



Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform Summary of Public Input: November 1 through November 15

The excerpted statements below summarize public comments received by the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform through the commission's web site, e-mail address, or by mail between November 1 and November 15, 2007. Comments specifically about property taxes have been forwarded to the Commission on State Tax and Financing Policy.

- I continue to be frustrated by the size of government. Government is choking us. There are so many duplications of services. I have noticed our local JobSource office is spending a great deal of money on advertising how great they are and how much good they do. Why spend money and resources on advertising when those dollars and resources are costing tax payer money? Also, the more we do for people the more they want done for them. We are actually making people less motivated by giving them so much. We need to let not-for-profits and private individuals and churches give to the needy. Government should stay out of this arena. I was poor as a child and I did not like it so I worked hard to not be poor. I know many bright, capable people who sit and wait for handouts because they know someone will rescue them. No wonder jobs go overseas. Our people will not work, at any wage, in some cases.
- In regards to LIBRARIES: To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, the following suggestion should be revisited: Instead of consolidating all public libraries have the STATE MANDATE THAT THE TAX RATE FOR ALL LIBRARY DISTRICTS BE THE COUNTY LIBRARY'S CURRENT TAX RATE OR THE LOWEST LIBRARY TAX RATE IN THAT COUNTY. This simple tactic will maintain local control and force budget cuts. If a library system cannot maintain current operations due to budget cuts, then that library board can decide to contract library services with another library district or VOLUNTARILY consolidate with another library system.
- What could possibly hold such a strong grip on my attention? The abject stupidity of another three-million dollar re-re-re-assessment for Marion County has provided me with this wonderment. If you can read the Marion County reassessment order without grinding your teeth to nubs, you will notice their re-emerging theme: "We want your money, and we don't care how we get it!" The argument of stable funding sources for the "Government" is neither an argument nor a logical statement. The time for rebellion has come. The immoral and degrading property tax must be removed immediately, to preserve "We the People." The 13.2 percent sales tax rate is a bluster, and not well thought out, at that. I, and others, are fed up with the Gospel according to Luke Kenley. Where are your original ideas? And, I have seen no mention of spending reductions from you. Where are they?
- One of the keys to local government reform in my opinion is to improve the system of taxation at the local level. For this reason we are leading the effort for a Constitutional Amendment to permanently repeal property taxes. This is the only way for individuals to be able to finally own their own home, farm or business as well as to be able to vote on the issue of repealing property taxes. Additionally, this would provide a permanent solution to the property tax crisis and would also mean that we would not be repeating history by raising a tax or creating a new tax in exchange for temporarily lowering property taxes. Changing the manner in which local government is funded will help improve the delivery of services to Hoosiers at the local level while at the same time



helping to control local government spending. All of this would benefit the citizens of Indiana around the state in all 92 counties. More information is available on our website at www.RepealPropertyTaxes.com.

- Considering the projects Governor Daniels has imposed or attempted to impose on the citizens of my county, when I hear him use words like 'inefficient' and 'duplicative' to describe grassroots, local representation, I keep my left WAY up. The citizens of Indiana, and by this I mean the average Hoosiers, not the monied corporate interests, would do well to pay close attention to political plans that look to downsize the opportunities for the citizenry to have direct input into the legislation that governs their day-to-day lives. Centralized governmental control may spell 'more efficient' for some, but for many of us, it spells 'exclusive' and 'uninformed'...uninformed when it comes to the drastic local effects of such 'modern' and 'efficient' schemes as confined animal feeding operations and coal-powered generation plants. It spells Big Money and its influence. It spells economics for the privileged few and leavings for the rest of us. We here in my part of Indiana already know your opinion of our opinion, Mr. Daniels... whatever you're sellin', we ain't buyin'.
- I would like to know why each town of my area of Indiana has its own water treatment facility. Why not have several towns incorporate their water treatment facility together to help them lower their water bill costs. I would also like to say this website will be a great place to allow voters like myself to interact with our government.
- I believe the first step is for the county to market the property they acquired due to unpaid property taxes. I cannot speak for other counties but one of them has more than 300 pieces of county-owned property. Let's say 200 out of the 300 are good and the adjacent property owner is willing to purchase them for a small amount of money add it to their property and pay the taxes every year. I can show you two pieces of property near my house that the county wants to sell at about \$2,200. These properties are 20' by 100' and are useful to no one except the adjacent property owners. I understand that there is a state law that prohibits doing this. This law must be changed. If the property did not sell at 10 tax sales for a couple of hundred dollars what makes anyone think it is worth more than \$2,000 now? Nothing has changed with the property since the first tax sale 10 years ago. Let's get these properties sold in order to collect the property tax. This is logical and common sense economics. Furthermore, you must not charge Hoosier families out of their homes with higher property taxes. I know many senior citizens, who own their homes, thought they were on easy street when they retired. They found out that due to high property taxes, they must sell the property they have lived in for 30, 40, and some for 50 years or more.
- The problem with the system is that we have failed leadership at the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF). They control the whole property tax system. The DLGF sets the budgets, approves or declines assessments, and set the rates. The last of the three is not the problem. They do very little or nothing at all with budgets. Budgets are rubber stamped with no consideration about what problems they will cause down the road. The assessment side proves this year the people at DLGF have very little knowledge or don't care about the system. Here is the problem: property tax is the only way for the township to collect revenues to fund itself. The county and state have many different ways to fund themselves, such as sales, income, wheel, and so on. It's time that the counties and state budgets come off the property taxes and allow the townships to operate in ways in which its citizens will have control once again!
- Create one county government with an elected council, and a "county administrator" (full-time professional executive, preferably with a degree and experience in public administration) hired by the County Council, who would in turn hire the department



