americans consider normal life impossible.

Instead, we now have begun a string of Potemkin-like projects in our southeast quarter. These are feel-good projects (housing and retail) that resemble those in other quarters but have no market underpinning. Their business plans depend on continual shoring from quasi-official sources and a forever need to refinance.

That is so even though the city only a few years ago had to bulldoze a failed shopping center on

the south side built in 1969 with subsidies to mirror the one on the north side. It was testimony — or should have been — to the folly of such economic-development schemes.

For those who own private businesses, Black or Caucasian, are not stupid, and such faux development only squanders community hope and trust. Present or future, what start-up Black businesses need — inordinately — is relief from taxes and regulation, even if it means allowing white businesses similar relief.

Both white and Black families need to feel safe in their homes, to be able walk or drive to a nearby grocery store — to even have a nearby grocery store. But Black political leaders steadfastly oppose the policies that would make any of that possible.

Again, what is the explanation?

Try as I might, I cannot dismiss Amy Wax's contention entirely. Someone smarter will have to take that on. He or she, though, will have to grant that the policies pushed by today's Black political class seem designed to institutionalize envy, to first of all blame, shame or punish the white population, preferably by means of direct reparation.

In the few places where it is challenged at all, the debate is over whether this anti-white stance is justified by past injustice and slavery. Amy Wax is asking whether it is self-defeating as well. There should be answers to both questions.

Words That Have Failed Us

(April 11) — We keep a list of dead words, that is, words that have lost meaning through overuse, misapplication and a general inability to illumine.

I won't bother you with the full list but here is one example: We do not allow the use of "very."

Anyway, you get the idea. Regular readers will remember that last year we announced the demise of "hypocrisy," a perfectly innocent word of the most respectable Greek origin that this generation of politicians has rendered meaningless.

What you might not know is that there were earlier attempts to eliminate "hypocrisy." In fact,

in 1711 the British made it illegal. "The Occasional Conformity Act" outlawed the hypocrisy of taking Anglican sacraments for the purpose of holding public office, access to which was otherwise prohibited for non-Anglicans such as Congregationalists and Baptists.

Now, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has wiped out not only a single word but an entire class of words.

Previously, especially in its editorials and television monologues, American discourse was filled with what grammarians recognize as "modal verbs." These are verbs used to express modality (properties such as possibility, obligation, etc.)

They were used to tell others what they "should," "shall," "may," "might," "ought," "need," "could," "had better," and "must" do. They implied intellectual or moral superiority, that and they fed the delusion anyone actually cared what the so-called opinion-makers were saying.

The charade is over. For when the tanks began to roll, there was the realization, or rediscovery — suddenly and universally — that there are people in the world who do not behave as if we all are on a CRT picnic retreat. To say it another way, one day exhorting and shaming seemed a good strategy, the next day it did not.

An incident related by Jeff Benedict in his book "The Dynasty" will serve as the simplest of illustrations.

On a 2005 visit to Moscow, Bob Kraft of the New England Patriot and other American businessmen were granted a meeting with Vladimir Putin. The Russian president asked to see a Super Bowl championship ring that Kraft was wearing. When Putin was handed the ring, he expressed admiration and after the cameras turned away — whoosh — he put it in his pocket and left the room surrounded by heavy security.

Kraft, who valued the ring at about \$25,000, was apoplectic. He told friends that Putin had stolen his ring, saying something to the effect that Putin ought to have known its sentimental value, that he shouldn't have taken it and he had better return it. The State Department eventually

had to tell him it would be better if he considered the ring his gift to Putin.

Note all the modalities in that story? Pretty much a waste of breath, huh?

Kraft concluded as much and released the following statement: “President Putin, a great and knowledgeable sports fan, was clearly taken with (the ring’s) uniqueness. I decided to give him the ring as a symbol of the respect and admiration that I have for the Russian people and leadership.”

So here at The Indiana Policy Review we won’t be using modal verbs anymore or letting autocrats handle our jewelry.

