Message

From: Kaiser, Steven [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=10BF2440EDD749D2845015C7AB59FF4B-SKAISE02]
Sent: 1/24/2017 5:52:16 PM
To: Carla Morgan [cmorgan@eastchicago.com]; McCoy, Lisa [LMcCoy@idem.IN.gov]
CC: Garypie, Catherine [garypie.catherine@epa.gov]; Toney, Marcy [toney.marcy@epa.gov]; Leverett Nelson [Nelson.Leverett@epa.gov]
Subject: USS Lead - Press

No press reports today (01/24).

January 23, 2017

NWIT - East Chicago residents seek help with bottled water drive
The Rolling Stone - The Radical Crusade of Mike Pence
NWIT - EDITORIAL: Holcomb should hit reset on lead-crisis response

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/east-chicago-residents-seek-help-with-bottled-water-drive/article_58163797-e73e-54e8-b182-4922c5129728.html

- ## East Chicago residents seek help with bottled water drive

Lauren Cross Northwest Indiana Times Jan 21, 2017

EAST CHICAGO — Residents living in the contaminated USS Lead Superfund site said they are solidifying plans to launch a bottled water drive in light of EPA test results showing high lead levels in a batch of homes' drinking water.

Veronica Eskew, principal at East Chicago Urban Enterprise Academy, said during a Saturday meeting of a community advisory group she can organize a schoolwide competition to encourage her students to bring in cases of bottled water for distribution in the Superfund site. The school is just north of the site, with Chicago Avenue separating the two.

Maritza Lopez said they are eyeing two churches in the Calumet neighborhoods as storage locations, and Juan Fernandez, organizer of the annual People's Thanksgiving Turkey Drive, said his group would help deliver bottled water to senior citizens.

"We'll need volunteers," Lopez said.

Residents are pushing for bottled water despite statements from the city that it provides clean drinking water and complies with EPA's 1991 Lead and Copper Rule, which set guidelines for safeguarding against lead levels.

The Community Advisory Group — formed last year to advocate on behalf of residents during EPA cleanup of properties — also is pushing for water testing in more homes and occupied units at the West Calumet Housing Complex, said Lopez, of the 4900 block of Euclid Avenue.

About half of the nearly 350 families have moved out due to the highly contaminated soil, she said, but many others remain with a March 31 move-out deadline.

"We still have families living there. We have to safeguard everyone and look out for each other," Lopez said.

EPA earlier this year agreed to test a handful of basements for contaminants as part of a pilot study, but residents on Saturday said they want additional testing. They also want EPA to disclose any and all contaminants found during indoor and outdoor testing.

Lopez urged Superfund residents to attend Monday's East Chicago City Council meeting at 6 p.m., when they plan to urge members to become more involved and help lobby local, state and federal agencies to better address residents' concerns.

Residents said they plan to meet in early February with Lake County Assessor Jerome Prince to discuss property values. Residents have asked the city to consider a voluntary buyout for homes at pre-Superfund prices.

Upcoming dates
EPA is hosting a multiagency open house about the USS Lead site from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at the old Carrie Gosch Elementary School, 455 E. 148th St., East Chicago

EPA is hosting a Superfund 101 class from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 18 at the East Chicago Urban Enterprise Academy, 1402 E. Chicago Ave., according to the school's principal.

http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/features/the-radical-crusade-of-mike-pence-w462223

The Radical Crusade of Mike Pence (East Chicago reference highlighted below)

He's trampled on the rights of women, LGBTQ folks and the poor. Then there's the incompetence. Meet, quite possibly, the next president

The optics were good. About 100 Carrier factory workers in Indianapolis sat in folding chairs awaiting President-elect Donald Trump, who had announced, via Twitter, he'd saved their jobs. Well, not all their jobs – 730 were saved while another 550 were heading to Mexico – but that was a small detail. (Trump also kept saying he had saved air-conditioning jobs, though the factory makes furnaces.) After a while, a silver-haired man resembling the guy on top of a wedding cake strode to the podium.

"It is great to be back home again in Indiana," said Mike Pence in the stentorian voice honed during a seven-year career in talk radio, where he described himself as "Rush Limbaugh on decaf." "The state of Indiana is very proud. We are a proud manufacturing state. We are home to low taxes, sensible regulations, great schools and roads, and the best workforce in America."

His voice grew somber as he talked about the day last winter when Carrier announced it was moving more than 1,000 jobs to Mexico.

"We met with the leaders of the company back in March, and try as we might to make the Indiana case, it was clear that the die was cast," Pence said. "The simple truth was that policies coming out of our nation's capital were literally driving jobs out of this country."

Much like the distortions and obfuscations that Pence used while defending Trump during the vice-presidential debate, this wasn't remotely true: Carrier was moving the jobs because it could pay Mexican workers $6 an hour. Critics say Carrier was now staying because it likely feared its $5 billion in federal contracts could be in peril under a vengeful Trump regime. Oh, yeah, and then Pence kicked in $7 million in state tax breaks. Even Sarah Palin decried it as "crony capitalism."