heads (streets, roads and bridges, water/sewer, police, fire, etc.). Create one school district per county with one superintendent answering to one school board.

- It is imperative that the commission not dismantle or consolidate programs or services that are in place and are working efficiently and providing satisfactory services to communities. Our library is efficient, responsive to the needs of the communities, and is perceived as "our" library. We do not want it merged into the county library system. This would be a giant step backwards.
- The most critical government services are public safety (police/fire/EMTs), water & sewer (though this can be contracted with public oversight), streets and bridges (may be contracted.) To modernize and streamline local governments we could combine and streamline service delivery (uni-gov as much as possible), and maximize the use of technology. The biggest impact on the ability of local governments to deliver services efficiently and effectively is the fragmented elected bodies (multiple small jurisdictions), and dysfunctional, small staffs. My top three recommendations for reforming the structure and/or function of local government are to eliminate townships, re-draw county boundaries to a formula of population/area (square miles), and direct the unification of service delivery (city/county 911, planning & zoning, parks and recreation).
- Do not restructure local government. I find this very disturbing, this attempt to privatize government. Two-thirds of our local welfare department will be moving to another town in a few weeks. When older citizens come for help, they will have a computer and a telephone. Most do not know how to use a computer and you rarely get to speak to a human when you use the phone these days. I thought when I ran for office I was becoming a public servant. I still believe that exists at the local level; however I have watched it disappear before my eyes at the state level. Perhaps you need to look at what is happening at the state level and perhaps restructure it. Our local assessors do a wonderful job. The value of talking to a person, at the local level is priceless. I have worked in county government for 17 years and I have never been part of a worse mess. Trending and ratio studies hit and we could not get our tax rates for 2006 pay 2007. Our schools borrowed money and the taxpayer will have to bear a heavier tax burden. The percent of homestead credit was lowered for the county while the state kept more, business inventory came off (yet there did not seem to be a noticeable difference in prices). All this while nursing homes still pay a tax on every bed they have in their business. Government was not meant to be privatized. We need the checks and balances our system provides. It is the only way we all can choose to have a voice. I liked the discussion at the forum and I like the structure, even though at times it is tumultuous. It is what makes our country great. As you chip away at these rights and privileges, at the local level, I say, remember "We The People."
- Assign the task of property assessments to Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF). Assign state appointed assessors to various state-wide geographical districts. Eliminate the assessing function of the present Township Trustee/Assessors. Once DLGF is in place, eliminate the function of the Township Assessors and assign that function to the County Assessors. Assign the Poor Relief function to County Welfare officials and the tending of Township cemeteries to County Commissioners.
- When an interstate gas line crosses my property, the utility is granted the power of eminent domain. They desire a permanent easement whereby I pay the property tax forever, but cannot plant a tree within the easement right-of-way. If private property rights have been lost via government granted eminent domain, it should be immune from further taxation OR provide the owner the privilege of negotiating a long-term lease instead of selling a permanent easement. Further, the proceeds of a forced sale via government granted eminent domain should not be subject to income tax.



