

TODAY'S VERSE

Jeremiah 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.



FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own.

What makes Evan Castor smile? "Playing basketball, and anything like that, sports especially," said the then 14-year-old, a then eighth-grader at Noblesville West Middle School. He was found in 2019 at the Boys & Girls Club of Noblesville Basketball Spectacular at Noblesville High School. Today's feature is a look back at one of The Times' previous Faces of Hamilton County. Evan, who sported a No. 7 blue and white jersey, played on the seventh- and eighth-grade Championship team sponsored by Smith's Jewelers and coached by his dad Glen Castor (who'll celebrate his birthday this Saturday), Stacey White and Jim Irwin. His team beat Taylored Systems to win the seventh- and eighth-grade boys championship game. Why Club basketball league? "It's just a lot of fun, especially in this league this year....I got a couple of my friends together, and our dads coached." The son of Glen and Mary Castor, he also played baseball at NWMS and played football at NHS, where he is a senior expected to graduate June 6, 2023. What else? "When I'm not in school, I'm usually outside running bikes around with my friends or just going and finding a court to play on." The Boys & Girls Club of Noblesville basketball team members are now selling \$5 tickets for a Club Pancake Breakfast hosted by Kiwanis Clubs of Noblesville from 8 a.m. to noon Feb. 11 at the Club's Community Center. This year's Basketball Spectacular is March 10 at the Community Center.

And Another Few Things...

1. Rokita Statement

Yesterday, the Office of Attorney General Todd Rokita released the following statement on ESG House Bill:

"We are encouraged by the General Assembly's willingness to help with the fight against woke investment managers that fail to fulfill their fiduciary duty. House Bill 1008 punches ahead to protect our state's investments by codifying INPRS's policy of always placing financial returns above the ever-changing whims of climate change activists and leftist corporate policies. "This bill still needs real legal teeth to hold any bite against the massive asset managers who handle a majority of the world's wealth. It requires a real law enforcement mechanism which takes advantage of the court system and reinforces the full applicability of our consumer and anti-trust laws to the bill's language. We are actively battling to protect investors against ESG practices and policies, including three investigations into the three largest managers - BlackRock, Vanguard and State Street."

2. Chamber Summit

Work-based learning is now a key component in building and diversifying Indiana's talent pipeline, which is critical to moving the state forward. Work and Learn Indiana's inaugural Work-Based Learning IMPACT Summit, hosted on Feb. 21 at the Ritz Charles in Carmel, will serve as a convening of best practices in this talent area and spur the sharing of ideas toward growth and partnership within workforce and education. In addition to celebrating promising models, the summit's key outcomes are to help imagine and innovate solutions toward future collaboration and inspire new partnerships to operationalize these practices. Organizers believe that helping students gain relevant exposure to the world of work reinforces classroom learning and puts them on a path to success. Tickets for the entire summit are \$100 each - and tickets for the award lunch only are \$50 each. Both can be purchased at workandlearnindiana.com/impact-awards For more information about Work and Learn Indiana, visit workandlearnindiana.com or call (317) 264-6852

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The Times photo courtesy of Betsy Reason

Jackie Prater (left) checks out customers at Wilson Farm Market in Arcadia, which offers all kinds of goodies, including fried pies and cinnamon rolls, at the farm market booth open through Sunday at the Indianapolis Home Show, today through Sunday at the Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center in Indianapolis.

Party at Lacy Building, Seed Swap, Sneaker Convention, Savor Noblesville and More



BETSY REASON The Times Editor

Attend an all-ages benefit with live music at The Lacy Building in downtown Noblesville, and find more live music at an array of venues, take in a comedy

show, visit the Indianapolis Home Show, take a pony ride, experience a seed swap and a sneaker convention and more in our list of 25 things to do this weekend and beyond:

- 1. Enjoy live music with Jason Salyers at 7 p.m. today, Craig Thurston on Feb. 3 and Tay Bronson on Feb. 4 at Primeval Brewing in downtown Noblesville.
2. Hear live music with My Yellow Rickshaw from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. today at 1205 Distillery North in Westfield.
3. Experience The 78's live music at 7 p.m. today at The Boathouse Kitchen & Swan Dive in Cicero.
4. Come party at The Lacy Building on Logan Street on the north side of the Hamilton County Courthouse Square in downtown Noblesville with all

ages welcome for DitchWeed at The Lacy, 6:30 p.m. today and music by Ditchweed Acoustic Project, with donation items to Living Water Outreach.

- 5. Head south for decorating ideas while discovering the latest trends, and tour the Centerpiece Home, created by Custom Container Builders with shipping containers, with pool and pool house made of containers, meet design expert Mina Starslak on Saturday, explore four mini barns being transformed into backyard bungalows and hundreds of vendors at the Indianapolis Home Show, today through Sunday at the Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center in Indianapolis.
6. Check out the comedians at

See BETSY Page A6

Franciscan Health Returns to Carmel Marathon for 10th Year as Presenting Sponsor

CRRG Events announced yesterday that Franciscan Health will return to the Carmel Marathon Weekend in a multiyear agreement. The long-standing partnership, first activated in 2014, will again recognize the full marathon distance as the Carmel Marathon Presented by Franciscan Health.

In addition to medical support, Franciscan Health will provide online training resources for race participants in the lead-up to this year's 13th annual event held on April 8 in Carmel.

Franciscan Health is a 12-hospital health system which includes clinics, home health services and doctors serving Indiana and Illinois. Franciscan Health Carmel, a three-story hospital along the marathon course, includes growing primary care services, surgical services, neuroscience services, an outpatient infusion clinic, imaging and labs.

In addition, the Franciscan

See MARATHON Page A6

Two New Courtrooms Open in Hamilton County

Two new courtrooms opened in the Hamilton County Judicial Center on Tuesday, January 24th. The new courtrooms will be used by Magistrates Chad Hill and Erin Weaver. Magistrates work for and with elected judges to handle a wide variety of cases, both civil and criminal.

"The county continues to grow and continues to have more and more cases filed every year," says Superior Court 5 Judge David Najjar.

"We simply needed more



Judge David Najjar

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HONEST HOOSIER

Every day across this country, new laws and ordinances are proposed. How come no one talks much about doing away with laws we don't need anymore? Kind of like taxes, huh!



TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

If you're on medications from multiple doctors, make sure each one knows your entire list. Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Times and online at www.thetimes24-7.com.



TODAY'S QUOTE

"Don't only practice your art, but force your way into its secrets."

- Ludwig van Beethoven

TODAY'S JOKE

Why should you stock up on yeast? So you can make some dough!

OBITUARIES

Evelyn "Joan" Ellis

The Times appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank ANTHONY FISHER for subscribing!



Jensen Earns Endorsements from Community Leaders Please Go Away!

More than 20 Noblesville and Hamilton County community leaders have endorsed incumbent Chris Jensen for reelection as Mayor of Noblesville.



Mayor Chris Jensen

"I am thrilled to accept these endorsements and I am honored by their trust and support," said Mayor Jensen.

"We have made tremendous progress over the last 3 years, but we can't take our foot off the gas. We are going to continue to protect our authentic downtown, invest in our first responders and infrastructure, and embrace the White River as the asset that it is."

The list of endorsements includes such leaders as Speaker of the House Todd Huston, State Senator Scott Baldwin, State Representative Chuck Goodrich, Hamilton County Prosecutor Greg Garrison, and Mario Massillamany,

Chairman of the Hamilton County Republican Party.

Also included in the campaign's first list of announced endorsements are members of the Noblesville City Council, the Hamilton County Council, the Hamilton County Commission, and the Hamilton County Republican Committee.

Those endorsements include:

- Ken Alexander, Hamilton County Councilor

- Christine Altman, Hamilton County Commissioner
- Brian Ayer, Noblesville City Councilor
- Teresa Ayers, County Republican Party Vice Chairman
- Scott Baldwin, State Senator
- Brad Beaver, Hamilton County Councilor
- Mark Boice, Noblesville City Councilor
- Raju Chinthala, County Republican Party Treasurer
- Greg Garrison, Hamilton County Prosecutor
- Chuck Goodrich, State Representative
- Mike Davis, Noblesville City Councilor
- Todd Huston, Speaker of the Indiana House
- Sue Maki, Hamilton County Councilor
- Amy Massillamany, Hamilton County Councilor
- Mario Massillamany, County Republican Party Chairman
- Steven Nation, Hamilton County Councilor
- Greg O'Connor, Noblesville City Councilor
- Darren Peterson, Noblesville City Councilor
- Pete Schwartz, Noblesville City Councilor
- Beth Sheller, County Republican Party Secretary
- Aaron Smith, Noblesville City Councilor
- Megan Wiles, Noblesville City Councilor

County Republican Party Chairman

"With the support of these leaders and so many others, I will continue to work every day to improve our city. As I campaign and talk to constituents, I hope to earn their votes this May and November," Mayor Jensen added.

For more information about Mayor Chris Jensen, visit JensenForNoblesville.com



DICK WOLFSIE
Life in a Nutshell

My wife is getting ready for our upcoming vacation. She has already packed and unpacked and packed again. She practices packing because she wants to be sure everything fits in her suitcase. I practice putting on my pants because I want to be sure there will be room for the waistband to expand after I indulge in the all-you-can-eat buffets on the cruise.

I'm under the assumption I am going with Mary Ellen on this trip, but there is not a great deal of evidence to support this. My advice and input has not been requested, so I don't want to jump to any conclusions that could lead to disappointment.

During all her planning she did exhaustive research by reading travel brochures and doing endless web searches to secure the best plane fares. She even made a few dinner reservations for when we are off the ship. In fact, she already checked the menu at one restaurant, and she knows what she wants for dinner in three weeks. She made a great salad dressing choice.

Mary Ellen told me that this trip may be a bit pricey, but it would be the perfect way to celebrate the 50th. This confused me because I know it's not her 50th birthday. We celebrated that four different times about 20 years ago. And I am almost positive it's our 43rd anniversary coming up, so it's obviously just a ploy to get me to agree to splurge on this trip. But just to be sure, I'm going to run the numbers again.

Meanwhile, you should

see what our house looks like. Books, charts, maps, and travel magazines are all strewn about the place. The last time I saw her this obsessed with a vacation was years ago when we went to Ireland. There were travel posters in every room, shamrocks pasted on the fridge and Irish music blasting from the portable CD player. Mary Ellen even started calling our beagle Barney instead of Barney, which might have confused him, but he was getting so many corned beef leftovers, he let it slide.

I finally questioned her detailed planning. I was concerned that this much preparation might make the trip seem less spontaneous.

"Dick, when you enter a new country, it's important to have a plan for what to do—a strategy.

"Yes, I agree if you are invading, but not if you are vacationing."