Coulter in Bloomington

(April 4) — I don’t relish the castigation of a student editorial, having written some terrible ones as an undergraduate. Even so, the Friday offering from the editorial staff of the Indiana Daily Student deserves attention on a couple of levels.

First, it is the only in-person report of a campus speech by the columnist Ann Coulter. It was not covered by newsrooms of either the Daily Student or the Bloomington Herald-Times. There was some responsibility, then, to record the event for posterity.

But after reading the piece for the second and third time, I had to admit defeat. I have no idea what Coulter said at Whittenberger Auditorium last Friday night.

All I know is that the Daily Student staff and, one must assume, the faculty advisors on its board do not like Ann Coulter one whit. Generally, headlines give the reader only a glimpse into content. In this case, it served as an over-wrought substitute for the entire work:

“Ann Coulter Storms Out After Lying to IU Students for 75 Minutes.”

Again, the editorial is our only record of however many minutes she spoke. Coulter says it was 90, not 75. Whatever, it was unusual — at least for coverage of a speech — that there were no full quotations from the actual speaker, only

snippets to mark characterizations followed by denunciation.

Apparently, although we cannot be sure, Ms. Coulter made comments contrary to what is being taught at IU — horribly contrary if we can judge by the editorial tone. These comments, one by one, were labeled “lies” but L’Ami du Peuple of the French Revolution or the Soviet’s Izvestia may have been more circumspect in use of the word.

For calling someone a liar is something of a bright line in journalism, even concerning a public figure such as Ms. Coulter. It is one of the few defamations that is legally actionable — our second concern.

To write that someone is a liar you must be prepared to prove that what they said is false. The writers at the Daily Student, shielded at the moment by court interpretations of the First Amendment, made no such attempt, primarily referencing social media opinion. (Does Indiana University still have an English language research library with history books in it?)

The purported “lies” included what others might consider the unremarkable and historically grounded description of the French Revolution as “liberal” and the American one as “conservative.” Also, the editors call it a “lie” to suggest that our nation was founded on Christian values or that it was created as anything other than a slave state. Finally, it is a “lie” to say that crime has become a political issue.

What exactly did Ms. Coulter say about any of this? The Daily Student doesn’t tell us.

And back to the headline. Did the newspaper get it right? Coulter described the audience as “lively” but said there was no heckling and that she didn’t “storm out.” There were many questions from liberals, she says, but they were polite “until the large girl refused to let anyone else ask questions.”

That was 90 minutes into what was supposed to be a 60-minute event, according to Coulter, and the audience was bid a good night.

Whatever happened in Whittenberger Auditorium Friday night, if you are paying tuition to Indiana University, especially to its media

school, you should ask society's forgiveness and understanding.

Where Are All the People?

(April 1) — According to the most recent census figures my city gained only a few hundred people in 2021 through migration, perhaps a quarter of it from other countries. When you figure in natural population loss and screen for a solid middle-class citizenry we may be at stagnation levels.

This is so even though over the last decade our city has spent tens of millions of dollars (it is hard to get an exact figure) building or maintaining all sorts of things downtown. Promoters promised this would attract people — sports stadiums, convention centers, luxury hotels and apartment complexes, river walks, shopping complexes, plus attached parking garages galore.

By now you would think we would be shoulder to shoulder with happy urban dwellers. We are not. Most times of the day downtown feels more like an architectural exhibit than a metropolitan experience. And considering the fanciness of the surroundings, there has been a surprising number of turnovers in shops and office space.

But maybe it's just me. Maybe those few hundred new residents are just the tip of the demographic iceberg, the first of the shopping-mad yuppies arriving to help pay off those bonds and deferred taxes. Maybe when Covid subsides, the economic seeds will fully bloom. And I hear that the county population increased; maybe they came to be near the shopping and the fun.