- Tax assessments should be calculated by the Marshall & Swift method which is based on nationally standardized cost data not sales data. The Assessment System in place in the state of Indiana is a big part of the problem, not the Assessors in place who use it. Sales is not an accurate measure from year to year on what property should be worth. A cap on how long someone pays on their property should be in place as well. Use the cost of materials, instead of market sales, so the tax is fair for everybody Statewide!!! Furthermore, get a handle on spending by schools and governments and make them use what money is available and not continue to raise tax rates to fund unnecessary projects, groups, and commissions to oversee everything. STOP blaming local assessors for the tax problem! We local assessors are only doing what we are told by the Department of Local Government Finance per their guidelines! FIX THE SYSTEM FIRST! The local assessors are needed. We are the front line for taxpayers. On any given day the taxpayer can come to our local township offices and speak with the elected assessor and/or the supervisor whichever department that relates to the taxpayers needs. ALSO: help the taxpayer with one simple appeal form if they don't approve of their assessment: one form for Residential, one form for Commercial/Industrial, and one form for Business Personal Property.
- I would be very disappointed if libraries were consolidated.
- I don't think it is right to close small libraries. Many people in my town believe this too.
- I am opposed to closing libraries. It would be inconvenient to go elsewhere.
- Why are you going to cut local offices like welfare. I have complaints about the welfare system.
- Indiana Department of Transportation has awarded \$50,000 to upgrade a railroad crossing in my county that isn't as necessary as fixing bridges and roads. This money was appropriated without consent of the voters. People should be advised ahead of time so they can have a voice in the decision to spend large amounts of money.
- I believe that we need the small town libraries. It is handy for old people and for the little ones in school. Also, with the high gas prices and winter driving it is hard to go to the larger cities for library service. If we consolidate, then the larger libraries will have to make more room, so there is more expense. We have lost our school, railroads, and small jobs. If you take away the library, you taken the heart of the town, also.
- There are twenty ways to CUT residential property taxes (RPT): 1. Mandatory IN 36-7-4-1300 IMPACT FEES on NEW CONSTRUCTION. Pay the fee in the mortgage over 15 to 30 years. Growth states such as California, Florida and Georgia collect impact fees to pay for new schools and infrastructure. New construction does not pay additional property taxes in Indiana for approximately two years. 2. Mandatory SALES TAX on NEW CONSTRUCTION. Central Indiana is the #1 most affordable housing market in the USA with five years of record-breaking sales up to 2006. 3. Increase BUILDING PERMIT FEES, WATER & SEWER TAP-ON FEES, DEVELOPMENT LICENSE FEES, etc. 4. Use ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCOME TAXES (EDIT) to offset residential property taxes. Tax revenue raised by EDIT that is given to businesses increased local income taxes by 250 percent in Hendricks County while growth and corporate welfare have caused residential property taxes to increase 350 percent. 5. Increase DIESEL FUEL TAXES, LICENSES, TOLLS and WHEEL TAXES on large, heavy trucks that destroy our roads and bridges; therefore NO property tax revenue necessary to be used for transportation infrastructure. NO privatization of toll roads needed that would be a financial burden on your children and grandchildren. 6. Elimination of TAX ABATEMENTS for retail and warehouses paying low wages whose employees (some who are illegal aliens) do not provide sufficient taxes for government services such as education, police & fire and infrastructure but do require taxpayer paid Medicaid, rent



subsidies, energy assistance, food stamps, education and illegal alien law enforcement. Illegals receive these tax paid benefits. 7. Elimination of TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) and SALES TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (STIF) that deprive schools, police & fire, road & bridge repair, water & sewer upgrades, libraries and other essential government services from needed tax revenue. 8. Elimination of TIF RECOVERY on the residential property tax bills that pay for business tax cuts. This is a double tax on homeowners. 9. Elimination of ALL CORPORATE WELFARE such as SINGLE FACTOR SALES APPORTIONMENT, TAX CREDITS, TAX GRANTS, TRAINING GRANTS and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCOME TAXES (EDIT) on family income. The best corporate welfare has only moved lower (40 percent less) paying Honda/Toyota jobs into Indiana to replace higher paid GM/Ford/Chrysler jobs that include better benefits. 10. Eliminate NON-PROFIT STATUS for institutions that do not pay property taxes such as medical care that is bankrupting American families and foreclosing on their homes because it is 16 percent of GDP and rising fast. 11. Use the Innkeeper tax (hotel/motel taxes), food/beverage tax and car rental tax to pay for parks, water, sewer and road repairs that tourists and guests use when they visit our state or your county instead of multi-million dollar sport facilities and private business marketing/sales expenses. 12. STOP development costs and business taxes from being SHIFTED to residential property taxpayers, to low & middle class income taxpayers and to sales taxpayers. Home Town Matters will only accelerate this shift of taxes. 13. Say NO to NEW, high density, cheap, small ground floor, vinyl housing that reduces present property values. A \$250000 home is required to pay property taxes for essential government services. 14. Read the "Great American Jobs Scam, Corporate Tax Dodging and the Myth of Job Creation" book by Greg LeRoy available at <http://www.greatamericanjobsscaml.com>, the Indiana government library in Indianapolis or your local library. 15. NO NFL tax breaks or using taxpayers' money to pay for the Super Bowl. Use these tax savings to cut RPT. 16. Indiana has a "brain drain" problem. NO full-day kindergarten, taxpayer paid textbooks or selling/leasing the lottery are needed. Use surplus taxes to cut RPT. 17. NO \$27 million tax subsidy to horse racing or the film industry. Use subsidies to cut RPT. 18. Increase taxes on tobacco, alcohol, gas guzzling vehicles and luxury goods and services. Use these taxes to cut RPT and fund medical/health insurance for the uninsured. 19. Use the 20 percent increase in sales taxes and gasoline taxes enacted a few years ago to cut RPT instead of cutting business property taxes. My RPT increased 19 percent the following year. 20. Repeal the \$9000 pay increase that is automatically adjusted for inflation that the Indiana State General Assembly recently voted for themselves. Use the tax savings to cut RPT.