The other day she was at the kitchen sink and I walked behind her and gave her a little smooch on the back of her neck. "Not now," she said, "I'm packing."

"Mary Ellen, I think you are getting rusty with the excuses. What happened to 'I have a headache'?"

"Dick, I am now re-packing in my head, thinking about how to position my shoes, where to stuff my bathing suit and how to layer in my blouses. I want everything to be perfect. I don't like to leave anything to the last minute. When do you plan to pack?"

"The week before our 50th anniversary."

By the way, after reading this you probably are curious to know where we are going on this trip. I promise you that once Mary Ellen tells me, you'll be the first to know.

Dick Wolfsie spent his career sharing his humor, stories and video essays on television, radio and in newspapers. His columns appear weekly in The Times of Noblesville. E-mail Dick at Wolfsie@aol.com.

Local Students Make President's, Dean's Lists at Miami University

Miami University students who are ranked in the top three percent of undergraduate students within each division for the fall semester 2022-23 have been named to the President's list recognizing academic excellence.

Among those students who earned this prestigious honor are local students:

- Josie Cruzan of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology
- Meghan Koers of Indianapolis, earning a B.A. in Architecture in Architecture
- Kyle Boatman of Fishers, earning a B.A. in Architecture in Architecture
- Addie Mitchell of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, Premedical Studies
- Ashleigh DeLong of Noblesville, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, Premedical Studies
- Lydia Copeland of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts, M.S. in Kinesiology and Health in Chemistry, Premedical Studies, Kinesiology and Health
- Andrew Finkelmeier of Fishers, earning a Bachelor of Science in Games + Simulation
- Cyle Ginsberg of Westfield, earning a A.B. International Studies, Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, Economics
- Lily Cota of Carmel, earning a A.B. International Studies, Certificate in International Studies, Global Readiness
- Nikki Rose Lescano of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Kinesiology & Health in Kinesiology, Premedical Studies
- Maddie Stookey of Fishers, earning a B.S. in Kin, Nutr & Health in Kinesiology, Premedical Studies
- Abbie Harris of Indianapolis, earning a B.S. in Kin, Nutr & Health, Bachelor of Arts in Kinesiology, Psychology
- Grace Lappin of Carmel, earning a B.S. in

Business in Marketing

- Olivia Castor of Fishers, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Microbiology, Premedical Studies
- Katelyn Wang of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology, Premedical Studies
- Anna Thorp of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Nursing in Nursing
- Ashley Springer of Fishers, earning a B.S. in Nursing in Nursing
- Madeline Shell of Fishers, earning a B.S. in Nursing in Nursing
- Caroline Paris of Westfield, earning a B.S. in Kinesiology & Health in Nutrition
- Julia Bohn of Westfield, earning a B.S. in Education in Primary Education PK-5
- MacKenna Mitchell of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Kat Pikus of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Neuroscience
- Ava Hunt of Fishers, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration
- Jenna Lindeman of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Science in Speech Path & Audiology
- Jillian Flinta of Fishers, earning a Bachelor of Science in Speech Path & Audiology
- Anna MacLafferty of Fishers, earning a B.S. in Business in Supply Chain & Operations Mgmt
- Luke Croner of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Zoology, Premedical Studies

Students who are ranked in the top twenty percent of undergraduate students within each division for the fall semester 2022-23 were named to the Dean's list recognizing academic excellence. Local students receiving this recognition include:

- Anna Martin of Arcadia, earning a B.A. in Architecture in Architecture
- Victoria Simich of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art
- Audrey Fitzgerald of Fishers, earning a BA Arts Mgmt & Arts Entrshi in

Arts Management & Arts Entrepr, Fashion

- Vivian Kraabel of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Biochemistry, Premedical Studies
- Elise Wiggers of Fishers, earning a Bachelor of Science in Biology
- Lizzie Nichols of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science in Biology, Biology
- Anna Shea of Indianapolis, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, Premedical Studies
- Owen Dossett of Westfield, earning a B.S. in Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering, Data Science and Statistics
- Gretchen Day of Fishers, earning a B.S. in Engineering in Chemical Engineering
- Danny Kirk of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Engineering in Computer Engineering
- Ian Watson of Westfield, earning a Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Statistics
- Ally Britton-Heitz of Westfield, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Politics, Russian, East Eur & Eurasian St
- Ben Gladden of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Business in Finance
- Tyler Knapp of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Business in Finance
- Nick Fox of Indianapolis, earning a B.S. in Business in Finance
- Ashlyn Underhill of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Business in Human Capital Mgmt & Leadership
- MariClaire Warnock of Indianapolis, earning a B.S. in Business in Human Capital Mgmt & Leadership, Entrepreneurship
- Katie Watson of Indianapolis, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Individualized Studies
- Angel Luo of Carmel, earning a BA Interactive Media Studies, B.S. in Business in Interactive Media Studies, Marketing
- Libby Lefevre of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Kin, Nutr & Health in

Kinesiology

- Emily Clevenger of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Business in Marketing
- Parker Miller of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Business in Marketing
- Mya Hughes of Sheridan, earning a B.S. in Business in Marketing
- Matt Davis of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Business in Marketing
- Davia Poythress of Fishers, earning a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics & Statistics
- Charlotte Melby of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Science, B.S. in Education in Mathematics, Integrated Mathematics Edu
- Anastasia Damick of Noblesville, earning a Bachelor of Music in Music Education, Music Performance
- Alex Cline of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Nursing in Nursing
- Riley Maher of Fishers, earning a B.S. in Nursing in Nursing
- Lauren Harvey of Westfield, earning a B.S. in Nursing in Nursing
- Emersen Kolb of Fishers, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
- Annie Christie of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Sociology
- Zoe Mervis of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Kirsten Cobb of Westfield, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Emily Long of Carmel, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Elliott Linneweber of Indianapolis, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Kate Robinson of Indianapolis, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health, Gerontology
- Katie Folta of Fishers, earning a B.S. in Kinesiology & Health, M.S. Kin, Nutrition & Health in Public Health, Kinesiology, Nutrition & Health
- Will Brauer of Carmel, earning a B.S. in Business in Supply Chain & Operations Mgmt



Photo courtesy of HHSC

HHMS 6th Boys Basketball Win Husky Invite 2nd Year Straight
Hamilton Heights 6th grade Boys Basketball team took the top spot at Saturday's Husky Invite for the second year in a row. It was the smothering defense the boys played that enabled them to beat Western, for the second time in a week, 48-32! Luke Sullivan with 15 points and Jade Dean with 9, led the Huskies charge! All Husky players saw court action, including Gavin Luchessi, making an impact for his first appearance of the season by scoring 8 points! In the Championship game the Huskies came out strong with their swarming defense and beat the Carmel Greyhounds 37-28! Sullivan led the way with 15 points and Dean with 8 helping to lead the team to a win! All players gave their all this year as the Husky 6A Team finished 8-5 and the Husky 6B team finished 7-4! Special thanks to the coaches, all the players for their hard work and dedication and to the faithful supporters!

TheTimes24-7.com

<p>2914 Fordham Lane Indianapolis • \$99,900</p> <p>PENDING</p> <p>Attention investors! This condo is ready for your expertise. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, eat-in kitchen, laundry on main level, brick hearth fireplace in family room, great patio, assigned covered parking. BLC#21897547</p>	<p>26 Forest Bay Lane Cicero • \$695,000</p> <p>NEW LISTING!</p> <p>Stately and well maintained brick 2-story, 2.24 acres with wooded backyard. 3 BR, 3 full and 2 1/2 baths, huge finished basement, 3-car garage, screened porch, access to lake. BLC#21896185</p>
<p>1999 N Harbour Drive Noblesville • \$379,900</p> <p>NEW PRICE!</p> <p>Pristine home situated in the heart of North Harbour on over half an acre (.65). Features include 4 BR, 2.5 BA and a stunning 22x15 sunroom. Lovely view of Harbour Trees Golf Course #7 across the street. BLC#21893242</p>	<p>1350 S 9th Street Noblesville • \$329,900</p> <p>SOLD!</p> <p>Stunning rehab in downtown Noblesville with over 2,200 sq ft features 4 BR, 2 BA, finished basement, master bath with en-suite and more! BLC#21879748</p>

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Kenny Talks Boilermaker Hoops, NFL Draft

It's such an oft-used phrase, "defense wins championships," that it's almost become a sports cliché.

But part of Purdue's downfall in the NCAA basketball tournament a year ago was having a variety of offensive weapons who didn't always want to guard their man.

That is not the problem so far this season for the Boilermakers, whose improvement in the defensive rankings has at least one prominent college basketball writer liking their chances to win the national championship.

Borrowing a concept from the late Sports Illustrated writer Grant Wahl, Seth Davis issued his "Magic Eight" teams that have the best chance at a national title. Davis notes that in the seven years Wahl wrote his "Magic Eight" column, only the 2003 Syracuse national champions overcame his criteria.

Davis' main rule was a school had to be ranked in the top 30 in adjusted defensive efficiency on KenPom.com. Davis notes that no NCAA champion during the past 11 years was ranked lower than 22nd. Kansas was 17th on its way to the 2021-22 title.

Davis' "Magic Eight" for 2022-23 are Purdue, Alabama, Houston, Kansas, TCU, Texas, UCLA and Virginia.

"In mid-February last season, I wrote that the Boilermakers, who were

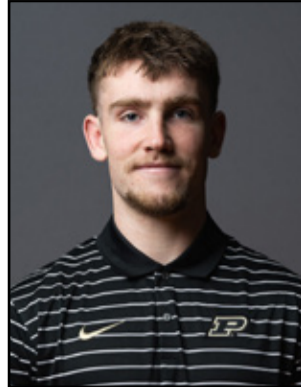


KEN THOMPSON
Columnist

No. 5 in the AP poll, had a fatal flaw: their defense," Davis wrote for TheAthletic.com. "At the time, they were ranked 102nd in defensive efficiency on KenPom. Now they are 16th. "The main reason, of course, is Zach Edey, but while the Big Maple is putting up monster numbers, his best asset may be his passing. You can't defend Edey with single coverage, and yet no team has two defenders big enough to keep him from passing out of double teams. Throw in his savvy decision-making, and you understand why Purdue is ranked No. 4 in the country in offensive efficiency and has lost just one game (by a single point) all season."

Davis doubled down on the Boilermakers Wednesday during a discussion among The Athletic's college basketball writers on their choice to win the national title.