But it's maybe, maybe, maybe, Nobody seems to know — that is, nobody with objective, independent assessment willing to speak up. The real estate folks tell us sales are great. The bankers say banking is robust. The eco-devo teams are boosterish. City officials are buoyed. Ribbon-cuttings are multiplying like topsy. Liquor sales are up.

Hmmm. A friend of this foundation, the economist Eric Schansberg, is in the habit of applying a three-question test to such discussions: Compared with what? At what cost?

On whose authority? So I asked a friend at City Hall if the data from traffic counters or a similar objective measurement were available for the last decade or so. He is looking into it.

Yet, it seems that if we are spending all those millions there should be demonstrable progress to even the most inexpert eye. That is especially true when you are using public funding mechanisms.

There should be a lot of new people here. There aren't.

It's almost as if there were sound reasons that little of this "development" is the result of free-market private investment — the kind based on people using their own money at their own risk on the informed expectation that there would be a descent return.

It's almost as if those in the private sector guessed that prospects here, however reasonable, would not justify those millions in concrete, rebar and attorney fees — all paid up front — that our city government volunteered. Nor did they see how increasing the future tax burden and reducing bonding capacity would help matters.

It's almost as if they guessed right.

Let the Yard Signs Bloom

(March 29) — A friend no longer gives to Indiana political campaigns. To be more specific, he no longer gives to the reelection campaigns of House Republicans stamped with party approval. The reasoning is logical, not ideological, and conforms to the realpolitik of a supermajority:

His representative doesn't need the money, having already been assured by the House Republican Campaign Committee (HRCC) of enough to fend off a primary challenge.

Analysis of voting records of the last six years shows that the representative isn't listening to him or his neighbors but rather to the Statehouse leadership and whomever pulls those strings.

Even in the case where his legislator happens to vote in line with our friend's interests that would be the case without the donation (see No. 1 and 2 above).

There are still reasons to give but they fall into the soft psycho-socio categories, i.e., the satisfaction of being with a winner, the sporting excitement of an election campaign or the simple obligation to help a friend in politics. Not everyone, however, can afford such luxuries.

In recent years the state GOP in choosing which candidates to help has abandoned political tactics for an ideological test. The party is known to withhold support from certain Republican candidates even though those candidates mount credible challenges to Democrats. The libertarian-leaning need not apply and Trump supporters are suspect.

And constitutional rights? The leadership is ambivalent. This foundation had to sue them to get the prohibition against multi-issue legislation addressed. Questioning the Indiana Collective Bargaining Act is verboten. Want to throw out your party chairman? You will watch as the purposefully vacant precinct chairs are filled with his supporters.

So, what happened?

What always happens, those who became established rigged the system. It doesn't necessarily mean the end of democracy, though, it's just a continuation of the chess game. We need to devise a new strategy.

Only we aren't. We are abiding the fraud pretending this is representative democracy. The late Jude Wanninksi of the Wall Street Journal described our situation as going into the voting booth hoping to choose a promised chicken but finding on the ballot only a rattle snake and a turkey vulture. We are forced to choose the vulture as being more like a chicken than a snake.

We thus suffer a political agnosia. We have the wrong focus. Critical issues go unaddressed. Indiana falls behind in the competition between the states, not the least of which involves first defining and then maintaining moral order.

A new strategy, if it forms, will see donors taking money that otherwise would be ineffectively absorbed by the HRCC and using it to directly challenge the wayward in primaries, including and especially those in leadership.

Until now, an incurious if not complicit media has made it difficult to sort this out. There are alternative informational tools, however, to fill in the coverage gaps and track voting records. As a result, recalcitrant positions may attract well-funded opposition across the full range of issues, throwing a few out of office and sharpening the populist senses of the rest.

We shall see, if not in this cycle perhaps in the next.

A Census Reality Check

(March 25) — A cover essay of The Indiana Policy Review some years ago featured a study entitled "The Nine States of Indiana." It described with various metrics the nine distinct economic regions of the state. Wouldn't you think that each would develop a different economic strategy — perhaps different even from city to city?