- I support eliminating the township functions. In the case of the assessor, that should go to the County Assessor. Fire Departments should go under the control of the County Commissioners. Township poor relief done by trustees should go to Community Action Agencies in the state who already perform these functions for the state on other programs.
- The Governor's Assessors press proposal will not improve the assessment system. The county and district assessors will be appointed which is political. If appraiser certification is required, it will be extremely costly. Local assessing officials with Level II will just get rehired because someone has to do the work. Consolidation of records and offices will cost a mint. At least a minimum of one year would be needed for the transition. A Michigan study determined that getting rid of township assessors would cost the state \$10 million. Indiana should lay low for a few years and let the dust settle instead of redoing the system every year. Thought has to be given to any plan. The Governor's plan is very vague. County assessors will be appointed according to requirements determined by a state regulatory agency. What agency? What standards? Appointed



rather than hired or fired is still political. Control of local government is being removed. Time and serious non-political thought are required.

- In order to fix permanently the property tax problem in Indiana we need the following: 1. Shift to a taxation system based on services required - i.e., bare ground requires very little services as opposed to a person living in a home. 2. Shift to a taxation system based on the ability to pay - if you make money, you pay. With property taxes it doesn't matter if you are elderly and living on a fixed income, if your property taxes go up you must find a way to pay them. Likewise, if a business has a bad year and loses money, they must come up with their property taxes. 3. A shift from property taxes to income and/or sales tax would greatly streamline the very inefficient, unfair, and costly system of property taxes. 4. Changing our state's taxation system can be done in stages, eliminating levies completely. 5. Shifting from property taxes to a state tax system would allow for much greater equity in our schools. Currently a rural school spends much less per student than an urban school. With the state collecting taxes, the amount distributed per student could be equalized. 6. Prioritize services - citizens should help with this process. The highest priority services would be mandated to be funded, (schools, police, fire protection, etc.). Lower priority services would only be funded if funds were available (parks, libraries, poor relief). Government has become too inclusive, making citizens think we need every service available. Government should not be responsible for everything. Where government ends, then the private sector would kick in, donations could help fund a library, churches could help with poor relief. As an example, several years ago property owners took care of the roads close to where they lived, they mowed the ditches, they cleared the road when it snowed. And still to this day in the country many still do this, although probably much less than in our past history. Citizens expect the city, the county, the state, the Federal government to take care of everything. Where has personal responsibility gone? Let us get back some degree of personal responsibility for our lives, our property, and our communities. With more personal responsibility would come more efficient stewardship of our resources and cut out some of the abuse and inefficiency to the system we currently have.
- We would like to see our library stay.
- Consolidating our library with one in another town would cause much inconvenience. I would kindly ask for your support in keeping our library here in our hometown.
- We need to implement county-wide emergency services and do away with township government. Emergency services provided in the past by volunteers will be ending. Emergency Medical Service is the most important part of that service. We need to have a merger and direct control of services and expenses county-wide. This needs to be an elected position, so that taxpayers have a voice. I am a trustee and I even feel the office is antiquated. If you don't replace it with county-wide services the taxpayers have no voice. This is an important issue and one that costs a lot of money. County-wide emergency services is a need for all areas and must be considered. All expenses should be kept to needs and not wants.
- Please vote against the mandatory consolidation of local libraries.
- Please do not consolidate our library. The state distribution (\$600,000 for all Indiana libraries in 2006) given to libraries in the past, should not have been transferred to the State Library.
- My contentment and pleasure here is due a great deal to the wonderful library in my town. Please let it continue!
- Please recommend to the legislature and to Governor Daniels that libraries not be consolidated. There is no need for change here.
- I have signed the form from my local library asking not to consolidate.