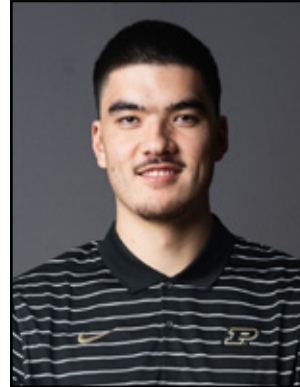
"Sometimes we get too stuck to conventions and history, and in Purdue's case both those things make me feel like Charlie Brown trying to kick



Braden Smith

that field goal with Lucy holding. (Or Brett Maher trying to kick a PAT. Too soon?) One of those conventions is that you need to have great guard play to win a national championship. Well guess what — Purdue has that. And I'm not just talking about those fearless freshmen Braden Smith and Fletcher Loyer. I'm talking about the Big Maple himself. He's not a playmaking point guard, but Zach Edey is expert at recognizing and passing out of double teams. You simply cannot guard this man one on one, but he's so good at reading the defensive help that he almost always makes the correct pass. And of course, it's easier for him because he's always passing over smaller defenders.

"As a team, Purdue is making just 32.6 percent from 3, and while that seems very low, Smith is a 44.6 percent 3-point shooter, and three other Boilermakers are 35 percent or higher. They don't need to be great at this part of the game.



Zach Edey

They just need to be good enough, which clearly they are."

Purdue's rise up the defensive rankings was aided by a rare performance on a Big Ten opponent's home court. Alan Karpick, publisher of GoldandBlack.com and a Purdue athletics historian, notes that the Boilermakers' 61-39 victory inside Williams Arena was the lowest point production by a conference rival on its home court since Jan. 7, 1944.

That night, Purdue held Chicago to 27 points in a 43-point victory against the Maroons. Chicago withdrew from Big Ten athletic competition two years later.

The Journal and Courier noted in its Jan. 8, 1944 edition that the victory snapped a four-game losing streak for Purdue. It also was the 46th loss in 47 games for Chicago. At least the Maroons led 2-0. Purdue's Chuck Haag nearly outscored Chicago on his own, putting up 21 points.

Minnesota's 39 points was its lowest total since

the 1950-51 season. The Gophers' 12 first-half points were the fewest allowed in any half by a Big Ten opponent in the league's 128-year history. The 12 points allowed matched the Purdue school record as well, last accomplished against UNC-Wilmington on Nov. 21, 2012.

Colts will get their QB?

Mel Kiper Jr.'s first mock NFL Draft of 2023 presents an interesting scenario for the Indianapolis Colts.

Kiper predicts the Chicago Bears keeping the No. 1 overall pick and selecting Georgia defensive tackle Jalen Carter. If so, that would assure the Colts would get probably the No. 2 quarterback in the draft.

That would be 2021 Heisman Trophy winner Bryce Young of Alabama, since Kiper projects Ohio State's C.J. Stroud going off the board to Houston at No. 2.

"There's a clear gap after the top three passers in this class, and the Colts don't necessarily have to trade up to get one of them," Kiper writes.

"In this scenario, they could take Young, a quick processor with an elite feel for the pocket and how to move around and locate his target. The 2021 Heisman Trophy doesn't have a big frame, which some NFL scouts will downgrade him for because there aren't many starting quarterbacks under 200 pounds. I love his tape, though, and I'd be willing to bet on his talent. Spread out the offense and

watch him throw darts to Michael Pittman Jr. and Alec Pierce."

Noteworthy
Chris Forman, Purdue's associate strategic communications director for men's basketball, notes that Zach Edey is approaching single-season numbers posted by a Hall of Fame center.

Based on a 35-game schedule, Purdue's 7-4 junior center is on pace for 751 points, 460 rebounds and 82 blocked shots. In his research of the Sports-Reference database, Forman found only one player with 750 points, 450 rebounds and 75 blocks in a season: Navy's David Robinson (796-455-207). Since the 1992-93 season, no player has even reached 700-400-75. ...

Edey was selected to The Sporting News' midseason All-America first team last week. The Sporting News is one of four organizations used to determine consensus All-America status.

The front-runner for National Player of the Year, Edey is averaging 21.5 points and 13.2 rebounds. Notably, Edey has 43 blocked shots to just 29 fouls in 19 games. His 16 double-doubles are one behind St. John's Joel Soriano for the national lead.

Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.

Registration Opens for the Ag Women Engage Conference

The 2023 Ag Women Engage Conference (formerly known as the Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference) begins on Feb. 22 at the new Terre Haute Convention Center. The conference includes two days of guest speakers, networking opportunities and breakout sessions addressing personal, family and farm issues affecting women, families and farm businesses.

Brenda Mack, a fourth-generation small crop producer and associate professor in the Department of Social Work at Bemidji State University, will present a keynote session on building and strengthening resiliency for those in agriculture.

Educational sessions throughout the two days will cover farm succession planning, marketing, new technologies, financial strategies, mental health resources, home food vendor guidelines and more.

"The Ag Women Engage Conference continues the networking and professional development tradition set by the Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference. It's a new name, but the

same fantastic education and conversations will be taking place," said Elysia Rodgers, Purdue Extension - Dekalb County director, agriculture and natural resources educator, and conference organizer.

Youth in grades eight through 12 and undergraduates are invited to attend the Young Ladies in Agriculture Forum, taking place in tandem with the AWE Conference on Feb. 22 from 1-8 p.m. ET. Topics include financial strategies, building a strong resume and networking in the agriculture industry.

A pre-conference session, "Becoming the Employer of Choice," is scheduled for Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The human resource management curriculum is geared for farm managers and owners looking to improve their human resource management skills.

The cost for the pre-conference session is \$50. Conference registration is \$125. Register by Feb. 10 online. The Young Ladies in Agriculture Forum cost is \$20, with registration online. For accommodation or more information, contact Rodgers at (260) 925-2562 or eberry@purdue.edu.

Conductor Matthew Halls to Lead the ISO and Pianist Joyce Yang

Pianist Joyce Yang's wondrous poetic style is ideally suited for the brooding darkness of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24. Matthew Halls conducts Strauss' symphonic poem Don Juan along with Beethoven's short, spirited, yet compelling Eighth Symphony.

Rounding out the program is Brink by Irish composer Donnacha Dennehy. This work was commissioned by the ISO and it responds to the work of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony. This will be the world premiere of Brink.

Dennehy wrote, "One thing that draws me to Beethoven is the way he takes an idea to the brink, the way something initially innocuous can take on more and more ramifications as the work proceeds. During the early days of the pandemic, it also felt as if we were being collectively taken to the brink, especially for those of us living in America. That feeling drives the propulsive forward energy of this work."

Dennehy will speak before the Friday performance at Words on Music, which begins at 7:10 in the theatre. Admission to Words on Music is included with the ticket.

Buy tickets now at indianapolisymphony.org/event/strauss-mozart-beethoven-8/ Performances begin at 11 a.m. Feb. 2; 8 p.m. Feb. 3; and 5:30 p.m. Feb. 4.

For more information regarding the policies of the Hilbert Circle Theatre, visit indianapolisymphony.org

About Matthew Halls: Mathew Halls was named Chief Conductor-designate of Finland's Tampere Philharmonic in September 2022. He returned to Tampere last fall to conduct Bruckner's Seventh Symphony, before debuting with the Orchestre de chambre de Paris and Minnesota Orchestra, and continuing long-standing partnerships with the Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, Houston Symphony, and Indianapolis Symphony.

Read more about Matthew Halls by visiting schwalbeandpartners.com/matthew-halls-conductor

About Joyce Yang: Joyce Yang came to international attention in 2005 when she won the silver medal at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The youngest contestant at 19 years old, she took home two additional awards: Best Performance of Chamber Music (with the Takacs Quartet) and Best Performance of a New Work.

In 2006 Yang made her celebrated New York Philharmonic debut alongside Lorin Maazel at Avery Fisher Hall along with the orchestra's tour of Asia, making a triumphant return to her hometown of Seoul, South Korea. Yang's subsequent appearances with the New York Philharmonic have included opening night of the 2008 Leonard Bernstein Festival—an appearance made at the request of Maazel in his final season as music director. The New York Times pronounced her performance in Bernstein's

The Age of Anxiety a "knockout." Read more about Joyce Yang at pianistjoyceyang.com/about

About the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra (ISO):

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, at home and thriving in the heart of Indianapolis, offers an exceptional artistic and musical experience. The orchestra is open to all and dedicated to creating an inclusive and innovative experiential environment that is inspiring, educational, and welcoming.

The ISO celebrates historically beloved performances while engaging audiences by introducing new voices through programming including the DeHaan Classical Series, the Printing Partners Pops Series, the holiday traditions of AES Indiana Yuletide Celebration and the popular Film Series presented by Bank of America.

For more information, visit indianapolisymphony.org

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More Than 50 Groups to Host Writing Workshops, Author Talks for Indiana Authors Awards Programs

Fifty-two organizations in more than 30 cities across the state will host Indiana authors during 2023 as part of a statewide speakers program and writing workshop program offered through the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards. Category winners and shortlisted authors from the 2022 awards season will visit communities virtually and in-person to provide readings and discussions.

Indiana Humanities, the engine behind the Indiana Authors Awards, selected the hosts and provides support for award-winning Indiana authors to travel the state to speak to public audiences. The programs, open to public libraries, schools, churches, museums, community centers and other nonprofit organizations, are funded through the support of Glick Philanthropies.

"We are excited to continue offering Hoosiers with opportunities to meet and connect with Indiana's most talented authors," said Megan Telligman, director of programs at Indiana Humanities.

"Thanks to continued support from Glick Philanthropies, more communities will have access to engage with literature written about and inspired by our state, which we hope inspires meaningful conversations."