Pence introduced the man of the hour: "It is my high honor and distinct privilege to introduce to you a man of action, a man of his word, and the president-elect of the United States of America, Donald Trump."

Then a strange thing happened; well, not that strange, since it was Donald Trump. He spoke of his huge victory, and then admitted that his constant campaign talk of saving Carrier jobs had been bullshit. It was not until he saw a Carrier worker talking about Trump saving his job on television that the president-elect decided to act.

"And then they played my statement, and I said, 'Carrier will never leave,'" said Trump with a rich man's version of a laugh.

The media began tweeting furiously. The president-elect had just admitted he'd spaced on a major campaign promise and had only been reminded by a chance encounter on the nightly news!

But one man didn't bat an eyelash. That was Mike Pence. Resplendent in dark suit and striped tie, he remained ramrod-straight, a proud smile frozen on his face.

Ten days later, dozens of Carrier workers and family members gathered at Mount Olive Ministries church in west Indianapolis as an icy rain pissed down outside. They lit candles and said prayers for the hundreds of jobs that were not being saved.

Sitting in a pew was Chuck Jones, the local United Steel Workers president. He tried to muffle his smoker's cough and bowed his head. Jones, a gruff man with neat gray hair and a mustache, had become a folk hero since the Carrier spectacle, when Trump attacked him on Twitter for having the audacity to question the jobs Trump didn't save.

But tonight, Jones' wrath was for Pence. I grabbed Jones coming in from a smoke break and asked about Pence's role in the Carrier deal.

"He did absolutely nothing," said Jones.

I reminded Jones that he had met with Pence in March. Jones smiled a sad smile.

"Let me tell you about that," he said.

In March, Pence met with Carrier's parent company's executives. Jones was there at the Statehouse with some union members carrying "Keep It Made in America" signs. As the cameras rolled, Pence invited him back for a meeting. Pence blamed the factory loss on Washington regulation, and Jones blamed it on corporate greed.

"Why haven't you responded to our request for a meeting?" asked Jones.

"I never got one," responded Pence.

When Jones got back to the union hall, he looked up the letter he sent requesting a meeting and saw that someone in the governor's office had signed for it. He communicated that back to Pence's team. They promised a follow-up meeting. It never happened. (Pence declined to comment for this story.)

"I know he doesn't like unions," said Jones. "But this isn't about unions – it's about human beings losing their livelihoods."

Jones wanted to head back into the service, but he had a parting shot: "You let Joe Schmo open up a tire shop and hire two people, Pence was knocking people down to get in front of the cameras taking credit for it." He shrugged his shoulders. "But for us, he did nothing."

During my travels across the self-proclaimed Crossroads of America, I learned that Mike Pence had once paid his mortgage with campaign funds, dragged his feet during an HIV epidemic and a lead-poisoning outbreak, signed an anti-gay-rights bill that nearly cost Indiana millions of dollars, lost his mind on national TV with George Stephanopoulos, and turned away Syrian refugees in an unconstitutional ploy laughed out of federal court. And he ended his gubernatorial term unpopular enough that his re-election bid in a Republican state seemed dicey at best.

Pence is the nation's 48th vice president. Nine vice presidents have assumed the presidency as a result of death or resignation. That's a 19 percent ascendancy rate. Between Trump's trigger-happy Twitter persona, the ethical nightmare of his business empire, his KFC addiction and possible entanglements with Vladimir Putin, I'd say the chances for Mike Pence are more than 50-50.

So what do we know about Pence? The governor benefited greatly from the wall-to-wall "Trump is a crazy monkey throwing feces" media coverage during the fall campaign, in that his record was undercovered, but it's out there and suggests that his impact as vice president will screw African-Americans, women, the poor and any other square peg in round America. His concerns for the parts of Indiana outside his comfort zone toggled between disinterest and disdain.

And here's the frightening thing: Unlike his boss, Mike Pence has an actual ideology. Pence proclaimed at the 2016 GOP convention that "I am a Christian, a conservative and a Republican, in that order." However, his actual record – including turning down up to $80 million in federal pre-K funding – is the antithesis of Jesus' "whatever you do for one of the least of my brothers, you do for me" theology.

Here's a quick story.

While Mike Pence was governor, his relationship with the Democratic minority in the legislature was crap. Someone on his staff suggested having the Democratic leaders over to the governor's mansion for dinner. The table was set for 20, but there were only around seven in attendance. One unlucky legislator stuck next to Pence tried to make conversation, but found even at dinner she couldn't shift Pence off his talking points. Gov. Pence shouted to his wife, Karen, his closest adviser, at the other end of the table.

"Mother, Mother, who prepared our meal this evening?"

The legislators looked at one another, speaking with their eyes: He just called his wife "Mother."

Maybe it was a joke, the legislator reasoned. But a few minutes later, Pence shouted again.

"Mother, Mother, whose china are we eating on?"