- As a taxpayer, former employee, volunteer, and patron of my local library, I ask you to please report that this library is providing a service that deserves to be continued and might be lost in consolidation.
- I am writing to protest merging independent libraries into a larger system like a county library system because I fear that a merger would eliminate the local control that provide us with so many meaningful programs and services.
- I strongly OPPOSE any consolidation of our local library into the county library. Please let us keep our library just as it is.
- Why would you think that closing a local library is going to save the State of Indiana any money? My kids and I have used the public library for nearly 15 years. Our town is small but if you close this local branch, all the school kids and older residents of this town would have to drive a distance to use their libraries. Why would driving and wasting my time save YOU ANY MONEY. I would put unnecessary wear and tear on my vehicle, use OVERPRICED , IMPORTED, CRUDE OIL IN MY VEHICLE WHICH WOULDN'T HELP OUR COUNTRIES DEPENDANCE ON SAID IMPORTED CRUDE OIL AT ALL. IN ORDER TO SAVE A COUPLE OF PENNIES TO BE WASTED BY OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS SOME OTHER WAY?! I don't see the savings at all Mr. or Mrs. Elected Official. It would be a crime against the very citizens who elected you in the first place. PLEASE DON'T CLOSE LOCAL LIBRARIES!!!
- Our community strongly resists the idea of consolidating public libraries in our county. My town has a wonderful facility that is totally supported (financially) by the community and I personally feel that as long as it is not a burden to the state it should be left as is.
- I am opposed to the closing of libraries. I think that any governor that decides to close a library must not like books or care about the communities. Local libraries provide many opportunities for people to meet. It provides many opportunities for people and families who cannot drive great distances. It provides summer reading programs for children. It provides family programs for free for those who cannot afford such things. It provides computers for people to find jobs or make school reports. There is staff there who can help anyone. You can borrow books or movies. The community needs the library. The library is vitally important. What kind of governor would close a library? Mitch Daniels needs to stop and think. Quit trying to fix things. Leave the libraries as they are. Small towns need their libraries. Books are vital for learning.
- To close my local library would be detrimental to my community.
- I want my local library to remain right where it is and do not want it consolidated into a bigger branch somewhere else.
- We want our public library to stay as is. Please do not make it part of county public library.
- There should be an Indiana law stating every new resident homeowner should have 1) Indiana Driver's License 2) at least one vehicle with Indiana license plates 3) a voter's registration card. The state of Indiana is missing lost revenue due to the present laws.
- Please do not jeopardize our public library system. Traveling from where my main membership is located would be a great handicap for me and many others in my area who depend on the many services they provide. The programs for children are superb and the computer availability is great. I am 83 years old and learned how to use the Internet and do genealogy by attending sessions there. Please re-think this consolidation - and DON'T do it!
- What about exemptions on rental property?
- As a cost savings for elections city and town elections should be set on the non-presidential election dates such as 2010, 2014, 2020. It's silly to have polls open for a



city or town just because there is one race for an at large position. It is a waste of tax dollars.