Organizations hosting author talks are:

- Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne (Author: Angela Jackson-Brown)
- AMB Foundation, Evansville (Author: Tamara Winfrey Harris)
- Center for Inquiry 2, Indianapolis (Author: Helen Frost)
- Center for Inquiry 70, Indianapolis (Author: Kim Howard)
- Clear Creek Elementary School, Bloomington (Author: Kim Howard)
- Crown Point Community Library, Crown Point (Author: Jim Madison)
- Franklin College, Franklin (Author: Angela Jackson-Brown)
- Heartland Society of Women Writers, Indianapolis (Author: Marianne Boruch)
- Highland Arts Council, Highland (Author: Michael Martone)
- Highland High School, Highland (Author: Paul Allor)
- Impact Academy, Indianapolis (Author: John David Anderson)
- Indiana State Library, Indianapolis (Author: John David Anderson)
- Indy Reads, Indianapolis (Author: Tamara Winfrey Harris)
- LaGrange County Arts, LaGrange (Author: Judith Roth)
- Liberty Elementary School, Liberty (Author: John David Anderson)
- Maple Seeds Preschool Co-op, Indianapolis (Author: Rebecca Mullin)
- Marquette Park Playground Committee, Gary (Author: Kenneth Kraegel)
- Morrison-Reeves Library, Richmond (Author: Susan Neville)
- MSD of Wayne Township, Indianapolis (Author: Rebecca Mullin)
- Paragon Elementary School, Paragon (Author: Kim Howard)
- Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library, Plainfield (Author: John David Anderson)
- Princeton Community Middle School, Princeton (Author: Laura Martin)
- Shelby County Public Library, Shelbyville (Author: Paul Allor)
- Sheridan Public Library, Sheridan (Author: Rob Harrell)
- St. Joseph County Public Library, South Bend (Author: Ashley C. Ford)
- The Community Learning Center, Kendallville (Author: Craig Fehrman)
- Tri-North Middle School, Bloomington (Author: Laura Martin)
- University of Southern Indiana, Evansville (Author: Craig Fehrman)
- Valparaiso University, Valparaiso (Author: Rob Harrell)
- Walton and Tipton Township Public Library, Walton (Author: Gabrielle Balkan)
- Westchester Public Library, Chesterton (Author: Tyrone McKinley Freeman)
- Writers Guild at Bloomington, Bloomington (Author: JL Kato)
- Zionsville Middle School, Zionsville (Author: Laura Martin)
- Organizations hosting writing workshops are:
 - Adams Public Library System, Geneva (Author: Shari Wagner)
 - ArtMix, Indianapolis

olis (Author: Ashley Mack-Jackson)

- Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library, Bloomfield (Author: Dave Griffith)
- Bloomington High School South, Bloomington (Author: Kenneth Woods)
- Brownsburg Public Library, Brownsburg (Author: Januarie York)
- Christian Park School 82, Indianapolis (Author: Curtis Crisler)
- Edison School of the Arts, Indianapolis (Author: Chantel Massey)
- Floyd County Public Library, New Albany (Author: Lydia Johnson)
- Forest Park Jr.-Sr. High School, Ferdinand (Author: Dave Griffith)
- Franklin Central High School, Indianapolis (Author: Chantel Massey)
- Franklin College, Franklin (Author: Sandra Mitchell)
- Impact Academy, Indianapolis (Author: Kenneth Woods)
- Indiana Connections Academy, Indianapolis (Author: Januarie York)
- Indianapolis Public Library, Indianapolis (Author: Alicia Rasley)
- Jeffersonville Township Public Library, Jeffersonville (Author: Kenneth Woods)
- Lake County Public Library, Merrillville (Author: Samuel Love)
- Midtown Indy, Inc., Indianapolis (Author: Januarie York)
- Morrison-Reeves Library, Richmond (Author: John F. Allen)
- New Castle-Henry County Public Library, New Castle (Author: Larry Sweazy)
- Pendleton Community Public Library, Pendleton (Author: Alicia Rasley)
- The Franklin County Arts Council, Brookville (Author: Shari Wagner)
- West Lafayette Public Library, West Lafayette (Author: Bryan Furrness)

In addition to paying the speakers' fees, Indiana Humanities will provide participating organizations with resources such as a communications toolkit, press release template and graphics for social media promotion.

Dates, times and other details for the author talks and writing workshops will be announced later. Watch for more information at indianaauthorsawards.org/events



Photo courtesy of Radomir Balazy

Purdue researchers led by Jingjing Liang will develop the first global artificial intelligence-based forest growth model, with funding from the World Resources Institute.

Purdue Launches New AI-Based Global Forest Mapping Project

Purdue University's Jingjing Liang has received a two-year, \$870,000 grant from the World Resources Institute to map global forest carbon accumulation rates.

"To accurately capture the carbon accumulation rates of forested ecosystems across the world has always been a challenging task, mostly because doing so requires lots of ground-sourced data, and currently such data are very limited to the scientific community," said Liang, an associate professor of quantitative forest ecology and co-director of the Forest Advanced Computing and Artificial Intelligence Lab.

"This task is considerably more challenging than mapping carbon emissions from forest loss," said Nancy Harris, research director of the Land & Carbon Lab at the World Resources Institute, a nonprofit research organization based in Washington, D.C. "With emissions, there's a clear signal in satellite imagery when trees are cut, leading to a big drop in forest carbon stocks and a relatively abrupt pulse of emissions to the atmosphere. With sequestration, forests accumulate carbon gradually and nonlinearly."

Even the most advanced satellite sensor can't capture this reliably on its own, especially in older forests where the signal saturates. A forest stops getting taller long before it stops accumulating carbon.

Forest carbon accumulation rates are sensitive to the subtle changes in three forest growth components: ingrowth, upgrowth and mortality. Ingrowth represents the number of small seedlings that have attained a specific threshold size to be called trees. Upgrowth is the gradual increase in diameter of trees through the process of photosynthesis. Ground-sourced forest inventory data measured at multiple points in time is currently the only reliable source of information for accurate

quantification of these three forest growth components.

"To date, people have never been able to estimate the ingrowth, upgrowth and mortality rates of individual forest stands at a global scale. This information gap leaves huge uncertainty in the size, location and trend of global forest carbon sink," Liang said.

Liang is developing an artificial intelligence model that will combine information collected about billions of trees measured on-site with satellite and other geospatial data to map local forest growth rates throughout the global forest range.

"This will be the first AI-based forest growth model deployed at a global scale," he said. Beyond accurately quantifying carbon dynamics, Liang's AI-based forest growth model will also capture the dynamics of forest biodiversity and timber quality.

"We're excited to support the growth of this research collaboration," Harris said. "The spatially granular data this new project will provide will help us better understand the role our planet's forests play in local, nature-based solutions to mitigate global climate change. The inclusive and globally networked approach of this initiative is at the heart of the mission of WRI's Land & Carbon Lab."

Developing such a model requires massive computing power and comprehensive global data coverage. The state-of-the-art high-performance computing clusters at Purdue will provide sufficient computing support. Still, achieving comprehensive global coverage of ground-sourced plot data remains a challenge, particularly in tropical countries.

"The data from these countries have been limited historically," Liang said. "Through the newly established network of Science-i and its sister consortium, the Global Forest Biodiversity Initiative, we already have working relationships

with a large number of scientists across the world who are collecting and sharing those data."

Liang founded Science-i, a web-based collaboration platform involving more than 300 scientists around the world. He also co-founded the Global Forest Biodiversity Initiative, which has built a database of 1.3 million sample plots and 55 million trees. That database will serve as the project's basis.

"We are going to collect much more data, especially from the global south, to fill those data gaps," Liang said. "We will get more people involved, especially those from underrepresented groups."

Collaborators of this project already include representatives of Indigenous groups across North America, Amazonia, Africa and elsewhere. Rural communities, forestry practitioners and citizen scientists will also become project collaborators.

"We co-produce the knowledge based on the FAIR principle of global collaboration: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable," Liang said.

"In Science-i, everyone collaborates with each other as equal partners on all projects. We openly share our findings with transparent real-time discussions across the whole team. Then we cross-evaluate and consolidate our research findings at the end. This is a brand-new way to do international collaborative forest research."

The extensive global partnership and comprehensive forest tree database created from this project will complement Purdue's Digital Forestry Initiative, which seeks to leverage technology and multidisciplinary expertise to measure, monitor and manage urban and rural forests.

Liang is co-lead, with Ximena Bernal, associate professor of biological sciences, for the Biodiversity Research Community, part of Purdue's recently launched multidisciplinary Institute for a Sustainable Future.

Congressman Jim Banks Clarifies Anti-Abortion 'Travel Ban' Stance

By Whitney Downard

Third District Republican U.S. Rep. Jim Banks does not want stronger anti-abortion laws but says he doesn't believe measures banning travel from Indiana to abortion access states like Illinois is the answer.

"Neither (conservative WOWO host) Pat Miller nor I were talking about travel bans," Banks said Wednesday in an interview with the Capital Chronicle. "I have never even heard of a travel ban until (I was accused) of that."

During a Fort Wayne radio interview last week praising the anti-abortion March for Life rally in Washington D.C., Miller told Banks the pro-life movement still had work to do because Hoosiers could still access the procedure by driving to Michigan or Illinois.

"The fight is far from over," Miller said.

"That's exactly right," Banks responded. "I'm for federal legislation, I'm for stronger laws at the state level - whatever we can do to save lives, to protect babies. That's what this fight is all about."

This interaction, tweeted out by Heartland Signal, caused a minor uproar on

the app, claiming Banks supported banning travel between Indiana and Illinois for those seeking reproductive health care. Heartland, part of the "progressive" Chicago station WCPT, called Banks an extremist in another tweet.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a Democrat, added his opinion to the din, saying on Twitter, "The GOP's plan to criminalize the most fundamental decisions a woman can make doesn't stop with overturning Roe. The fight is far from over, and Illinois stands ready to protect all women."

The Times of Northwest Indiana, based in Munster, wrote its own story describing the conversation, including Heartland's tweet, with the initial headline of "Republican US Senate candidate backs abortion travel ban for Hoosier women." An updated headline for the story says "Hoosier US Senate candidate backs reducing abortion options in other states."

Banks said Wednesday that he would support a nationwide bill banning abortion after cardiac activity is detected in a fetus but called the "outrageous accusation" about travel

bans "ridiculous."

"My quote couldn't be any more clear: I am unapologetically pro-life and support laws that protect babies. I support a federal ban and I support the law Indiana passed," Banks said. "There are arguments that Congress shouldn't pass pro-life bills but I support them because of states like Illinois that have no pro-life protections for babies or women."

Banks announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate earlier this month, emphasizing his conservative values and commitment to anti-abortion legislation.

Indiana's near-total abortion ban is on hold, as the Indiana Supreme Court weighs the constitutionality of the ban - the court heard arguments last week and said an opinion would be issued "in due course."

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Indiana Lawmakers Roll Back School Choice Bill, Advance Student Literacy Initiatives

By Casey Smith

Indiana lawmakers on Wednesday approved a bill that would further expand school choice for Hoosiers but rolled back certain provisions that would have made the program universally accessible.

The bill to widen eligibility for the state's education scholarship accounts advanced 8-5 from the Senate Education Committee. Sen. Jean Leising, R-Oldenburg, joined Democrats in voting against the measure.

It now heads to the Appropriations Committee, where further deliberations will tackle the ongoing questions about how much the program will cost and who will be allowed to take part.

GOP senators who support the bill, said it would give families more options and ensure that students who don't qualify for the program now — but want to — can participate.

Still, critics say they're concerned about how much universal education scholarship accounts would cost and whether the state can afford to fund all students who are eligible to participate. Democrats maintain, too, that the program expansion would pull additional dollars away from already cash-strapped public schools.

ESA expansion and other education bills move ahead

Currently, Indiana's Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program is limited to students who qualify for special education.

