

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963

## Opinion roundup

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Today the Daily Journal presents a sampling of editorials from around the state and nation:

### State mistaken in not considering light rail

The Star Press, Muncie

When it comes to considering light-rail transportation, Indiana resembles a caboose on a long train. We're miles behind the leaders on that subject.

One good way to catch up would be for the legislature to approve a bill to study the feasibility of a commuter rail system from Indianapolis to Muncie. A measure to do that gained unanimous approval recently from the Senate's transportation committee.

A commuter system would spur economic growth in central Indiana by allowing people a new and efficient way to travel to work, visit friends and relatives and take advantage of shopping and entertainment venues not available in smaller communities.

A rail system also would help wean Indiana from a dependence on foreign oil and its attendant costs. And it would allow the state to join other localities that are already benefiting from such transportation systems.

The light-rail issue would get a boost if the Daniels administration would give it more credence and support.

So far, Gov. Mitch Daniels has been committed to vehicular-only solutions for Indiana's transportation problems, largely meaning more toll roads.

Until Indiana fully explores city-to-city rail transportation, it will be missing out on the many benefits that could arise.

### Making state secretary BMV chief good idea

South Bend Tribune

Putting the Indiana secretary of state in charge of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles is a good idea for several reasons.

The best argument for making the secretary of state the BMV commissioner, by virtue of his office, is the natural relationship between the secretary of state's office and the BMV. The secretary of state is responsible for voter registration and elections. The BMV conducts voter registrations and distributes the IDs that voters must have in order to cast ballots.

Secretary of State Todd Rokita has performed his duties superbly. Among his innovations was the centralized database of registered voters, which is aimed at enhancing voter registration and keeping voter rolls accurate. Motor-voter registration at license branches also is a function of the secretary of state's office.

There have been suggestions that politically motivated House Democrats want to make the change to discredit the governor or, more improbably, to make the governor's job easier in anticipation of a Democrat taking over next term. In fact, legislators would be doing all the people of Indiana a favor.



ROKITA

### Katrina's effects not over for children

The Hattiesburg (Miss.) American

A new study showing that up to 35,000 children — one-third of them across the Gulf Coast still displaced by Hurricane Katrina — are plagued by mental health, behavioral and school problems, is not one of those documents that can be permitted to rest on some government shelf.

This is something that requires immediate and ongoing attention.

The study, jointly conducted by the Columbia University National Center for Preparedness and the Children's Health Fund, also indicates that many of those children's parents are depressed, leaving them unable to help the children, according to Dr. Irwin Redlener, director of the center and president of the health fund.

Redlener's concerns need to be shared by everyone. It's been 17 months since Katrina struck the Mississippi Gulf Coast, leveling much of the Gulf Coast and causing levee breaks in New Orleans that swamped the city and nearby St. Bernard Parish with polluted water for weeks.

In addition to the physical devastation, Katrina brought out a smorgasbord of issues totally unrelated to weather and hurricane preparedness, although those are not to be summarily dismissed.

When children are victimized through no fault of their own, it is time to take notice. That notice needs to come by way of a combination of private sector initiatives, faith-based and civic relief, and government support. The impact the hurricane had on the lives of the children is not something that is going to be washed away simply by time. It will take recognition and treatment.

### Pair tax breaks with minimum-wage hike

South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Small business is the backbone of the U.S. economy. A minimum-wage increase that cripples small business is likely to be counterproductive.

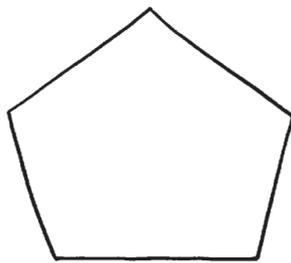
Therefore, Americans should support the Senate version of legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour over two years. The House has approved similar legislation, but the Senate added tax breaks for small business that House leaders oppose.

The House should be reasonable. A wage hike that hurts small businesses, which generally operate on low profit margins, is one that also could hurt workers by costing them jobs.

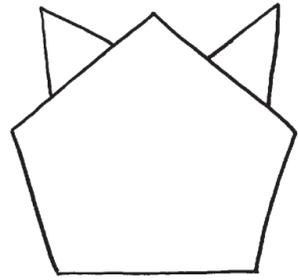
The Senate has the more sensible approach and the one most likely to truly benefit workers. It's also revenue-neutral, because the tax breaks would be offset by tax increases on corporations and their top executives. The House should join the Senate so the bill can move quickly to the president's desk.