We haven't seen that. Indeed, the strategies look pretty much the same: old-fashioned Chamber of Commerce schmoozing to attract middling corporations that would have come here in any case and new "investment" attracted by promising up-front profits to cronies with financing that will fall on future generations, all sprinkled with assorted packages of state and federal subsidy.

That is the Regional Cities Initiative in a nutshell. A scholar of this foundation, a former economic aide to Mitch Daniels, dubbed it "press-release economics." Now we are looking at the results in the mid-term Census showing Indiana's population congregating in Indianapolis as the outstate cities stagnate or fail.

For 17 years now, one governor after another has rounded up all of the state's rent-seekers and constructed Potemkin villages here and there with reshuffled taxation, federal grants, Tax Increment Financing, bonding schemes, etc. They like to call it "development."

Maybe, but mostly for those who sell concrete and rebar, plus the politically connected law, engineering, real estate and architectural firms. They built it but too few came to justify the cost.

Check out the 2021-22 U.S. Census population map and see if you can find any indication that the tens of millions of dollars spent on Indiana's eco-devo strategy is panning out. That, please know, is the only statistic that matters — how many people are coming and how many are going. And don't let them tell you it's Covid's fault.

It is somebody's law that says scientific theories are rarely disproven, a new generation of scientists merely grows up not believing them. Something similar is true about economic-development projects. They don't fail, they just go bankrupt after everyone responsible has retired and left the state.

That thought occurred as a picture crossed my desk of the governor being fêted at this week's board meeting of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). This being the day after his disastrous veto of sexual reality, his handlers must have wanted to broadcast that the governor may be bad at biology but he knows his economics.

But he doesn't.

Our cities, our regions, will prosper not because someone clever in Indianapolis has put together a package of government-financed incentives. They will prosper because Hoosiers are more productive and hard-working — that and their government is kept out of their way in all regards, especially in taxation and regulation.

And that last is exactly what has not been happening. Jason Arp, in the upcoming issue of *The Indiana Policy Review*, writes about a "legislature in lockstep," where there has been a growing expectation that government is to have an expansive role in economic development here.

"It is an expectation vigorously promoted by the political class and reflected in our legislative data," Arp says. "This transfer of economic decision-making from entrepreneurs to bureaucrats is seen in the proliferation of bills to that effect, the expansion of the Indiana IEDC."

The head-counters at the Census Bureau are trying to tell us that isn't working. We should listen.

Understanding Holcomb

"This victory (Governor Holcomb's veto of a bill banning transgenders from playing on girls sports teams) belongs to the trans youth of Indiana, who deserve to live as their authentic selves and to play the sports they love, free from discrimination." — Katie Blair, *ACLU of Indiana*

(March 20) — We have solved one great mystery of political life — why officeholders don't care what we think — but we still are puzzled by another.

First, the solved one. In the last issue of the quarterly *Indiana Policy Review*, a former banker and systems analyst exposes a Statehouse racket that protects legislators from their own constituents. A caucus campaign commission gives them enough money to ward off primary challenges if they vote in line with leadership, the strings of which are in turn pulled by a shadowing private group.

Don't pretend to be surprised, and spare us the platitudes about them working for us. It is the nature of our time that the elite of our institutions work hard to shield themselves from accountability. Thus, university administrators, corporate CEOs and, yes, legislative leaders, strive to create a situation where alumni, stockholders, voters, etc., don't matter.

The Indiana Republican Party in supermajority has attained this inviable position. Their legislators don't need to go out among the hoi polloi. They merely show up at a cocktail party and collect lobbyists' checks with the understanding there will be a kickback to the caucus committee.

There's none of that nasty back-and-forth that you get knocking on doors asking support from a guy in a wife-beater who just spent \$100 filling his truck with gas and whose trash hasn't been picked up by the city for a month.

Mystery solved.