Although the first draft of the bill, authored by Sen. Brian Buchanan, R-Lebanon, would have extended the program to all students — regardless of a student's educational needs or their family's income level — an amended version approved on Wednesday includes language to reserve half the appropriation just for special education students.

The latest language also limits eligibility to match income requirements in place for the state's voucher program, known as Choice Scholarships.

The income ceiling is high, however. A family of four can make up to \$154,000 annually — equal to 300% of the amount required for a student to qualify for the federal free or reduced price lunch program.

For children who qualify and don't attend public school, the state will give an average of \$7,500 to parents to use for private school tuition, homeschool or other educational expenses.

The previous state budget appropriated \$10 million a year for the program, enough to fund about 1,300 ESAs. Fiscal year 2023 is the first year the program enrolled students. The treasurer's office reports that 143 students are participating in the program this year.

Buchanan said he's seeking the same \$10 million for ESA funding in the next biennium, noting that the program will be "first come, first served" if the number of students who want an ESA exceeds the state cap.

"If we have to clean it up, we will, and we're already having some discussions now," Buchanan said, referring to how the state's budget writers might fund the ESA expansion. "But I don't know what it's going to be in the budget."

Several other measures also moved forward Wednesday.

That included a bill to require all Indiana students — beginning with the Class of 2028 — to take a personal finance course before they graduate from high school.

Schools would have to offer a stand-alone course with curriculum centered around life skills like opening a bank account, applying for loans, and filling out tax returns. It's one of five bills that would make personal finance a graduation requirement.

State senators heard mixed testimony on a separate bill that places restrictions on high school graduation waivers and doubles down that schools can have dress codes.

Senate Education Committee chairman Sen. Jeff Raatz, R-Richmond, who filed the bill, said he doesn't intend to completely eliminate graduation waivers, which are given to students who are unsuccessful in completing postsecondary-readiness competency requirements by the end of their senior year.

But his bill does seek to crack down on how many are issued by removing waiver students from a school's graduation rate. That means schools with greater numbers of waiver

students would see their graduation rates decrease, which could lower their state-issued accountability grade.

Raatz said other language in the bill addressing "disruptive behavior" in the classroom ensures that schools can ban kids from "dressing inappropriately."

"There's been some complaints brought to me by some schools and parents about students dressing inappropriately. When I say that, they may be imitating or behaving like a furry," Raatz said. "Essentially, what this signals to school corporations is that through your dress code, you have the ability to drive how students dress."

Wide supports for bills aimed at literacy improvement

The House Education Committee on Wednesday focused on a handful of bills that seek to improve Indiana's dismal literacy rates among younger students.

Two bills would increase training and classroom support to help educators address those declining literacy rates, especially in elementary and middle schools. Both bills passed unanimously out of the committee and will now be considered by the full House chamber.

One measure, authored by Rep. Jake Teshka, R-South Bend, responds to a request from Gov. Eric Holcomb to establish a \$20 million incentive program that rewards schools and K-3 teachers that improve students' passing rate for the Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination, also called the IREAD-3 test.

The governor's goal is for 95% of all Indiana third graders to pass the IREAD exam by 2027.

Teshka's bill creates a \$20 million Science of Reading Grant Fund to place literacy instructional coaches in elementary schools, increase science of reading training for teachers, and help incorporate science of reading curriculum in local and statewide schooling requirements.

The "science of reading" is defined in both bills as the successful integration of concepts such as phonics, vocabulary and comprehension in reading.

Teshka's bill overlaps with the other, HB 1590, authored by committee

chairman Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis.

The measures require that starting in the 2024-2025 school year, the State Board of Education and Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) would be required to adopt academic standards for reading that are based on the science of reading.

The bill also requires teachers to show proficiency in science of reading instruction and to obtain a science of reading certification in order to be licensed to teach in an elementary school.

Trained literacy coaches would specifically be tasked with helping teachers at schools where fewer than 70% of students pass the IREAD exam.

"The science of reading is backed by over 50 years of evidence-based research," Teshka said. "I think the debate is settled, and what's left to decide is what we're going to do about this urgent and necessary issue."

Literacy fell considerably during the pandemic. Just 81.6% out of the 65,000 third graders at public and private schools in Indiana passed the 2022 exam. The Indiana Department of Education's goal is that 95% of students in third grade can read proficiently by 2027.

In response, the IDOE requested the new legislation. Indiana Education Secretary Katie Jenner doubled down Wednesday that the latest state data demands a response from lawmakers.

"We want to do everything we can as educators and schools in partnership with our parents, to make sure we increase all children's reading proficiency," Jenner said. "It's urgent, and it's necessary." Behning agreed.

"I think we all recognize that we have a reading problem," he said. "Reading is a foundational skill that every kid needs to learn and when you look at our I-LEARN results, or I-READ results, we clearly are struggling."

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Committee Affirms Anti-ESG, Anti-China Pension Investing Bills

By Leslie Bonilla Muñiz

Indiana senators on Wednesday said the state's pension system should prioritize return on investment in one bill — not environmental and social concerns — even as they advanced another bill requiring the system to divest from China-related investments.

Senate Bill 292 would require the Indiana Public Retirement System to make investment decisions for its 500,000 members primarily to maximize the rate of return, not to influence any environmental, social or governmental policies — known as "ESG" investing.

But Senate Bill 268 would force the system to divest from its China-related holdings, saying that such investments "risk" Hoosiers' "security and welfare."

The two bills directly conflicted with each other — and existing divestment requirements — until the Senate Pensions and Labor Committee on Wednesday added an exception to the ESG ban.

A no-ESG reminder
Author Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, told the committee his ESG ban wasn't intended to "tie the hands of the INPRS investors," but rather ensure that they "do not make decisions based upon environmental and social, or governance standards."

INPRS Deputy Executive Director Tony Green told the committee that the system does currently prioritize high returns and low risks over ESG considerations.

"This is just codifying what our investment policy statement says," Green said.

State law also already requires that INPRS invest and manage assets "solely in the interest of the beneficiaries," as Indiana Attorney Todd Rokita noted in a September advisory opinion.

Democrats criticized the bill as unnecessary, even as they asked why it didn't apply to other state entities that invest public dollars, like the treasurer or the Indiana Finance Authority.

The committee approved the bill 7-2, along party lines. Similar legislation is moving around the nation.

Divesting from China?

INPRS also already follows three state-level divestment laws, plus

several federal measures — and Senate Bill 268 author Sen. Chris Garten, R-Charlestown, wants to add China to that list.

The system has more than \$1 billion invested in China as of Wednesday, Garten told his fellow lawmakers. His bill would require INPRS to divest from 50% of any holding within three years of discovering a banned connection to China, 75% within four years, and 100% by five years.

"This is our business partner, right? [China is] engaged in multi-dimensional warfare with every Hoosier that's vested in these funds," Garten said, after running through several Federal Bureau of Investigation economic and security reports.

Rokita's office, which has been highly critical of the country — even filing two lawsuits against China-based TikTok — was in favor.

"The Chinese Communist Party is not our friends. They're a national security threat," Policy Director and Legislative Counsel Corrine Youngs told lawmakers. "And they're trying to supplant us on the world stage by weakening our economy, polluting the minds of our youth, and stealing our systems data and intellectual property."

Garten also pulled from a recent United Nations report detailing the country's ongoing genocide of the Uyghur ethnic group, including surveillance, forced sterilizations, forced labor and attempts to stamp out cultural, religious and language practices.

The bill was amended Wednesday to include specific federal and state criteria, which INPRS said it supported.


"We were trying to take that discretion from our board away, because we don't have subject matter expertise," Green said. Instead, INPRS can use the state and federal criteria to compile a "list that we execute."

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BETSY

From Page A1



Photo courtesy of Jason Salyers

Enjoy live music with Jason Salyers at 7 p.m. today at Primeval Brewing in downtown Noblesville.



Photo provided

Enjoy live music with The Juan Douglas Trio 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday at Spencer Farm Winery in Noblesville.

The Brick Room Comedy Club, featuring host Patrick McDaniel, special guest Mookie Harris, musical guest Kelli Ray Yates and stand up Daryl Hollonquest Jr, character guests by Mariah Davison, Holly Brooke and Jonathan Pfendler at 8 p.m. today; and Carter Dougherty and headliner Ossia Dwyer on Saturday at the downtown Noblesville Maple Avenue club, with tickets \$10 at thebrickroom.cc.

7. Party with The Doo! from 9 p.m. to midnight today at Ale Emporium in Fishers.

8. Westfield Winter Farmers Market is 9 a.m. to noon Saturdays, through April 1 at West Fork Westfield Event Center on East 191st Street.

9. Enjoy pony rides, chili, a hot chocolate bar and live music from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday at Urban Vines Winery & Brewery in Westfield.

10. Try out Fishers Parks' mobile skatepark noon to 2 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at Fishers AgriPark on Florida Road, with required registration at playfishers.com

11. Join the fifth annual Central Indiana Seed Swap from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds in Noblesville.

12. Attend the Central

Kicks Sneaker Convention at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds in Noblesville.

13. Enjoy live music with The Juan Douglas Trio 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday at Spencer Farm Winery in Noblesville.

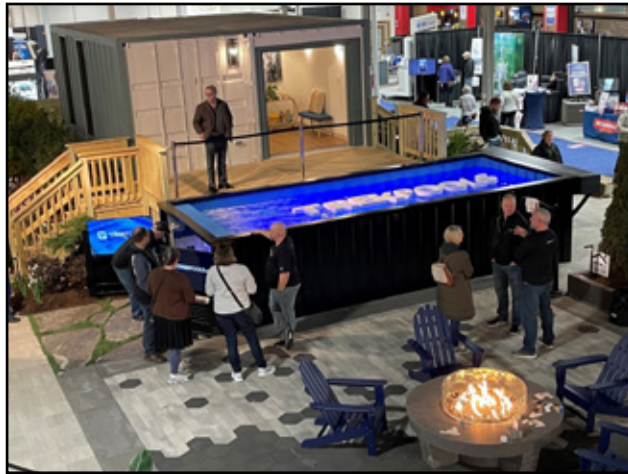
14. Put on your cowboy hat and boots and head to Joe's Grille in Westfield for Country Summer band live from 9 p.m. to midnight Saturday.

15. Auditions for Hamilton County Theatre's production of "The Great Gatsby," directed by Andrea Odle, are 6:30 p.m. Sunday and Monday at Arts for Lawrence's Theater at the Fort in Indianapolis, for the March 17-26 show, with more info at thebelfrytheatre.com

16. Help raise money for North Elementary during the annual Savor Noblesville fundraiser -- a premier food event supporting the North PTO -- at 6 p.m. Feb. 2 at Mill Top Banquet and Conference Center in Noblesville.