Mother Pence went on a long discourse about where the china was from. A little later, the legislators stumbled out, wondering what was weirder: Pence's inability to make conversation, or calling his wife "Mother" in the second decade of the 21st century.

Pence was raised in the Sixties as a nice Irish-Catholic boy in Columbus, Indiana, a quiet bedroom community where, Pence likes to say, he "grew up with a cornfield" in his backyard. He was named after his grandfather, who emigrated from Ireland and became a Chicago bus driver. Mike was one of six children, and his dad ran a chain of gas stations. An astute altar boy, Pence genuinely seemed to want to serve his community. The local paper tells a story of Pence befriending two kids with muscular dystrophy and later serving as a pall-bearer at each of their funerals.

He stayed close to home and went to Hanover College. There, he became fascinated with evangelical Christianity and had a religious epiphany at a Christian music festival in Kentucky.

His conversion reportedly caused consternation among his family, especially for his mother. He met Karen at church while he was studying at Indiana University Law School. Karen carried a gold cross with the word "yes" on it in her purse in anticipation of the moment when Mike would propose. Their faith deepened together, and they were wed in 1985, eventually having three children. Pence reportedly calls Karen the "prayer warrior" of the family.

Pence went to work at an Indianapolis law firm, where he began each day in prayer with a colleague. In 1988, at 29, he made his first bid for Congress, capturing attention by riding a bicycle across the district. He lost, but the campaign was seen as a dry run for a 1990 campaign against Democrat Phillip Sharp.

The race was initially close. And then Billy Linville, Sharp's campaign manager, swung by the Statehouse to pick up Pence's financial-disclosure forms.

"It was clear upon observing his expenditures that he was using campaign funds for personal use," Linville told me. "He was making his mortgage payments. He was making a car payment for his wife. He was making payments for his personal credit card, and he was even spending money for his family groceries."

While this was not an illegal practice at the time, there was a delicious irony, since Pence's main campaign plank was that Sharp was beholden to special interests, and here was Pence buying spaghetti with his donors' money.

Pence's campaign entered a death spiral. Revealing a pattern that would rear its head again when he was a governor and a vice-presidential candidate, Pence doggedly repeated his campaign talking points no matter what reporters asked. Meanwhile, he doubled down on smear tactics. He sent out a mailer with a picture of a razor and lines of cocaine, suggesting Sharp was soft on drugs. He had campaign volunteers call voters and tell them Sharp was going to sell his family farm to a nuclear-waste facility, which wasn't true. But the most infamous tactic was a cheaply produced television ad with an actor portraying an Arab sheik that suggested Sharp was in the pocket of foreign oil. The ad was denounced by editorial boards and Arab-American groups as low-class and sleazy. Pence lost the race by 19 points. After he lost, Pence wrote an essay about his political disaster. He called it "Confessions of a Negative Campaigner."

Undaunted by defeat and a gifted speaker since high school, Pence took his golden voice into talk radio. His show had a conservative bent, but was congenial enough that Democrats felt comfortable stopping by. Still, the 1990s marked the schism between the folksy in-person Pence and the Pence who bullied from the pulpit.

He became president of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, a conservative think tank, and began publishing his thoughts online. He wrote some real doozies, like coming out as a climate-change denialist ("Global warming is a myth. ... There, I said it") and a cigarette denialist ("Despite the hysteria from the political class and the media, smoking doesn't kill"). He became a board member of the Indiana Family Institute, an anti-abortion, anti-gay organization that pronounced the protest movement that formed after the brutal 1998 murder of gay teen Matthew Shepard to be homosexual-activist "propaganda."

Just as disturbing was his use of reckless rhetoric, which prophesied why he would become so popular with the Tea Party. He decried the 1991 Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, declaring that Thomas' opponents were engaged in the same tactics as the KKK, and criticized Indiana senators Dick Lugar and Dan Coats for "standing by while Clarence Thomas is being lynched."

In 2000, Pence made another bid for Congress. He checked the GOP boxes for cutting taxes while increasing military spending, but he also made it clear he was a Christian warrior, stating, "Congress should oppose any effort to recognize homosexuals as a 'discreet and insular minority' entitled to the protection of anti-discrimination laws." He also argued that the AIDS resources bill, commonly known as the Ryan White Care Act, should be renewed only if resources were "directed toward those institutions which provide assistance to those seeking to change their sexual behavior." While Pence has argued that providing assistance to those seeking to change their sexual behavior meant abstinence groups,

many gay activists heard code words for "conversion therapy." In 2006, he spoke in favor of a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman, arguing that "societal collapse was always brought about following an advent of the deterioration of marriage and family."

Pence fought against the pro-choice movement with vigor rare even by right-wing standards, introducing a bill to de-fund Planned Parenthood year after year he was in the House. The death of a woman after taking an abortion pill led Pence to the House floor, where he spoke favorably of Lex Cornelia, a collection of ancient Roman laws, including one detailing how providers of abortion potions were sentenced to work in the mines.