## Fun with Geometry...

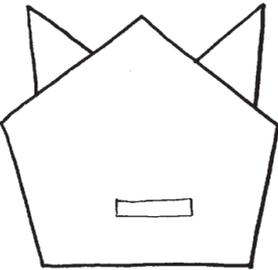
START WITH A PENTAGON...



ADD TWO TRIANGLES...



THEN A RECTANGLE...



FINALLY, 5 CIRCLES. AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE?



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## SPEAK OUT: INDIANA COMMERCE CONNECTOR

### Claims that state needs tollway are misleading

To the editor:

The following is an open letter to State Sen. Thomas J. Wyss, the sponsor of Senate Bill 1 proposing both the Illiana Toll Road in northwest Indiana and the Indianapolis bypass toll road.

Dear Sen. Wyss: I just read your second letter to the editor in the Daily Journal in less than a month concerning your vision for Indiana, especially its highway infrastructure.

As you may recall, Senator, I have sent you both traditional letters and e-mails explaining why I oppose highway privatization and in particular the proposed Indianapolis bypass toll road.

Yet, Senator, I still await at least a simple acknowledgment that you received any of my communications.

In your letters to the editor, you speak about building a toll-free Interstate 69 without borrowing money or raising taxes. I say it can be done right now without signing any further privatization contracts by simply using the Major Moves money already set aside for the project.

How? Utilize the much more economical U.S. 41-Interstate 70 corridor route instead.

In regards to your vision of "if we build them (i.e., highways), they will come," please tell me on what specific study you base your benefits claims for the Indianapolis bypass toll road. No such study currently exists that supports your claims. Senator, you and I both know that to be true.

May I be so bold as to suggest that you (along with Gov. Mitch Daniels and the Indiana Department of Transportation, including the public relations firm recently hired to promote these privatization projects) conclude your stated benefits claims with a simple disclaimer, something like "these stated benefits are solely my own personal opinions and are not

currently supported by an independently conducted study."

If highways are the panacea to economic prosperity, as you, Senator, claim, then please explain the continuing loss of manufacturing jobs in this state (e.g., Ford, Guide, Delphi and now most recently both Lilly and Visteon).

Can it simply be, as you imply, the allegedly outdated and limited highway infrastructure Indiana currently has? I don't think so.

The facts are that Indiana currently ranks No. 4 in the nation in the number of interstate miles on an area basis, and Indianapolis ranks No. 1 in interstate connections for all cities across the entire nation.

Senator, also please explain why Indiana currently ranks near the bottom in economic growth and job growth given our current highway infrastructure.

May I again be so bold as to suggest that Indiana already has enough highway infrastructure? Let's instead develop, improve and promote the highways/roads and the industrial parks/areas we already have.

Let's also continue efforts to diversify our state's economy through such job sectors as the life sciences, high tech and logistics.

In closing, if INDOT conducts a second public meeting in Franklin regarding the Indianapolis bypass toll road, I hope you can also come.

I'm certain that many Johnson County residents in addition to myself would like to personally



WRITE A

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

#### WHERE TO SEND THE LETTER

<b>Mail</b> Letters to the editor The Daily Journal P. O. Box 699 Franklin, IN 46131	<b>E-mail</b> letters@thejournalnet.com	<b>Fax</b> 736-2766
<b>Drop-off</b> 2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31) Franklin		

share with you our own visions for Indiana and our community outside the confines of the Statehouse itself, the letter to the editor section of our local newspaper, and especially Fort Wayne, your home district.

**Philip E. Brewer**  
Greenwood

### Property owners not safe from eminent domain

To the editor: Sen. Thomas J. Wyss asks us to imagine a world without Interstates 65, 69 and 465 and makes a feeble attempt to link the Indiana Commerce Connector to this vision. Sen. Wyss fails to mention a few important details.

Imagine that. The federal and state governments took private property for the good of the cause in developing the interstate system. They did not, however, hand the land over to private, for-profit business.

I believe that most Americans would agree that the interstate system of the 1960s was an achievement that benefited society as a whole. The critical point that Wyss, Gov. Mitch Daniels, the Indiana Department of Transportation and many state legislators are missing is that taking private property in the name of economic development and turning it over to private, for-profit businesses is morally and ethically wrong.

It troubles me that the basic principle of property rights is being trampled on. Why can Gov. Daniels do this?

