

Our nation and state face many challenges today. The economy, unemployment, crime, failing infrastructure, health care, education, and energy issues are just a few of the problems we Hoosiers face. It didn't take long for me to think of that short list of issues, and certainly there are many other pressing issues. We are facing the most difficult times that I can remember. Those of us who call ourselves baby boomers thought we would live our entire lives without seeing the hardships that our country is facing today.

Our country has faced tough times before. It will take strong leadership and experience to make the correct choices and perpetuate a plan that will put us on the right track. We are lucky to live in Indiana. Other states have it worse. Certainly Michigan has high unemployment due to its auto industry, but drive Michigan's roads and highways and you'll find out they are not like Indiana's. Michigan's roads have been neglected for years. Illinois laid off 460 State Troopers just this past week. Indiana laid off less than fifty enforcement personnel. California is setting inmates free due to that state's inability to adequately fund its prison system. Yes, Indiana is doing better than many of our neighbors. That is not by luck or chance. It is the result of Republican leadership in the Statehouse. Indiana must keep itself poised and prepared to deal with today's problems and issues more effectively than those states that surround us. The laws of nature have proven to us many times over that only the strong will survive.

I can't think of any election that has held more importance for me than the one taking place this November. We must elect men and women who have the knowledge, experience, and vision to keep our state prosperous. Mike Karickhoff has that experience. He has served six years on our city council, including one year as council president. Mike understands budgets. He knows the importance of quality of life issues from his tenure as Superintendent of the Kokomo Parks and Recreation Department. As an employee of Ivy Tech Community College Mike recognizes the importance of higher education in Indiana, and the need for Indiana colleges to provide the educational programs and facilities that will prepare a new workforce for the 21st Century. Mike has served his community as a volunteer with the United Way, the American Red Cross, the Kokomo Y's Men, Kiwanis, among others not mentioned.

The men and women serving in the Indiana State Legislature in 2011 face daunting tasks. Next year legislators will prepare a new two year state budget in the face of unprecedented economic challenges. Anyone who believes next year's legislative session will be smooth and pain free has his head in the sand. Those we elect must recognize that our state can continue to fare better than our neighbors even in difficult times. Those we elect must understand *why* we have fared better than other states. Republican leadership and vision is responsible for it. We must move our state forward, standing behind the leadership and wisdom of our Governor. Voters must choose their District 30 representative carefully as the future of our great state stands in the balance.

Marty Talbert
Howard County Sheriff