Now for the second one, the spontaneous wokeness of leadership. Why did every suit with a

title plaque on his desk suddenly coalesce on the same narrow set of bizarre social values?

Only a few years ago, if the owner of a pizza shop didn't want to cater an event, that was his business. And it would have struck many as odd for a governor to proudly establish a cabinet-level department to encourage a system of identity politics that makes no moral, political, economic or administrative sense — something with the incomprehensible title of Chief Equity, Inclusion and Opportunity Officer (CEIOO).

Nor would the state's largest newspaper treat as one side of a serious, honest "debate" the proposal to allow the sexual transitioned to compete in women's sports. And who gave Levi's, Nike and Coke the idea they should pontificate about any of this? And by the way, can there be even one African-American commercial actor who can't find work?

Coincidental with the first mystery, even the crudest polling must tell them that the average Hoosier is fed up with this guff. How exactly do they think it is progress to define diversity by something as irrelevant as melanin count or to insist that women high-jumpers can have penises?

They aren't saying.

For an answer, we had to turn to Martin Gurri, a former CIA analyst writing in *City Journal*. Gurri introduces his argument by noting that anything goes these days, so much so that the National Archives places warning labels on the Constitution, "because reading it may induce unpleasant sensations in some identity groups."

He goes on to explain, as ironic as it may sound, that even as the elites achieved the power to install such idiocy they became insecure about it, pathetically so.

Gurri says that the older "institutional types" realized somewhat suddenly that we were laughing at them. Wokeness offered a way out of the room. They could align with that younger, callow generation that is forever demanding perfect social "change" and "justice."

"Stripped of the splendor of their titles, panicky elites have cast about for some principle

that will allow them to maintain their distance from the public," he says. "They could reorganize society on woke values, with themselves in charge as high commissioners of purity. They could trade institutional authority for social control. With uneven measures of sincerity and cynicism, the cult of identity could be appropriated by power."

Now that we understand, why don't we feel any better?

GOP's Diversity Bandwagon

(March 3) — My local GOP chairman is jumping on Gov. Eric Holcomb's "diversity" bandwagon. A meeting this weekend at GOP headquarters here featured two young Republican people of color (POC) telling us what we should be doing to attract more of them. It is a great idea — and futile.

A reporter left the meeting with the idea that the GOP is "rebranding." Does that mean sifting the political class for people of color who dress and talk like Eric Holcomb and Suzanne Crouch — gender appropriate, of course, and better looking? If so, you should doubt that the numbers from such a strategy will tip any election, which, if we can put aside moral posturing, is the job of a political party.

In any case, there are better ideas. They require the Indiana GOP to stand on its platform, specifically the planks that encourage and reward individual effort and accountability. That separates it from the other political party, the one pandering to racial identity.

The difference is becoming more blurred. In this session of the Legislature, the GOP leadership did its best to confuse what had been any city's choice to eliminate its tax on business equipment, a progressive tax if there ever was one. In my city, alas, the GOP-controlled council squashed any hope of ever repealing the tax.

So, in the context of this discussion and without calling your uncle the CPA, what does that mean?

Consider that the tax and cost of equipment is a major factor in a business's decision where and when to relocate.

And consider that the suitable areas with the greatest number of Black property owners are characterized by low property values because of (you fill in the blank).

It is a good guess, then, that if the tax on business equipment could be removed, such property would have an advantage, on net and citywide, in attracting new industry and jobs.

Are the diversity evangelists passionate about spreading that word? Does the Statehouse

leadership understand the economic barriers government places before people of color or, for that matter, anyone?

And while we are on the general topic, would the POC troupe be willing to go from city to city arguing that in keeping with historic GOP principles all racial and sexual preference in government jobs and contracts be eliminated from municipal codes?

Whatever, there were free donuts. — *tcl*



"The Battle of Cowpens," painted by William Ranney in 1845, shows an unnamed patriot (far left) saving the life of Col. William Washington.