17. Experience Music Bingo from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays at The Boat-house Kitchen & Swan Drive in Cicero

18. Experience Turntable Thursdays at 5:30



The Times photo courtesy of Betsy Reason

See the Centerpiece Home's pool and pool house, made from shipping containers by Custom Container Builders, at the Indianapolis Home Show, today through Sunday at the Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center in Indianapolis.



The Times photo courtesy of Betsy Reason

Tour the Centerpiece Home, created by Custom Container Builders with shipping containers, at the Indianapolis Home Show, today through Sunday at the Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center in Indianapolis.

p.m. Thursdays at Primeval Brewing in downtown Noblesville.

19. Enjoy live music of Craig Thurston the first and third Thursdays beginning in February.

20. Learn about beekeeping during a Pop Up Beekeeping 101 from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Feb. 4 at Fishers AgriPark, with no registration required.

21. See the story of Anne Frank come to life in "The Diary of Anne Frank" Feb. 10-25 Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre in Carmel.

22. Make plans to attend the Galentine's Goddess Brunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 12 at The Lacy Arts Building in downtown Noblesville, with tickets \$45 each, includes waffle bar, mimosa bar, juice bar, book bingo, activities, goddess crowns and more.

23. Enjoy a night under the sea at The Attic Theatre's production of "The Little Mermaid" musical Feb. 16-18 at The Ivy Tech Auditorium in

Noblesville.

24. Save the date: The Boys & Girls Club of Noblesville's 37th annual Auxiliary Auction, Mardi Gras Charity Ball, is 6:30 p.m. Feb. 18 at Harbour Trees Golf Club, with a live and silent auction, and \$175 tickets available in advance. For information, visit bgcni.org or call the club at 317-773-4372.

25. Experience Dr. Seuss's "The Cat in the Hat" Feb. 28 and March 4 at Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre in Carmel.

Save the date: Noblesville Schools Education Foundation's Miller-Palooza is 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. March 10 at the Embassy Suite in Noblesville, with \$125 tickets, sponsorships available, dress casual Noblesville school spirit, and featuring Dueling Pianos from Felix and Fingers. To donate to silent auction, email adriann_young@nobl.k12.in.us

Contact Betsy Reason at betsy@thetimes24-7.com

COURTROOM

From Page A1

room to handle our burgeoning caseload."

Superior Court 7 also opened this month and will be presided over by Judge Darren Murphy. Judge Murphy will hear civil and criminal cases. Hence, the need to find new space for the magistrates.

Based on state caseload statistics, Hamilton County still needs more judicial officers. Judge Najjar says the county is high on the list of counties who

need additional judicial resources. "These new courtrooms will allow us to move closer to the actual judicial need dictated by our caseload statistics, but we still need more. Only then will we be able to move our cases more quickly and efficiently."

The two new magistrate courtrooms replace the county's Information System Services Department, which will eventually move to the basement of the Judicial Center.

MARATHON

From Page A1

Health Orthopedic Hospital Carmel, which opened in April 2022, offers a full spectrum of care for musculoskeletal conditions as well as Franciscan ExpressCare urgent care.

"We're thrilled to have Franciscan Health back for 2023 and beyond," said Todd Oliver, race director for the Carmel Marathon Weekend.

"This year will be their 10th year on board, and it's truly reassuring to have a partner like Franciscan Health on your side on race day. With their large footprint in Carmel and overall presence in the Midwest, I know they are a name our participants can trust whether they are training or out on the race course."

"The Carmel Marathon is a well-known event and sets the pace in promoting health, wellness and athleticism in the Midwest," said Sharon Annee, Administrative Director of Orthopedics and Neurosciences for Franciscan Health Central Indiana.

"Franciscan medical experts and athletic trainers will be on hand to assist participants every step of the way in the year's event."

The Carmel Marathon Presented by Franciscan Health attracts runners from around the country to

compete for a cash prize purse and enjoy a boutique race experience with all the benefits of a large-scale event. The marathon, a USATF certified course, has been named to FindMyMarathon.com's list of Top 50 Boston Qualifying Races five times.

In addition to the Carmel Marathon Presented by Franciscan Health, the Carmel Marathon Weekend has the support of presenting sponsors with the Indiana Spine Group 10K and Indiana Members Credit Union 5K. The event also includes a half marathon distance.

For more event information, visit CarmelMarathon.com

About the Carmel Marathon Weekend:

The 13th annual Carmel Marathon Weekend on Saturday, April 8, 2023 will feature a full marathon, half marathon, 10K and 5K, as well as a marathon relay. The Carmel Marathon Presented by Franciscan Health Carmel is the second largest marathon in Indiana and the largest running event in the city of Carmel.

The event offers a fast course (certified Boston Qualifier) through the popular Indianapolis suburb of Carmel, Indiana. To learn more, visit CarmelMarathon.com

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FRIDAY Business Notes and NEWS DAY

Friday, Jan. 27, 2023

A7

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IEDC Targeting Increase in High-Tech Investments with New West Coast Hire

Indiana Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers announced earlier this week that Jillian Ochs has been named west coast business expansion specialist for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. In this new role, Ochs will represent the IEDC to entrepreneurs, innovators and enterprise businesses in California, proactively increasing the state's brand awareness in the west coast market and working to secure high-tech, future-focused business investments in Indiana.

"Indiana is strategically focused on creating the economy of the future here, and we are uniquely positioned to lead globally in high-tech sectors," Chambers said. "Compared to traditional high-tech markets along the west coast, Indiana offers a low-tax, reduced regulation environment with a robust pipeline of STEM specialists and a quality of life that employers and

employees alike can enjoy. We are excited to welcome Jillian to the team and look forward to sharing Indiana's story even more boldly with future-focused entrepreneurs and innovators looking to grow."

Ochs, who resides in the San Francisco Bay area, brings to the IEDC more than 12 years of business development experience, with specialized expertise in new market entry, foreign direct investment and global partnerships. Currently, she is the founder of Smith Global, an independent strategic consulting practice focused on international expansion, market intelligence, go-to-market business strategy, global product commercialization, product develop and global business development. She represents a variety of small-to-medium sized enterprises (SME's), economic regions and business-to-business conferences and has led

and supported business development efforts for a variety of organizations, including Advise Global, Greater Zurich Area, Abu Dhabi Investment Office, Ministry for Investment Saudi Arabia, Conapto, WorldWebForum, and the PacificRim Tax Institute.

Ochs received the 40 Under 40 Economic Developers Award from Development Counselors International in 2017 and was named a 'Visionary You Need to Know' by the World Web Forum in 2018. She serves on the board of the San Francisco Zurich Sister City Initiative and is a member of the International Economic Developers Council, Swiss American Chamber of Commerce, and Swedish American Chamber of Commerce.

At the IEDC, Ochs joins a robust team of business developers in Indiana and globally focused on creating the economy of the future in Indiana. Ochs

will focus on increasing investment and innovation opportunities with California-based companies as well as domestic and international companies active in the California market, advancing Indiana's future-focused sectors, including tech, life sciences, semiconductor design and fabrication, and energy, as well as the sectors' R&D and supply chains.

In 2022, the IEDC secured \$22.2 billion in new industry investments, including \$15.5 billion from companies establishing new operations – either as a startup company or as an established business investing in Indiana for the first time. In the past two years alone, California-based companies have committed to expanding or relocating to Indiana, investing nearly \$7 billion in Indiana. This includes announcements from industry innovators like Anchorage Digital, Intellinair, and Ninth Avenue Foods.

Producers, Business Owners Encouraged to Apply for Rural Energy Program

For agricultural producers and rural business owners interested in making the shift to renewable energy, the time is now to apply for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development, the program provides funding through grants and guaranteed loans for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements. The application deadline is March 31.

"This year, REAP received an additional \$250 million from the Inflation Reduction Act, for a program total of \$300 million," said Kalee Olson, the policy associate for the Center for Rural Affairs. "This increase translates to more opportunities for renewable energy projects across rural America."

REAP funding is available for a wide range of projects, from installing solar panels to updat-

ing HVAC systems and insulation. To be eligible, farmers and ranchers must show that more than 50% of their annual gross income is generated by their agricultural operation. Businesses must be located in a rural area, defined as having a population of 50,000 people or less.

Grants may cover up to 40% of eligible project costs, and guaranteed loans may cover up to 75%. Grant and loan funding may also be combined for up to 75% of eligible expenses.

"The benefits of receiving REAP funding are two-fold," Olson said. "In addition to the financial assistance provided by the program, new or improved energy systems have the potential to save producers and business owners money over time."

For more information about REAP or for help applying, contact your state's rural development energy coordinator.

NFIB Encourages Indiana Lawmakers to Keep Small Businesses at Forefront During 2023 Legislative Session

Small business owners across Indiana, along with NFIB, the state's leading small business organization, are encouraging state lawmakers to listen to small business owners as they continue to recover from the pandemic and economic setbacks. Jan. 9 was the first day of the 2023 legislative session.

NFIB small business owners are still struggling with inflation, supply issues, and worker shortages. NFIB data shows that 44% of small business owners have openings they can't fill and 92% report that they have few or no qualified applicants.

Small business owners have a few priorities that they would like the legislature to keep in mind this session.

Workforce Development

- Support proposals that help employers find workers and develop a skilled talent pipeline, remove barriers keeping people out of the labor force and prepare Indiana's future workforce.

Regulatory Reform

- Support proposals aimed at reducing regula-

tions that impose unnecessary mandates, penalties and fines on small businesses.

Pass Through Entity Tax (PTET)

The 2017 Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act caps the amount of state and local taxes (SALT) an individual can deduct on their federal taxes to \$10,000. This hurts small businesses organized as pass through entities (S Corporations, Partnerships and LLC's) that pay taxes on business profits at the individual (owner/partner) level.

Allow pass through entities to elect to pay SALT on their income at the entity level. This reform will allow small businesses to fully deduct their state and local taxes from their federal tax returns.

Business Personal Property Tax

Indiana's business personal property tax continues to be a factor as nearby states have exempted this taxation. The state's business personal property tax is a levy on small business, and many have been bearing the brunt of this for years.

Reform or repeal of the business personal property tax to further improve the state's business tax climate and free up funds for main street to better compete with big business in this tight labor market and adjust to the increased cost to do business.

Health Care Costs & Transparency

Hoosiers are seeing higher health care spending per capita than peer states, and the rate of increases is also outpacing those states used for comparison. There are many factors driving the rate increases and more transparency and competition is needed to help lower costs. Small businesses should be able to provide more affordable health insurance to their employees.

Make Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement (MEWAs) more accessible to small businesses by removing unnecessary state barriers that are more burdensome than federal requirements so these plans work better and are easier to use.

Allow small business

owners to band together through Association Health Plans to access the economies of scale that large companies enjoy, allowing them to offer more affordable coverage options to their employees.