His agenda was so radical that exactly zero of Pence's bills became law. But he'd laid down markers that would be appreciated by the hard right who vote in presidential primaries.

The record of presidential campaigns launched from the House of Representatives is abysmal – perhaps that's why Pence decided to run for governor in 2012. It would give him executive experience and allow him to run as a Washington outsider. According to *Indianapolis Monthly*, he gathered friends and advisers to hash out the details. The main decision was that Pence would stress economic and educational issues while downplaying his social extremism. "Mike made the decision that the major issues in the campaign for governor in 2012 should be and must be jobs and education," longtime adviser Van Smith told the magazine.
Pence won with 49 percent of the vote. It didn't take him long to lose his way.

In 2013, Bill Oesterle, chairman of Angie's List and a veteran Republican insider, had several conversations with Pence. He'd donated $150,000 to Pence and run the 2004 campaign of Mitch Daniels, Pence's popular predecessor. State lawmakers were considering an amendment banning gay marriage that would have to pass through the legislature before it could be put before Indiana voters. Pence remained silent. Oesterle says he advised the governor that throwing himself behind an amendment pushed by far-right Christian groups wouldn't do him any favors.

"You're going to have to reach out to the center," Oesterle recalls telling Pence. "This is your chance to reach out to them."

"I get that," he says Pence responded.

A few weeks later, Pence announced his support for the anti-gay-marriage amendment, and his relationship with Oesterle deteriorated.

"That's when I think I really realized that Mike Pence had other interests ahead of Indiana," says Oesterle with a sigh.

Moderate Republicans began sensing that Pence's goal as governor was checking off conservative bona fides as he looked toward the Iowa and New Hampshire primaries in 2016.

This became increasingly self-evident in late 2014. Pence had had a relatively good year: He accepted federal Medicaid expansion – a conservative taboo – by requiring those living just above the poverty line to pay some of their monthly income toward premiums, and adding penalties if they made "inappropriate" emergency-room visits.

On the education front, state workers and academic experts were putting the final touches on a federal-grant proposal that would make Indiana eligible for up to $80 million in pre-K funding, an enormous sum for a state that came in 35th nationally for educational spending. Then, the day the application was due, a Pence underling announced via e-mail that the state wouldn't be applying for the grant after all. Whispers began to spread that the religious right was leaning on him heavily about the federal government getting its fingers on the hearts and minds of preschoolers. In its place, Pence OK'd a small $10 million state pre-K pilot program. "He wasn't thinking about 'What can I do to make this pre-K program

work and what can we do to serve the rest of the people?'" says Scott Pelath, the Indiana House minority leader. "He was thinking, 'How am I going to be perceived now that this is done?'"

Within political circles, the coupling of ACLU activist Katie Blair and Republican consultant Megan Robertson represents a symbol of Indiana stepping out of the Paleozoic Era. I met with Blair and Robertson at Lockerbie Pub, a dingy but homey place in downtown Indianapolis. Both are from rural parts of the Midwest, but on opposite sides of the aisle. They got to know each other in 2013 as Blair worked to kill the state amendment prohibiting gay marriage alongside Robertson, then-director of Freedom Indiana, an LGBTQ advocacy group. (They were married in November.)

"We had no idea that Mike Pence was about to blow up the state," says Blair.

As 2015 began, a court case legalizing gay marriage loomed before the United States Supreme Court. Sensing it might be passed, Indiana Christian-right leaders including Curt Smith, head of the Indiana Family Institute, where Pence was once a board member, got behind the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a bill that essentially would allow business-owning Hoosiers to discriminate against gay customers. It had widespread GOP support, and Pence saw it as a consolation prize, since the Supreme Court was likely to make the right's quest for an anti-gay amendment pointless. He told opponents the bill wasn't anti-gay, merely pro religious freedom.

And then the photograph came out. It featured Pence signing RFRA into law surrounded by monks and nuns in habits, and the three men of the Indiana-right apocalypse: Indiana Family Institute's Smith, Micah Clark of the American Family Association of Indiana, and Advance America's Eric Miller. The press was not allowed. Smith has said homosexuality is outlawed in the Bible, along with adultery and bestiality; Clark once was a proponent of gay conversion therapy; and Miller claimed that ministers and priests could be imprisoned for preaching against homosexuality. The photo was so egregious that when a Democratic state representative began circulating it, colleagues complimented him on his Photoshopping skills.

"I was upset about RFRA, and then the photo came out and I was just like, 'What the hell?'" says Robertson.

Blair was less circumspect: "There are few times in my life where I've been that angry. It was stupid and offensive."

Within days, an economic tsunami crashed down on Pence. Oesterle and other local leaders stated they were unlikely to add workers to their Indiana businesses as long as RFRA remained in place. Conventions began pulling out hundreds of thousands of dollars in business like they did when North Carolina passed similarly phobic legislation, a figure that could grow significantly higher over a year or two of canceled conventions. The NCAA, headquartered in Indianapolis, proclaimed its displeasure. As the story went national, Pence was invited on *This Week With George Stephanopoulos*. His advisers counseled against the appearance, and Pence agreed. But somewhere along the line, Pence changed his mind.