- I was dismayed to read in the newspaper that Governor Daniels is proposing tying increases in the budgets of county government entities to the growth in personal income in the county. If I'm reading this right--and I can hardly believe I am!--this would mean counties with more needy and poor people would receive less or poorer services. Besides appearing unconstitutional on its face, such a proposal also sounds devoid of compassion and ethics. Please tell me he was misquoted!
- I am a Director of a public library and want to address state two themes that I have seen in comments from the public forums in regards to public libraries. First, the issue of "unserved" areas and consolidation needs to be addressed on the county wide level. The residents of the county need to decide what library system(s) works best for him or her. One size does not necessarily fit all. For some counties it might be beneficial, but for other counties, it might not. Regardless of which county, the planning and organization of one or more library district should come from the people the district(s) serve. We have three separate library districts in our county. I do think it is important for the three Library Boards to look at cooperative measures and how the three libraries can partner more. I know the other two libraries do not want to lose their identify and are afraid of that with consolidation. In terms of "unserved" areas, this is something that needs to be addressed. Again, it needs to be addressed on a local (county) level. The second issue is elected library boards. Although libraries are generally supported through taxes, it is, in my view, important to keep them out of the political process of elections. By stating this, I am not saying that libraries are special or better than any other public supported institution. But, public libraries are invaluable in so many ways (saying this not because I am a Director) and Library Board members who are appointed have served the community well in my experience. Library Board members who are appointed for the most part are ones who really value what the public library does and can make long term decisions that benefit the community and library the most. Appointed Library Board members in my experience realize that the taxpayers support the library and try to make the best fiscal decisions possible while maintaining the long-term health of the library. If Library Trustees were elected, my concern would be negative impact on the library due to political agendas or goals. Also, appointed Trustees represent government units or entities that are elected by the residents/tax payers who live within the library district. I understand the need to look at how to make local government more efficient and effective for taxpayers. I feel I can say that public libraries have in general served the public and taxpayers well within the State of Indiana. This does not mean that there are not things we as public libraries could do better. Hopefully, this Commission will help us in doing that. For the benefit of the communities they serve, I strongly urge that library boards remain appointed and any consolidation is decided on the local (county) community level.
- The Indiana Public Defender Council recommends that the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform explore state funding for indigent defense in Indiana. We believe that state funding and oversight will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of indigent defense services in Indiana. The Board of Directors of the Council concluded long ago that state funding for indigent defense services was necessary to improve the quality of services in Indiana. In pursuit of this goal, we have explored the following methods of increasing state funding for indigent defense services: 1. Keeping the present system and increasing reimbursement through the Public Defender Commission, e.g., increase the amount of reimbursement in felony and juvenile delinquency cases from 40 percent to 50 percent, or increase the current non-capital reimbursement of 40 percent in felony and juvenile delinquency cases to provide 40



percent reimbursement for all indigent cases. 2. Keep the present system and transfer funding responsibility to the state for some of the expenditures or types of cases, e.g., chief public defender and chief deputy (as is currently done for prosecutors), juvenile delinquency, CHINS, termination of parental rights, or appeals. 3. Transfer responsibility for providing and funding to the state for some services, e.g., appeals, death penalty, juvenile, CHINS, or termination of parental rights. 4. Transfer the responsibility for providing and funding all indigent defense services from the counties to the state. After reviewing the options and the indigent defense delivery systems in other states, our conclusion is that we support total state funding for indigent defense services.

- I agree with the proposal of raising sales tax and income tax. I think we should go further with 2 percent increase in sales tax and raise income tax to 4.5 percent and do away with the unfair property tax totally.
- Please allow the people to vote via referendum for an Indiana constitutional change to implement term limits for all elected officials. Please allow the people to vote via referendum for an Indiana constitutional change to eliminate straight ticket voting. I strongly believe that by implementing term limits on elected offices this will promote a more competitive atmosphere. Those offices that are currently deemed unobtainable due to entrenched officeholders with good name recognition would become a possibility for those seeking to run for office. In addition, by implementing term limits those elected officials that, if truth be known, would rather not run for re-election do so at the encouragement of their party. In other words, good, qualified people get more involved and active in their local government. I do not believe that every single candidate on one particular political side is the very best qualified person for each office being sought. By simply punching one spot on the ballot screen is a disservice to the election process. If a registered voter wants to vote all Republican or Democrat make them at least go through and punch every R or D that is on their ballot.
- Property taxes in my city are at 5 percent. I cannot afford to keep my house where I have lived for 15 years. I was told by my local government that the problem lies downstate. I need some answers. I want to be heard.
- Once again our community is under attack by our State government. I'm sure you realize of how important our public library is to the citizens who live and work in this area and therefore, I cannot understand the plan to force its closing. Our public library provides valuable services in our community. Services that would not be available to them if you force its closing. The money taken from the Indiana libraries in 2006 should be given back. I think you should look again for the 3.33 percent you need.
- Here is the website for actual testing of property tax changes using Land Value Tax System (LVT) in Indiana: www.indianalandvaluetax.org. Indiana's 2006 actual assessed valuations are used and cover most of Indiana's residential tax base. A 20 percent value shift from structures to land, staying revenue neutral, was used. Over time, of course the shift would reach 100 percent or nearby. Harrisburg, PA was using 90 percent land/10 percent structures last I knew. Thus tax savings to homeowners will become higher. As you experiment with the site, be sure to click on mapping, and then various ballons which are individual addresses. Also be sure to try your own address. The website was created at no cost to Indiana taxpayers. The president of the Borough of Manhattan has awarded a commission to The Henry George Foundation to prepare an LVT study for all of New York City. This proven system works.
- As an estate planning and administration attorney, I strongly concur with William L. Tracy's suggestion that all inheritance tax responsibilities be handled by the State Department of Revenue. Under present law, the county assessor, probate judge, and county treasurer are all participants in the administration of inheritance tax law before



the inheritance tax return is audited by the state. This is a clear case of government duplication of services and I hope the Commission will seriously evaluate this proposal. Please see the editorial by Jimi Herman in the Indianapolis Star, August 26, 2007.

