



## AMERICAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF INDIANA

Protecting your Family, Defending your Values, Standing for Decency

Call To Action

### Is it a Political Convention or a Coronation Ceremony?

The decision of **Attorney General Steve Carter** not to seek another term is creating an interesting battle for one of the most important political offices in the state. The AG nominees are picked by the political parties at their state conventions, just like the Secretary of State and Superintendent of Public Instruction rather than through our primary election in May.

I have been to several state conventions and they can be a lot of fun to observe. It's a unique part of our political process that political science class can try to explain but there's nothing like being there as a delegate participating in the nomination process.

The Democratic nominee has no opposition and will be Indianapolis attorney **Linda Pence** (no relation to the Congressman). There are two excellent candidates running for the convention nomination on the Republican side creating a classic convention nomination process for delegates.

**Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas** is the son of a respected former State Senator. Costas is a popular mayor having twice been elected to that office. Although I do not know him very well, I have friends who are working closely with the Mayor. I have a very favorable opinion of him based upon our recent conversations.

The other candidate is **Deputy Attorney General Greg Zoeller** who has worked as Steve Carter's right hand for close to eight years and has political experience going back to the staff of US Senators Dan Quayle and Dan Coats. I have known Greg for over a decade, first working with him when he was with George Witwer, the Republican Lt. Governor nominee running with Steve Goldsmith. I have also worked with Greg on some key issues in his role in the Attorney General's office on a zoning law challenge and issues such as the Ten Commandments and opening prayers at the capitol.

Numerous political insiders are publicly reporting some very unfortunate intimidation tactics being used on behalf of Mayor Costas and Governor Daniels who has endorsed Costas. I do not believe that these two leaders are directly responsible, but rumors and reports of strong-arm tactics from a few overzealous administration and Republican party staff members before the **June 2nd** convention are very disturbing.

Here is how **Howey Politics Indiana** described this problem: "Several Republican county chairs have complained to HPI about the strong armed campaign tactics used by Gov. Daniels' re-election campaign on behalf of Costas." The influential newsletter, **Indiana Legislative Insight**, reports that some county chairmen are requiring "loyalty pledges" in order for Republican supporters to become delegates. These ostensibly would require them to vote for Costas if the rumors of strong-arm tactics being used against county chairs are as true as even I am now hearing.

In fact, pressure tactics by a few staffers to make this a referendum for the Governor or to view support for Greg Zoeller as insubordination apparently angered Whitley County GOP chairman **Jim Banks** so much that he went from being neutral, to volunteering to be Zoeller's campaign manager during the convention.

There is good reason for delegates and county chairmen to be upset. (*Whether there is a significant backlash remains to be seen.*) There is nothing wrong with endorsements or honest campaigning behind the scenes, which is what both Zoeller and Costas personally seem to be doing. However, "loyalty oaths" and threats of "keeping score" are totally uncalled for, and do not belong in what should be a fair contest and a friendly competition among Republicans.

Incidentally, if I were hearing of similar rough tactics by a few staff members under Attorney General Carter portraying a failure to support their boss' choice of Zoeller as insubordination, I'd report on that too! I haven't heard of any such reports.

If anyone on this e-mail list is a GOP delegate or is considering asking their county chair to be appointed as a delegate, my advice is to ignore any undue pressure. You may want to avoid committing to any specific candidate beforehand. After all, this is supposed to be a convention election, not a prearranged coronation ceremony. These convention selections don't happen all that often and there are two talented individuals running. Why not wait until you hear each candidate's convention speech, and observe his floor demonstrations? Enjoy all the fun parts of the convention process and make your decision about who would be the best Attorney General when it is most appropriate based upon your own convictions.