What followed was one of the most embarrassing performances by a politician on national television this decade. Stephanopoulos asked a simple question: "So yes or no, if a florist in Indiana refuses to serve a gay couple at their wedding, is that legal now in Indiana?"

Pence responded, "George, this is where this debate has gone, with misinformation. ... The Religious Freedom Restoration Act has been on the books for more than 20 years. It does not apply, George, to disputes between individuals unless government action is involved."

Stephanopoulos pointed out RFRA supporters were stating the law would protect Christian florists from having to sell flowers to a gay wedding.

"Governor, is that true or not?"

Pence danced some more. "The issue is, 'Is tolerance a two-way street or not?'" he said.

Pence never answered the question and passed up two chances to say he was not in favor of discrimination against gay people. The interview ended with Pence insisting he would not be revising the law.

Back home, lawmakers and staffers despaired.

"I thought, 'He has just ended his career,'" says a prominent lobbyist. "And the state was going to get creamed to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. The situation that we were scared of before he went on TV just got exponentially worse. The city was burning."

That Tuesday, *The Indianapolis Star*, not a liberal paper, published a block headline screaming "fix this now." There was fear Indiana was on its way to becoming, like North Carolina, a convention dead zone. The civic leaders of Indiana called two meetings: one featuring Oesterle and other business leaders, the other starring local politicos. Pence was not at either meeting. That week, the legislature passed a revised bill that weakened the anti-gay language enough that the conventions came back.

And Pence's role? Nonexistent, as recounted in the charmingly titled *Deicide*, a book published last year by Pence's Christian ally Curt Smith: "I heard his chief of staff comment, 'Governor, I don't think we have any opportunity to negotiate.'"

Pence's bungling of RFRA and other issues suggests a politician with slow reflexes – a blemish for a congressional backbencher, but a horrifying flaw for a potential president. Oesterle and other GOP leaders began hearing from Republicans that they should primary Pence in 2016. Pence continued to stumble along, issuing an executive order effectively banning Syrian refugees after the 2015 Paris attacks. It was laughed out of federal court, but not before a family was diverted from Indiana to Connecticut, where Gov. Dannel Malloy welcomed them personally. Malloy eventually won a Profile in Courage award. Pence did not. Oesterle commissioned a poll that showed Pence's approval ratings in the thirties, and signs began sprouting up around Indiana reading pence must go.

The year after the RFRA debacle, Pence continued his social holy war by signing into law House Bill 1337, one of the nation's most stringent anti-abortion laws. Previously, Pence had allocated $3.5 million to Real Alternatives, a Pennsylvania company running abortion crisis centers, a.k.a. places where a woman goes for medical help and is pressured into carrying her baby to term and given no immediate medical treatment. The program had to be suspended in 2016 when Real Alternatives was investigated on billing-overcharge claims, a crime it was already under investigation for in Pennsylvania when Pence granted the contract in 2015.

But HB 1337 took his abortion obsession to a new level. Aspects of the bill included forbidding a woman from aborting a fetus that had life-ending chromosomal damage; requiring fetal burial; and a clause that could allow doctors providing these services to be charged with wrongful death. After HB 1337's passage, Hoosiers founded a movement called Periods for Pence, where through social media and a calling campaign they let the governor know the status of their menstrual cycle to protest how intrusive the legislation had become.

Blair had to calm Robertson down over the bill, explaining the one thing they had going for them was the fact that the bill was clearly unconstitutional.

"I was appalled," says Robertson. "But Katie was like, 'It's going to be fine.'"

Blair was right: On June 30th, 2016, a federal judge stayed the law, citing that it would likely be declared unconstitutional.

None of this mattered to Pence. He had burnished his anti-choice credentials once again. When Trump needed a VP nominee with a career-long reputation for being virulently pro-life to balance his own abortion flip-flops, Mike Pence was the answer to all his political prayers.

All the failed Cro-Magnon legislation and his blustering from the House floor made Mike Pence tiresome. But actual power made him a danger to all Hoosiers who didn't share his worldview. Transfer his Indiana stewardship to federal policy, and the implications are devastating.

I drove down to Austin, Indiana, a town Pence seems to have avoided. I met two nurses at the town's one-stop shop for HIV treatment and needle exchange. We piled into an SUV and drove to a nearby neighborhood. This wasn't Pence's fabled Indiana. There was a family living in a garage, and a trailer with a Nazi flag in the window, and another one with a black SS flag on a pole snapping in the wind. The neighborhood is the epicenter of an HIV outbreak that happened on Pence's watch.

We pulled up to one garage-house, and a man piled out of a Jeep he was living in. He looked two decades older than his thirtysomething age. "I got no heat in my Jeep – that's rough," he said. He returned some used needles and took a box of new ones. He circled back to retrieve four or five packages of Narcan, an anti-overdose drug. His hands were gnarled and yellow. "Thank you kindly," he said.