- I think the seating at the forums slanted responses. The horror stories about reform's potential impact on libraries are having the desired effect. If local government wants to discourage online transactions, they should be more timely, friendly, and available at convenient hours. Combine the WorkOne centers with libraries and offer government services there for efficiency. Combine and outsource local government's computer network servers. I support the Governor's plan to allow a vote on major bond issues. Eliminate property taxes. The Governor's plan leaves the door open for gaming assessments. I think it's unfair that locals give away property taxes to gain business. Property taxes should only be owed at the time value is increased. The fairest tax is the income tax because it is applied equally. Consolidate government to reduce cost.
- 1) Property taxes are a big issue. Owners are burdened for life and paying many times over the value of their property. Remove property taxes and find another method such as sales tax. Other states have sales taxes instead of property and they are surviving. Why can't we, in Indiana? 2) Sending all of our jobs overseas is not working for the American people. Something needs to be done about jobs in America. If people had jobs and income, there would be less crime, less prisons, and less homelessness. When there are unrepaired streets, deteriorated buildings and broken city sewers that could put the unemployed to work in our cities, no one is developing a program to put the unemployed and homeless back to work now. We need real contacts with employers, employers who will respond to job applications and resumes instead of putting the unemployed on hold. 3) Where is a report showing where all the money went that the State received from the sale of the Indiana Toll Road as of this date? Where have all those funds gone and where are all those funds going? What are those funds being spent on? Where are those funds being reinvested and how much interest has accumulated year to date? What has happened to accumulated interest? Is there be a yearly report showing where all that money has gone? In the State, in the Cities and Counties?
- Please do not consolidate our libraries.
- The amendment to the State Constitution does not cap State spending - it just takes the control of the money spent away from local governments and gives it to the State. If you want support for it, write the cap into the amendment for State spending. I am asking my State representatives not to support it unless this is done. I have nothing to lose. The same crooks got elected again. How can we get a law passed saying a person can't vote unless they have a job or own property? Would this be a federal bill? Can the State insist women on welfare be implanted with birth control devices? Can the welfare be limited to one child? How can the welfare be restructured to stop encouraging young women to get pregnant in order to have school paid for?
- Our local libraries are a vital and vibrant part of the energy of the community. Our local branches provide meeting facilities for local business and service organizations. The employees of the library grasp in a huge way the mission to have educational materials available. There are always educational displays in the various cases, there is access to computers, current and archival magazine and newspaper resources. My futile attempt to list services is just that, futile, because the list is so long I would miss way too many. Bottom line is please maintain the libraries in their present form.
- The biggest issue is the need for a "metro gov" system. That being one that combines city and county governments into one. Another issue of mine is that I cannot vote for the mayor or city counsel that have a direct effect on my livelihood, but the folks that live in



the city vote for county commissioners that have little to do with city government. Several offices could and should be eliminated. For example, we have a county surveyor that isn't even a surveyor. Township Trustees hold another position that should be examined. Unfunded state mandates must stop. What we need at the local and state level of government is accountability, common sense, trustworthiness, integrity, openness, and non-partisanship.