Support proposals that promote transparency by requiring hospitals, insurers, and pharmacy benefit managers (pharmaceutical middlemen) to disclose cost information so small business owners can make informed decisions about health care coverage.

"Indiana is fortunate in that we have a friendly environment to own and operate a small business," said Natalie Robinson, NFIB State Director in Indiana. "Legislative leaders have done a good job listening to our entrepreneurs and shaping Indiana into an ideal place to start and grow a small business. However, there is more to be done. This year, we are asking the legislature to continue to pass legislation that allows Hoosiers to invest back into their business to create new jobs and support their communities."

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FRIDAY

Voice of our PEOPLE

Timmons Talking Politics As Usual ...

A good many of you responded to last week's babblings about the fiasco the U.S. House went through in electing a Speaker. To a person, you agreed that it was just another example of the ineptitude our government sadly exhibits now. But a lot of you went further. Much further. The anger, the frustration, the absolute disappointment in where our government, and thus our country, stands today is almost overwhelming.



TIM TIMMONS
Two Cents

Your alarm got you going. If a politician blatantly lied about darn near everything and got caught, i.e., Rep. Santos, he wouldn't be in office. Think not? Ask Richard Nixon.

But before we go any further, no, this is not a call for overthrow . . . not a desk-pounding cry to take up arms . . . not an accusation of shadows and conspiracies.

What's wrong with our government isn't that com-

licated. For today, let's boil it down to five things.

1. Career politicians: We need term limits.

2. Lobbyists and campaign contributions: Money talks. Too loudly in this case.

3. Complexities: Richard Branson, the billionaire owner of Virgin Airlines has a great quote: "Any fool can make something complicated. It is hard to keep things simple." Way too much of our government is complicated. Tax code that weighs almost as much as me? C'mon!

4. Pork: I suppose you could throw this one under No. 3. But bills that get passed have riders attached to them that have nothing to do with the bill. Make proposed legislation plain to read and restricted to that specific law.

5. Benefits and perks: Get rid of insurance, pen-

sions and other perks for the hired hands. Not only do they now have sweetheart deals that most of us could only dream of, but it encourages them to stay in office.

To be fair, we could add a bunch more to the list, but this feels like a starting point, don't you think? The bottom line is we have allowed our government to grow far beyond what was intended.

We could talk more about what the Founding Fathers created. But as soon as you mention them, it sends some folks into a tizzy. Kind of like when you mention the definition of a man or woman.

Look, those who hold elected office work for us, at least in theory. So, let's all put our boss hat on for a second and think of this like a performance review.

First, the wonderful

folks in HR would tell us we have a problem. How can we review someone's performance if we don't have standards and expectations in place - specific ones? Without that, how do we measure job performance? It's a fair point. Can you imagine having a job in which your performance was never measured? Yet that's exactly the situation we have today with the hired hands.

If we can't agree on how to rate their performance how about if we focus on laws? It kind of feels like they think creating new laws is part of the job, right? But seriously, don't we have enough laws? Maybe instead we can task them to examine laws that are out of date and get them off the books?

While they're examining those, let's add that we

want them to take a look at taxes. All of them. I'd be willing to bet there are several (that might be the understatement of the year!) that are no longer used for what they were intended. The term is sunset clause - and it's not used often enough.

When they get those two things done, we can get them working on the five things from above. Too much? Nah, we're good and patient bosses. Let's give them plenty of time to get all this accomplished. How much? Oh, I don't know, how about four years?

Two cents, which is about how much Timmons said his columns are worth, appears periodically on Wednesdays in The Paper. Timmons is the publisher of The Paper and can be contacted at ttimmons@thepaper24-7.com.

Renting or Buying, What's Best For You?



GLENN MOLLETTE
Guest Column

A retired minister and his wife had never owned a house. They had spent all their married lives living in housing provided by churches. At age 65 they bought a house and financed it for 15 years. They had been frugal and had saved a good down payment. They paid for the house by age 80. The value of the house increased over the years and at age 83 they sold the house and received a very nice check. The money from the sale was enough to help them fund their next ten years in a nice assisted living apartment. While taking on a mortgage at 65 appeared crazy to some it afforded them financial security further down the road.

Many years ago, I bought a modest new house that cost \$151,000. I barely scraped together the nearly \$30,000 down payment. The house was financed for 15 years. I began the laborious journey of writing a monthly check to the bank. After about eight years, I needed money to pay medical bills and was able to borrow \$30,000 against my equity. It was nice that I had the equity because at that time I really needed the cash. Looking back, I would never do that again because it made the actual cost of my house increase to \$181,000. For a couple of years, I had two payments to make to the bank. A couple of years later my wife passed. If I had needed to borrow \$10,000 against my house, I could have done so to pay for funeral expenses. Fortunately, we had both taken out small insurance policies that covered that cost. Eventually I refinanced and consolidated the mortgages. By the grace of God I still paid for the house in 15 years.

I don't like monthly payments or paying rent. For most of us, at some point in our lives there will be a monthly payment of some kind. I've lived in apartments on several occasions and even houses furnished to me by congregations I served. I didn't care for either one. I'm not saying I wouldn't do it again but my preference

is to live in a place that is actually mine for as long as possible.

Renting a house or an apartment works for many at different stages of life. Buying a house is tough because it is a major financial commitment. You normally have to come up with 20% of the price to pay down as well as have the income to make the payments. That's not always easy.

New houses in a nearby neighborhood are presently selling for \$400,000. Most of them are modest three to four-bedroom houses. Having enough money to make the down payment and monthly payments is a lot for any person or family.

However, rent is expensive. Depending on where you live you may be paying \$800 to \$3,000 a month for a small apartment. You don't have maintenance or property taxes but you'll also never see that money again. A friend of mine sold her house at age 70 and moved into an apartment complex for people over age 55. She pays rent but she says the landlord treats her well and is timely with upkeep. A landlord who is very untimely with upkeep is very frustrating.

There are pros and cons to owning and renting. Choosing depends on your situation and personal preferences. A landlord can raise your rent and have rules pertaining to pets, painting, and more. However, it may be just exactly what you need. Typically, you don't want to sink your money into property if you are going to move in three or four years. You might come out ahead if you buy a fixer upper and have the time and money to improve the property. You don't want to make a bad buy. Buying property that you can't resell is a bad idea, unless you love it and plan to live there a long time.

Keep in mind that a big chunk of most American's wealth is in the house they own. If you pay for it and maintain it you can normally sell it to someone and recoup a lot of your money. You might even make a nice profit.

Dr. Glenn Mollette is a graduate of numerous schools including Georgetown College, Southern and Lexington Seminaries in Kentucky. He is the author of 13 books including UncommonSense, the Spiritual Chocolate series, Grandpa's Store, Minister's Guidebook insights from a fellow minister. His column is published weekly in over 600 publications in all 50 states.

Pro-Lifers Are Under Attack by Hostile Abortion Activists

By John Grimaldi

Here's a wake-up call: the numbers of babies killed in the womb in the U.S. since the Supreme Court legalized abortion 50 years ago has passed the 64.5 million mark-- the equivalent of the population of France, the 22nd largest nation among the 233 countries on the planet. Last June, the Supreme Court overturned its 1973 pro-abortion decision, yet the numbers of abortions nationally in the U.S. each year continues at a rate of more than half a million to as many as 900,000 as reported by the National Right to Life Committee [NRLC].

The NRLC's Director of Education and Research, Randall O'Bannon, shares the good news, however, that "the overturning of Roe was obviously an enormously significant event in our nation's history and a political watershed. Abortion was no longer, by the Supreme Court's fiat, legal in all fifty states, throughout pregnancy, for any and every reason or none at all. But for pro-lifers, it represented so much more. It meant, for the first time in nearly half a century that states would have the actual legal authority to protect unborn children, in many cases, from the moment of conception forward. Lives could be saved...For those states which took the opportunity, it meant that it no longer had to be the case that 10%, 20%, 30% or even 50% of pregnancies would legally, almost automatically, end in abortion. Their laws could protect unborn children and their mothers, and the merchants of death could be limited or even put out of business," he added.

It's good news indeed, but the fact is pro-abortion states have shown a willingness to fill the gap the Court's ruling created. In addition, the good news is overshadowed by the growing violence against pro-life advocates and the apparent lack of concern at the FBI. Last year, particularly in the months since the Supreme Court handed

down its decision in June, more than 230 pro-life churches and pregnancy support centers came under attack. It all started in May last year when the Supreme Court's draft-copy of its decision to overturn the pro-abortion Roe-Wade ruling leaked. It was the beginning of what amounts to an organized war against pro-life advocates.

The Religious Freedom Institute [RFI] recently issued an assessment that shows how "criminal attacks on pro-life congregations and organizations across America immediately and dramatically increased. Hostile actors targeted pregnancy resource centers, education and advocacy organizations, churches, and even schools. The attacks continued at a high frequency after the Court handed down its Dobbs decision on June 24, 2022. Attackers often committed multiple crimes against the same organization, including arson, death threats, property destruction, and menacing or vile graffiti. Perpetrators attacked several of the same organizations on multiple days."

CEO Jim Harden of CompassCare Pregnancy Services talked with Fox News about the lack of FBI protection for pro-life advocates and institutions. The CompassCare facility in Buffalo, NY was firebombed last year by pro-abortion extremists who call themselves Jane's Revenge and, thus far, he says, the FBI has done little to identify and arrest the culprits responsible.

"There's some very, very disconcerting things that are going on, and the fact that the FBI has not made any arrests is only shame on them." Jane's Revenge, he said, admitted that they were responsible and yet neither local law enforcement nor the FBI has made any arrests. "There is a serious sickness in the body politic of America and the FBI isn't even talking about it. It's the largest law enforcement agency on the globe and it appears that they're treating this like some sort of bubble gum theft."



RANDALL FRANKS
Southern Style Columns

A repeated question from childhood that often irritated parents from its repetitive use by every child within a traveling vehicle was "Are we there yet?."

When I was a child, I seldom uttered those words because I actually loved to go anywhere because I was fascinated with seeing the world around me.

I loved to see rolling green fields covered with cows gazing. Waters of the rivers flowing and churning by the rocks below. The mountains rising high around me as I tried to look back into every hollow to see if a small house sat there with a chimney shooting smoke into the sky.

When we went into the cities, I would stretch my neck trying to look up at the top of the buildings as we rolled through.

Since I spent much of my childhood as an only, long rides in cars were not much different than occupying my time anywhere around home. In those days we weren't tied to car seats, so I could move anywhere across the back seat or floor board of our blue Chevrolet Malibu as I played and filled the hours.

Nighttime was the only periods when I really didn't enjoy trips because there was little to see beyond the door windows.