Austin is in rural Scott County, which has a population of roughly 20,000 people and almost 200 cases of HIV infection. Extrapolate that to New York and that would be 80,000 cases for 8 million citizens. Here's the thing: It didn't have to happen.

There was one Republican legislator who saw it coming. I met Ed Clere in New Albany, just over the bridge from Kentucky. A real-estate broker, Clere is a big man with a self-deprecating way. Until about a year ago, he was chairman of the Indiana House Committee on Public Health.

In 2014, Clere saw the opioid crisis laying waste to rural Indiana, just as it was ravaging the rest of small-town America. There was a new scourge: Opana, a potent painkiller. The drug's manufacturers changed the makeup of the pill in order to make it harder to snort. But junkies are a resourceful group. They figured out if the pill was melted down into a liquid, an addict could get high by injecting it in fractions, often more than 10 times a day.

This meant a staggering rise in the use of dirty needles in Indiana. Clere noticed this and supported legislation in 2014 that would allow needle exchanges, to prevent the spread of hepatitis C and HIV. The committee watered down the bill, asking for a mere study. It passed the House, but the Senate ignored it.

The legislation died without any action taken, almost exactly a year before Scott County began reporting a slew of HIV cases in January 2015. First, it was three cases in December 2014, and then the number quickly grew into double digits. The administration finally acknowledged the crisis in a February 25th press release, but still didn't take any action. Pence's office made it apparent to Clere that Pence would veto any bill that legalized needle exchange. "There was no willingness to engage or to work collaboratively on a solution," Clere told me.

So Clere planned a massive public hearing for March 25th at the Statehouse in Indianapolis, featuring doctors, local officials and activists. That morning, a strange thing happened. Pence announced he would be holding his own hearing an hour earlier, down in Scott County. Late to the game, Pence clearly was now trying to upstage Clere. In Scottsburg, a tiny town a few miles from Austin, Pence listened to community leaders and told his audience that he would pray on the situation. Meanwhile, his deputy health commissioner tes- tified before Clere's committee that the administration was still opposed to needle exchanges in general, but was considering a limited one for the county.

On March 26th, Pence issued an executive order allowing for needle exchanges in Scott County that would have to be renewed again in 30 days. But soon, draconian restrictions were tacked on: There would be no new state money provided for the program. As for additional counties, potentially equally at risk, needle-exchange programs would have to be approved by both the state and county health boards, and would be given no funding.

Over the next year, the needle-exchange program in Scott County proved effective, and the HIV crisis stabilized. The total number of HIV cases crested at 191, a number that would have been undoubtedly smaller if Pence had taken quicker action.

Meanwhile, nearby Clark County spent more than a year trying to organize and raise funds for its own needle exchange. The county is finally getting a program – one day a week for six hours.

And Ed Clere? While Pence was still governor, Republican leadership stripped Clere of his committee chairmanship mid-term, allegedly for his rudeness toward committee members. No one could remember this happening before in Indiana.

The months before Donald Trump picked Pence off the political garbage heap were not easy ones for the governor. While Oesterle and others eventually declined to challenge Pence in a GOP primary, his approval ratings remained under 50 percent, and he was even with a Democratic challenger in head-to-head matchups. He did gain experience in being booed that would serve him well at a performance of Broadway's *Hamilton* in November. In the aftermath of the RFRA fiasco, Pence was lustily booed at the home opener for the AAA Indianapolis Indians. "This is Indiana, not New York – we don't boo anyone," says Michael Leppert, a Democratic lobbyist. "It's just not done." Then rumors of Trump's interest began to spread. At first, Indiana politicos were incredulous and wondered if anyone had actually looked at Pence's record. But then it began to make a certain kind of sense: Trump was down in the polls, and no one from the GOP elite was interested in joining his train wreck. Pence looked downright statesmanlike when compared to the other possible choices: the Bridgegate-plagued Chris Christie, the thrice-married stegosaurus Newt Gingrich and noted crazy man Rudy Giuliani.

Leppert saw a transformation in Pence beginning with his speech at the Republican National Convention.

"If you watch his State of the State addresses, he seemed disinterested and low-key," says Leppert. "But once he got on the national stage and could start pontificating on policy issues, it was like a light went back on."

There was one other twist: The robotic repeating of talking points that buried him with Stephanopoulos proved an asset in a national campaign. He talked about Trump having faith in his heart. If you listened carefully, you could almost swear Pence believed it.

Pence's boast that "we are a proud manufacturing state" echoes in a dyspeptic way as I walk the streets of the West Calumet Housing Complex, as a winter storm descends on East Chicago, Indiana. Northwest Indiana – including East Chicago, Hammond and Gary – is the chronically damned part of Pence's Indiana. Because of lax regulations, the region has become a belching industrial outpost for Chicago. The people? Forget them – the predominantly Latino and African-American East Chicago votes Democratic, meaning their requests fall on uninterested white ears.

