

# Police: Statehouse powder not dangerous

## Off-white substance in envelope led to building shutdown, no evacuation

By MIKE SMITH  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### INDIANAPOLIS

A powdery substance found in an envelope in House Speaker Brian Bosma's office prompted a brief shutdown of the Statehouse Wednesday, but preliminary tests indicated it contained no dangerous biological or chemical agents, state police said.

An administrative assistant to Bosma opened the envelope containing an off-white substance



"We're very optimistic that it's just someone stuffing some sugar in an envelope or something, but we'll find out."

Brian Bosma  
Indiana speaker

about 11 a.m. Another suspicious envelope was found in a mail-room but was not opened.

The FBI took both envelopes for testing. Additional results

were not expected for 24 to 48 hours.

"We're very optimistic that it's just someone stuffing some sugar in an envelope or something, but

we'll find out," Bosma said.

Authorities isolated the staff member and sealed off the speaker's office as they investigated. Police barred people from entering or exiting the Statehouse for a short time but did not evacuate the building. The doors reopened about 1:30 p.m.

House Republican spokesman Tony Samuel said the staff member, whom he declined to name, appeared to have no ill effects, and Bosma gave her the rest of the day off.

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*George Sutton*

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YOUR WIFE, KATHY

# ISTEP to stay put for now

## Committee rejects plan to move test to spring

By DEANNA MARTIN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### INDIANAPOLIS

A Senate committee on Wednesday eliminated part of a proposal that would have moved statewide ISTEP testing from fall to spring.



REED

Instead, the stripped-down proposal would require the Department of Education to come up with a long-term testing plan but would not require a move to spring testing.

Opponents of spring testing said the switch would have cost the state more than \$45 million, while supporters said it would cost next to nothing. Senate Appropriations Chairman Robert Meeks, R-La-Grange, had said that he would not give the bill a hearing if it were expensive.

Sen. Teresa Lubbers, chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee, is a proponent of moving ISTEP but suggested the amended bill Wednesday. She said the stripped-down bill was a compromise that would not cost the state anything.

However, the measure to move ISTEP to the spring could resurface in late-session negotiations because the House already has passed that provision.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Suellen Reed, who crossed party lines this month to join Democrats opposing the switch, said she was surprised and encouraged by the amendment, which she had not seen before the meeting.

She said the Department of Education would take public input while forming the plan.

"We need to hear from educators, we need to hear from parents, we need to hear from people who understand how the whole process works," Reed said.

# Senators vote to reduce own retirement benefits

By MIKE SMITH  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### INDIANAPOLIS

State senators are scaling back their retirement health benefits, but the changes announced Wednesday did not go as far as a decision by the House to end lifetime, state-subsidized health insurance for those who leave office after the November election.

Under a plan offered since 2002, state lawmakers who served a day more than six years and then retired or were not re-elected were allowed to receive lifetime state health insurance for themselves and their families. Premiums were locked at their current percentage, even if health-care costs rose.

Under a House change announced last month, representatives elected or re-elected this November would have to pay the full cost of their coverage with no state subsidy to stay in the insurance plan after leaving office. They also would lose most of their coverage after becoming eligible for Medicare.

The new Senate plan eliminates the benefit for senators or Senate employees who retire before the age of 50. Those who retire after that would still receive subsidized health insurance, but their premium copy would be based on a sliding scale that took into account years of service and retirement age.

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