Whether China will pose a threat to the United States is always an issue of discussion. I have written several columns on this topic on account of the significance of the issue.

Since China now has ability to destroy its own satellites, they also have the ability to destroy any satellites, including ours. Based on reports, the U.S. communication satellites are vital to our national security. So the Chinese missile test was perceived as a threat to U.S. security.

In Chinese culture, good human relations are vital among its people and with other countries as well.

For the past 20 years, China has supported us on the international stage with respect to North Korea and terrorism. Furthermore, China is also one of the largest trade partners with the United States. The Chinese feel that we should have confidence in them.

According to a theory of international politics, a country

can pose a threat to its neighbors only as long as it meets two major factors.

The first one is the capability of a country. If we look at the national power of China today, they have a population of 1.3 billion, a large mass of land, a strong economy ranked second in the world, the largest military force in the world and nuclear-weapon capability.

As far as weaponry goes, China is not as advanced as the United States. However, China is undergoing a modernization of its weapons. So China could pose a formidable threat to any nation in the world.

More important is the second factor, the intentions of China. No one can predict the intentions of another country. It is much like a game of chess, you can anticipate your opponent's move but never really be sure of the next move. However, here are some facts that need to be taken into consideration.

First, China has suffered so much under the communist regime, especially during the Cultural Revolution.

The past 20 years, under the party's reform wing, Chinese people for the first time have enjoyed the material life within their own nation that they were once so proud of.

No one in China wanted disorder or chaos, including their leaders.

Check a recent Supreme Court case, *Kelo vs. the City of New London* (decided in June 2005). In that case, the city of New London, Conn., condemned private property for public use.

The city had plans of revitalizing a blighted area and used eminent domain to do so. The city took the private property and handed it over to a private business to develop the property. The Supreme Court, in a narrow 5-4 decision, voted in favor of New London. Not surprising, the most liberal justices voted for New London and the most conservative justices dissented.

The case itself, however, focused more on public use than on economic development. The dissenting justices were concerned that governments would see this decision and apply it in a liberal fashion to using eminent domain. States could simply argue for the good of the cause and snatch your land. Sound familiar?

Many states, including Illinois, passed legislation in response to the case. These states passed laws to limit government takings of private property.

Indiana, on the other hand, has been a state that has been aggressive using eminent domain over the course of the past few years. Gov. Daniels and state legislators are in fact taking a liberal approach to the Supreme Court case.

In the course of history, you will find that property owners and working folks have made many a sacrifice. These sacrifices were made because people truly believed that it was a sacrifice for the betterment of this great state.

Property owners are now under attack. We have fought city expansion, pipelines and now toll roads. We are good people who will fight the good fight.

I would say to our local politicians: You are either with us or against us. There is no middle ground.

**Andy Hensley**  
Needham Township

## U.S. worrying too much about China's intentions



Yu-long Ling

There is an old Chinese saying, "Once you have been bitten by a snake, when you see a rope you will think it is a snake." We can relate this proverb to the current paranoid state of the United States.

After the Cold War, our country has become the target of international terrorism.

Post-Sept. 11 security has become a significant issue, and the United States has become paranoid about threats from everywhere.

As a result, we currently have wars going on in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The past several years, we have also been concerned seriously about the development of nuclear arms in countries such as Iran and North Korea. Leaders of both countries have expressed strong intentions against us and our allies. We have good reason to be concerned.

A current example is China's recent ballistic missile development that shot down one of its satellites in outer space. The mass media and some politicians quickly proposed China as being a direct threat to the United States.

As a former president of the American Association of Chinese Studies, I have had the opportunity to meet with many influential leaders in the United States and China.

Second, the United States is the most important trade partner with China.

Therefore China wants to cultivate this valuable relationship rather than ruin it.

Third, China is an active member of the United Nations Security Council.

Its leaders have learned quickly that it should be a responsible member. China feels it is not in its interest to rock the boat.

Finally, China is a country with many challenges and contradictions. Its leaders are very much aware of their positions.

Just like a captain sailing through a storm, they are very cautious and aware of the potential dangers, and the last thing they will do is challenge a superpower like the United States.

The Chinese are strong and satisfied; so there is no need to overreact.

My advice is to let this issue go. Do not turn a snake into a dragon.

In other words, don't make this a bigger issue than it really is.

Professor Yu-long Ling holds the Williams Chair in Law and Public Service at Franklin College and is an internationally respected expert in foreign policy. He writes this weekly opinion column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.