It is just before Christmas, but there are few lights or plastic Santas in the 350-unit public-housing project. That's because half the residents have abandoned their homes. They didn't have a choice: The complex has been declared contaminated due to off-the-charts lead levels. About 1,100 residents need to find new places to live by April. In retrospect, it shouldn't have been a shock: The complex was built in 1973 in the footprint of an old smelting factory and near at least three other industrial facilities. Many residents of East Chicago live in danger because their subdivisions were filled in with soil from contaminated slag heaps. I meet a group of citizens at an East Chicago diner, and the gathering features more than its fair share of cancer patients, parents of sick kids, and men and women who have lost all hope in their government. One woman presents me a list of the more than 20 medications she is on to deal with heart and respiratory problems.

At the diner, I find Akeeshea Daniels, a round-faced woman with a big smile and three sons. She's been a resident of East Chicago her entire life, and she moved into the West Calumet complex 13 years ago. Since then, she's had a hysterectomy at 29 and migraine and sinus problems that have left her on the couch listless and without energy. But she worries mostly about her 12-year-old son, Xavier, who was a month old when they moved into West Calumet. He's been diagnosed with ADD, is allergic to almost everything and suffers from severe asthma – potential warning signs of child lead poisoning.

"They don't understand our health is failing," Daniels tells me. "I have rheumatoid arthritis, and I've lost 55 percent of my bone mass since 2006. We're all dying."

According to internal governmental e-mails obtained by *Rolling Stone*, the Pence administration became aware of the seriousness of the East Chicago tragedy on the same day Pence was chosen to be Trump's running mate. A July 15th e-mail from the EPA to Carol Comer, head of Pence's Indiana Department of Environmental Management, underlined the deteriorating situation: "We have become increasingly concerned about exposures to lead from the soil, especially for children living in the public housing. ..."
Pence's administration said nothing publicly. In late July, an e-mail was circulated among Comer and other senior Pence aides, providing links to newspaper stories about the lead issue. Again, Pence kept quiet.

This was particularly curious because Pence had made a beeline to 97-percent-white Greentown, outside Kokomo, when the town had a lead scare last February.

"I know this issue can create anxiety because of the situation in Flint, Michigan, we all have been following," Pence told the Greentown community.

His staff tried to do damage control behind the scenes. On August 12th, Matthew Lloyd, Pence's deputy chief of staff – and de facto lieutenant while Pence campaigned across the country – sent out an urgent e-mail demanding that the communications staff reach out to Chicago's CBS affiliate, which ran a story about a mother who waited more than a year for results from the Indiana State Department of Health for her two-year-old daughter's blood test for lead poisoning. Lloyd wanted a correction on a story to address "inaccuracies [that] need to be corrected ASAP so other outlets do not pick up and report the same." (CBS did not correct its story.)

Pence continued to crisscross the country as his senior staff circulated e-mails noting an East Chicago pastor's demand that Pence visit the city. Twelve days later, Pence visited a disaster site in Indiana. But it was tornado victims in predominantly white Kokomo.

By August 30th, the lead crisis had been written up in a dozen Indiana papers and in the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. After the *New York Times* story, Pence personally responded, with a tweet: "Proud of our team. I appreciate the efforts to help families of East Chicago. We will continue to be there for them."
During the crisis, Pence never visited the city. (In September, he wrote a letter to the federal government asking for financial assistance for resettlement.) Lloyd told me, "We were working quietly and effectively behind the scenes with the EPA."

Shortly before my visit, East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland asked Pence to declare a state of emergency in East Chicago, freeing up funds to assist residents who were facing huge difficulties finding new public-housing accommodations.

Pence declined to do it, with his counsel writing on behalf of the governor: "The issues described within your letter are being addressed without the need for a disaster emergency declaration."

"If he came just for a minute to show he cared, that would be something," Daniels tells me a few weeks before Pence's term expires, trying not to cry. "Or an hour. Anything that brought attention here would help us."

On January 8th, Pence delivered his farewell address. He proclaimed, "We worked each day to fulfill the trust you placed in us."

What Mike Pence's role will be in a Trump White House is like everything else dealing with Trump: It is an enigma wrapped in a riddle held in the tiny hand of a serial liar with his thumb on the nuclear button. Trump choosing Pence was an explicit move to protect his flank with the Christian right. It seems likely that Pence will have immense influence over social issues, like repealing Obamacare, gutting abortion rights and keeping the LGBTQ community in its place.

It was too late when people began to take notice. Once he was elected vice president, thousands made donations to Planned Parenthood in his name as a "fuck you." When Pence moved into temporary digs in Washington during the transition, several houses in his neighborhood flew rainbow flags in protest. An LGBTQ dance party was held on his street 48 hours before his inauguration.

Pence's favorite movie is *The Wizard of Oz*, and he is poised to be the man behind the curtain. His influence could be far-reaching, from judicial selection to leaning on Pence's old cronies on Capitol Hill.
But at what price? During the campaign, Pence said he and Trump were actually very much alike: They both liked to pray, and Trump claimed to be a good Christian. His old colleagues in Indiana shook their heads and wondered if he had sold his soul.