But there were many times as a small child, I remember curling up in the front floorboard of the Chevrolet pickup at the feet of my mother near the heat vent where I would go off to sleep and awake when we got to where we were headed.

Feeling warm and safe in that place made traveling a preferred activity when I

was small. Of course, trips for us were largely limited to our annual vacation or periodic trips on holidays to visit relatives. Oftentimes vacations included relatives too.

Today, as I crawl into the driver's seat to head off for a trip, I do sometimes find myself thinking "Are we there yet?."

I know the answer, but the weariness associated with the act of driving, does make the traveling less appealing to me. I still enjoy seeing the places once I arrive but the monotony of looking out the windshield at the road makes the experience less of an adventure to me.

Often in life, we set goals, create a path, and then forge ahead towards that objective.

Along the way, we sometimes stop and access how close we are to reaching the goal in essence asking "Are we there yet?."

So, the skill of asking that question, though frustrating to parents can be a blessing as we map out our lives.

Evaluating where we are, where we are going, and if we need to adjust to reach a goal is a great skill.

Finding our way in life day-to-day can be an adventure on its own, I know I am on a constant trend of re-evaluating my position.

Do you feel like you are spinning your wheels? Maybe you are not reaching anywhere close to where you thought you would be? Maybe you need to ask "Are we there yet?."

Randall Franks is best known for his role as "Officer Randy Goode" on TV's "In the Heat of the Night." His latest 2019 #1 CD release, "Americana Youth of Southern Appalachia," is by the Share America Foundation. He is a member of the Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame. His latest book is "A Badge or an Old Guitar: A Music City Murder Mystery." He is a syndicated columnist for <http://randallfranks.com/> and can be reached at rfrankscatoosa@gmail.com.

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Voice of our PEOPLE

Ask Rusty – What Counts Towards My SS's Earnings Limit?

Dear Rusty: I retired on Feb. 1 of this year (2022). I collect a pension from my employer plus a union pension, as well as Social Security, all of which started in February 2022. I am married and I'm 65 years old. I only worked 4 weeks in 2022 before retiring, but my income ended up being far more than expected. I got 5 weeks' vacation pay and a retroactive check from an overdue labor contract. I also got hazard pay and a small check for a class action lawsuit my union filed years ago. All of that brings my 2022 income to about \$35,000 which means I have exceeded what I can make as far as Social Security goes. My question is, should I contribute some money to my IRA to offset my earned income? And is it

even possible for me to do that? **Signed: Retired but Concerned**

Dear Retired: Generally, income earned before starting your Social Security benefits (such as accumulated vacation pay) doesn't count toward Social Security's earnings limit for those who have not yet reached their full retirement age (FRA), nor do your earnings from working in the 4 weeks of 2022 before your SS benefits started. Similarly, the check for retroactive labor contract benefits, hazard pay for past work, and income from the class action suit do not count toward Social Security's earnings limit. The only thing that counts towards the limit is earnings from working after your Social Security benefits started, which you apparently did



ASK Rusty
Social Security Advisor

not do. Thus, from what you've shared, you should not be subject to any impact to your monthly SS benefits as a result of your total 2022 income. Note, you may still get an inquiry from Social Security next year about your 2022 earnings, but only earnings from actually working after your Social Security benefits started (which

Social Security Matters

by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Russell Gloor

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you did not) would count toward Social Security's earnings limit.

You may, however, wish to consult with a qualified tax advisor because some of your Social Security benefits received in 2022 will be subject to income tax on your 2022 tax return. Assuming you file your tax return as "married/jointly," if your combined income from all sources exceeded \$32,000

then 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year will become part of your overall taxable income; and if your 2022 combined income from all sources (including your wife's income) exceeded \$44,000, then up to 85% of your SS benefits received in 2022 will become taxable income. A tax advisor can give you more information on that, and also help you decide

if it would be wise to contribute to an IRA. But, in any case, contributing to an IRA will not affect your monthly Social Security benefit.

About The Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC):

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (AmacFoundation.org) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors.

Integrating Politics and Science – by First Separating Them

By Dr. Luke Conway

Freedom inherently involves risks. If you want your children to roam free at the local playground, they might injure themselves on the big slide. If you want the freedom to watch baseball, someone might get hit in the head by a stray line drive. All decisions about restricting freedom thus require a cost/benefit analysis that weighs the benefits of freedom against the potential risks.

In practice, this analysis requires two very different sets of considerations. First, we have to consider the threshold at which we will restrict people's freedom. How many injuries are too many before we stop the heartwarming laughter of the children's playground? How many deaths due to line drives would cause us to squelch the glories of baseball? Second, we have to measure whether or not the threshold is met. What do we consider a playground injury? How do we decide if a death was due to a line drive or some other cause?

This distinction between setting a threshold and measuring a threshold is often overlooked—but absolutely vital. That's because threshold setting is largely a political issue for everyone, but threshold measurement is largely a scientific issue for specialists. And yet, despite the importance of this difference, we tend to conflate the two. For example, it makes sense that health officials should decide on how best to measure health matters. But we also often take it for granted that they should set the threshold at which we will give up our freedoms for health-related risks. Should we?

No. In fact, who should reasonably decide the threshold is generally different than who should implement the threshold. Consider a parable.

Imagine your beloved Pittsburgh Steelers are playing in the Super Bowl. They are down by two points with one second to go. On the last play of the game, the Steelers kick a (three-point) field goal to win the game. You start celebrating the glorious victory. But wait—the officials are huddling. The play is being reviewed. And the head official comes out and says this: "Today, the officials have determined that the point threshold for a last-second field goal is only one point and not three. Therefore, the Steelers have lost."

The point here is quite simple. The officials' job is not to determine what the rules are. The officials' job is to judge whether those rules have been followed. They don't get to decide how many points the field goal is worth; they only measure whether the field goal criterion has been met.

When we turn our attention to COVID policies, this distinction between threshold setting and threshold measurement becomes paramount. We've frequently acted like the measurement of the threshold (how dangerous is COVID?) is the same as the setting of the threshold (how dangerous does COVID have to be before we restrict freedom?).

But in order for science and politics to function together effectively, we desperately need to separate the scientific issue from the political one. Threshold measurement is a scientific issue on which public health officials, as scientific experts, ought to be listened to. Threshold setting is a political issue on which public health officials have no more (or no less) right to speak than any ordinary citizen. That's how science and politics are supposed to work together. That's how they are supposed to be integrated. Yet our lives

these last two years have been increasingly defined by officials conflating the scientific judgment of whether a criterion has been met (which is their job) with the creation of the political criterion (which isn't). Our public health officials have been metaphorically determining what a field goal is worth, when they should not get to do that. That's our job. Their job is to determine if the field goal is good or not.

It didn't start out that way. In fact, early in the pandemic, Dr. Anthony Fauci is reported to have said to Donald Trump: "I just do medical advice. I don't think about things like the economy and the secondary impacts. I'm just an infectious diseases doctor. Your job as president is to take everything else into consideration."

That isn't the attitude of someone who wants to set the freedom threshold; it's the attitude of a man who wants to do his limited role of providing measurement information to those who do. By the end of the pandemic, however, Fauci was challenging court decisions that overturned the health experts' power to make restrictions: "I'm surprised and disappointed because those types of things really are the purview of the CDC. ... We are concerned about that, about the courts getting involved in things that are unequivocally a public health decision. This is a CDC issue, should not have been a court issue."

Do you see what happened? At the beginning of the pandemic, health officials rightly viewed their role as simply providing information, making judgment calls about whether our metaphorical field goal was good or not. By the end of the pandemic, they had shifted to believing that they should determine the threshold itself, so that the very rules of the

game—and not providing information relevant to those rules—was their purview.

Increasingly, the medical community failed to ask us regular citizens whether we liked these politically restrictive thresholds. Rather, the American public was simply shamed or bullied into complying with the medical communities' simplistic medical-based view. Fauci said that anyone questioning him was "really criticizing science, because I represent science." But much of his commentary wasn't scientific; it was political. Fauci said he "strongly supports" vaccine mandates, eventually saying to people who questioned the vaccines, "get over it." Texas' and Mississippi's anti-mask approach was "inexplicable," Fauci said. And yet these aren't largely medical commentaries; they are political thresholds completely outside of his purview. It wasn't his political decision to make—it was ours. I'm not questioning science by saying I prefer to err on the side of freedom; I'm simply stating that I prefer to take my chances with COVID (against which I have a very high probability of success) than with a repressive government (against which I will certainly lose).

But no one asked me. Instead, the public health officials running our pandemic response increasingly assumed they had the right to set the threshold at which our freedoms were taken away.

The results have been predictably disastrous. Not only has the American public began to lose faith in public health, but a single-issue approach has led to declines in education and increases in teen suicide rates, among other negative outcomes. While it is hard to counterfactually know what would have happened if we had ap-

plied a different strategy, it nonetheless seems clear that lockdowns had many negative consequences that would have been avoided without them. In fact, one study by a highly cited Canadian researcher showed that, considering all variables, lockdowns were actually bad for public health. In the words of the researcher: "I explain why I changed my mind about supporting lockdowns ... a cost-benefit analysis of the response to COVID-19 finds that lockdowns are far more harmful to public health (at least 5–10 times so in terms of wellbeing years) than COVID-19 can be."

This is hardly surprising. That's what happens when you cede power over a large and complex political issue to a single-issue group. Medical professionals almost by definition are going to overweigh the importance of any disease's direct physical toll. I don't begrudge them that; it's likely part of what makes them good at their jobs. However, it is precisely for that reason that we don't allow specialists to make judgments about political cost/benefit thresholds that have vast reach into all our lives. We would not let this happen in any other domain. Would you let a small group of green energy activists decide that you could not have gas-powered vehicles, or a small group of oil executives decide that you cannot have a Tesla? There is a reason we don't let specialists decide far-reaching political issues. Instead, all of us should collectively have a voice.

Thus, the decision of when the danger of a disease outweighs individual rights for freedom should never again be in the hands of unelected public health officials. That political decision is our decision, We the People, and as such should only reside

in our hands. Ironically, science and politics work best together when they are kept separate.

There is a danger in political laziness. If we become used to the conflation of the actual job of public health officials (determining the level of threat) and the thing they should never do (determining the point at which freedom gives way to threat), the next time a disease comes around, we may never fully recover our senses. The real threat is that we are becoming inured to medical authoritarianism by small degrees. Yet there is absolutely no reason that we should take such violations of our basic rights so casually.

So, my fellow citizens, as we turn the calendar to what will (God willing) be a better and brighter new year, let's keep our heads held high. And let us continually pray that fear will increasingly fall away like rusted shackles, and glorious freedom—freedom to laugh and to play, to hope and to dream—will rise in its place throughout this beautiful land.

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