- The citizens of small towns depend upon the availability of the services our local library provides. If our library was merged into another district, our community would immediately face decline and many people would be deprived of all the library offers us because of lack of transportation to another facility. After school consolidation adversely affected our town and it has suffered the loss of many businesses since then. In addition, consideration would have to be given in regard to the gas expense and the scheduling of time for trips to another library if ours is closed down. As a young child I was taught to respect our library and to use it, both as a tool in schoolwork and also for reading enjoyment. Libraries today offer much more than they did only a few years ago and members of the public utilize the many services offered. Using the library has proved beneficial in day-to-day living and it enables the public (children and adults alike) to continue learning more all the time. Being so close to our school, many students visit the library and it is an ideal study aid for them. Our township public library is a Carnegie Library that opened in 1908, thanks to the generosity of Andrew Carnegie and the many local residents who raised money to build the library. It has recently been placed on the State Register of Historic Buildings. Paperwork for recognition on the National Register of Historic Buildings is in process. To sum it up, our library is here because the residents wanted it bad enough that they worked hard and raised the money to build it and NOW, we want to keep it here! It's my understanding that there are 238 independent library systems serving Indiana towns but the public library state distribution of \$600,000 for all Indiana libraries in 2006, given to these libraries in the past, was transferred by Governor Daniels to the state library instead. This was a wrong decision, even as state consolidation of our libraries would be. Please oppose such an action.
- Please don't close my library. It is very important to the community. Although it is only opened from 3-6:00 p.m., it is always full. They have a very good literacy program. If it closed, the community would be devastated. Most people walk there. It would be terrible for them if it were closed because of the distance to the county library.
- Governor Daniels, your property tax relief plan contained many good ideas. However, I must say that it is fundamentally flawed. From my viewpoint here at the county, what I see is the absolute need for total elimination of property taxes. You have much of the excessive township and county expenses duplicated at the state level, to process the information coming from each county. I object to government waste. It offends me that so much of the property tax that I pay goes to pay for collecting the tax. There are undoubtedly high-value areas where the tax is profitable, but there are vast areas of lower-valued properties where the tax simply falls far short of covering the cost of collection. I believe that there are only two options in property tax -- keep it as it is, or eliminate it totally. My proposal is to eliminate property taxes altogether. It would be replaced with a sales tax on real estate. Since sales tax is essentially self-collecting, virtually the total amount would be available to the government, rather than the tiny fraction that remains with the property tax system. I realize there would be an outcry from the public about implementing a sales tax on property. But, I don't see you as a man who is afraid of outcry when the results are worth it. Since the dollar amount needed from this tax is much, much, much smaller than the total property tax revenues currently being collected, it would be a fairly nominal tax rate. This would simply be buried into the cost of buying a home, where the total price is inconsequential. What



matters on property payments is the monthly payment, and this would be affected only by a very few dollars, spread across a typical 30-year mortgage. Income properties, businesses and rentals, which typically don't turn over regularly, would need to be handled separately, using an income tax.

- Please tell Mitch Daniels to leave our libraries alone. We live in a small community. Our library is the very hub of our community. They are very frugal and use their funds wisely. Pre-school to adults, the library is used by all. My granddaughter volunteers at the library every week. Most students in our area would not be able to go as far as the county public library to be able to do research for school. Think this through before you ruin individual communities by taking away their educational lifeline. We love our libraries and do not want to lose them.
- My small business paid 3 times the property tax for 2006 payable in 2007 compared to the tax 2001 payable 2002. It is very difficult to do business with this kind of expense, especially when added to rising labor cost and utility cost. Someone has to say "no" to county and city spending. We have a new jail (20 years), 3 new schools, and a new government center. The school system here is the county's single largest employer. Their employees enjoy health care and good wages. My employees and I deserve a raise, also. My city and county need to live with a budget instead of spending without regard for what it does to the residents of the county.
- We need our libraries because they provide literature, computer access, materials and reasearch in close proximity to the needy of our area. It is a great distance to the county library. It is not good reasoning to close our libraries when you consider how important they are to support education, especially for our school children. Our library is most important for those who are struggling to make ends meet. My family is dependent on the library computer and would not like to drive great distances with the high price of gas. Please reconsider the effect of this decision on working families and the elderly. The social activities that improve the mental health of all ages of this community revolve around our libraries. The advantages outweigh the costs of our local libraries when considering life is about service to the community. You have promised this service to us, Governor. I worked on your election campaign and therefore I feel I have the right to tell you this is a wrong decision. We need our libraries, please do not close them.
- I am a citizen of Indiana and am against library consolidation.
- Closing libraries is a singularly bad idea. I hope you can find other creative ways to streamline local government and make it more efficient. My family and I visit our public library twice a week, volunteer in its work, and have seen the lives of many children enhanced by participation in our local library.
- I write to support the elimination of property taxes and their replacement by adding 2 percent each to sales tax, income tax, and corporate income tax. Per pupil school operating and transportation costs should be equalized among the counties. Change the method of assessment from the subjective and fluctuating market value to a concrete measurement of lot size or acreage in conjunction with a basic use category, such as residential, commercial, farm or unusable acreage such as marshland. I support the permanent and total shift of school operating and transportation costs and child services, including juvenile incarceration, to state levied sales tax. Make sure TIF districts go away eventually and stop the eternal refinancing of those bonds. Look at the number and kind of properties being exempted from any property tax levy. We are better off with smaller local units of government in the areas of schools and small claims courts and maybe township emergency poor relief. Consolidated counties don't need township boards once their fire departments are merged, however rural counties might prefer township ordinances over county-wide ones. They should be allowed to vote on those



choices. It is not helpful to force counties to hire professional appraisers. I absolutely do not want a Constitutional Convention to start over. The state should reinstate the common school fund for equalizing student funding.