State Rep. Ed DeLaney was Pence's representative back in Indianapolis. Like Pence, he grew up in a Catholic house.

"There was always an altar boy trying to be more pious than the priest," DeLaney says while sitting in his cubicle at the Statehouse. "That's Mike Pence." He paused for a moment as a band struck up for one of Pence's farewell ceremonies. "Now, is this altar boy that pious, or is he just pretending that 'cause it's working for him?"

DeLaney wasn't sticking around for the hoopla, so he put his coat on and headed into a bleak Indiana afternoon.

"That's something that only Mike Pence can answer."

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/opinion/editorial/editorial-holcomb-should-hit-reset-on-lead-crisis-response/article_e48cabfa-1633-5916-8f65-155f8c879aac.html

- **EDITORIAL: Holcomb should hit reset on lead-crisis response**
  The Times Editorial Board Jan 20, 2017

We all would love to have a reset button to erase public health crises or other disasters.

There is no such reset button, but there is an opportunity in the East Chicago lead crisis to reconsider part of the state's response to an issue plaguing at least 1,000 city residents.

In a front page article Thursday, Times reporter Lauren Cross revealed that former Gov. Mike Pence sent the city a letter Dec. 14, rejecting its request for emergency declaration of the lead crisis.

Now a newly inaugurated Gov. Eric Holcomb can and should push a figurative reset button, reconsidering a request that could open up more funding avenues for dealing with this Region catastrophe.

A horrific pattern of neglect and political corruption set the stage for the USS Lead Superfund site, which is displacing about 1,000 residents from East Chicago's Calumet and West Calumet low-income housing complexes.

These folks were exposed to lead-contaminated soil for decades, and many government officials clearly knew about it for years before we reached a fever pitch of disaster response this past summer.

The hideous head of public corruption long-plaguing Northwest Indiana politics reared itself in this disregard for humanity.

During the creation of East Chicago's West Calumet Housing Complex during the 1970s, past court testimony revealed the authority's director took more than $100,000 in kickbacks for helping steer various contracts related to the low-income housing project to friends and associates.

One of the alleged bribes was for demolishing a shuttered lead factory at the site.

It's unclear whether the bad actors associated with the complex's creation knew of the potential health risks.

But it is clear that 40 years later, a low-income housing complex has exposed hundreds of residents, many of them children, to unsafe lead levels for decades.

Now state, local and federal authorities should be doing all they can to aid the affected residents. It won't make up for the decades of neglect they suffered, but it's a start toward the path of redemption.

Former Gov. Pence rejected the city's request for emergency declaration, arguing that the state had adequately responded, including $200,000 in funds to help with residents' relocation.

But the city argues, and we agree, that an emergency declaration could open up more aid in addressing a very dire situation.

New Gov. Holcomb already has exhibited his own strong leadership characteristics delineating himself from his predecessor.

He's taken a more fresh and pragmatic approach to state-sponsored needle exchanges to mitigate a downstate HIV crisis, for instance.

It's time for Holcomb to bring that pragmatism to bear on the East Chicago lead crisis — one we know he takes seriously based on past interviews with The Times Editorial Board.

The new governor has an opportunity to show neglected residents of his state's northwestern quadrant that the highest levels of state government care deeply about their plight — and are willing to demonstrate that care with action.

This can and should be the year for some semblance of uniformity in public school calendars that could carry both scheduling and economic benefits for the Hoosier state.

A 2017 legislative bill pending in the Indiana Senate would keep most public schools from beginning the first day of a school year prior to Labor Day each year.

It may not sound like a big deal on the surface, but a relatively uniform start date after Labor Day could have scheduling benefits for families and financial benefits for the state and its tourism industry.

Proponents of the bill, from a tourism standpoint, lament the mid-August starts of many state school districts as cutting into some of the prime weather and activity months.

Minnesota has a law preventing school districts from beginning school before Labor Day. It's largely so the Minnesota State Fair, one of the state's most popular family events and tourism draws, can attract as many people as possible.

Children in school around those times can't attend the fair without skipping important instruction.

Under the Indiana Senate bill, the new school-start requirements would take effect in the 2019-2020 school year, preventing schools from beginning prior to the Tuesday after the first Monday in September.

This still provides some post-Labor Day scheduling flexibility while promoting a measure of uniformity. Meanwhile, many Hoosier public school children and their families would be able to continue planning family vacations, events and trips to the state's tourism attractions for an extended period.

Perhaps the Indiana State Fair, which has struggled in attendance, could attract more families with a later school start date.

Region beaches and nearby businesses could experience a longer prime season as well.

Past attempts to pass a post-Labor Day school start haven't gained traction in the Indiana Legislature.

This can and should be the year.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Kaiser
Office of Regional Counsel
United States Environmental Protection Agency
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353 - 3804