

## A Question of Will

By Steven Keltner

With less than 70 days to the election, Democrat Pat Bauer wants to switch control of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles from the Governor's office to the Secretary of State's office. When asked on WXNT's Abdul in the Morning Show why he wanted to make the change, Bauer replied "Why not."

This single reply is the summation of current Indiana politics. Essentially, Bauer was saying 'we have nothing else we would rather take on right now.' How about focusing on the 600,000 to 800,000 residents Hoosier Times reporter Dann Denny noted in his June 11 report are without medical insurance. As annoying as I find waiting in line at the BMV for a picture every 6 years, I think the BMV issue pales in comparison to the healthcare crisis in Indiana.

Current Secretary of State, Todd Rokita (R) dismissed the notion in the Indianapolis Star as "election year antics." Bauer agreed on Abdul's show, but clarified his view that elections are the time for people to hear ideas and then vote for whoever has the better plan. So for Mr. Bauer, elections are about the exchange of ideas. It's odd he didn't speak out about the exclusion of 11 Libertarian candidates from the November ballot. They had some great ideas. Diverting attention to the BMV and avoiding healthcare, education, taxes and immigration is the typical elections shell game used to give the appearance politicians are tackling tough issues. In reality, Mr. Bauer and many like him lack the political will to tackle truly important, and very complex issues, and prefer to tackle lightweight political issues.

Mr. Bauer pointed to Michigan as a model of efficiency in BMV matters. In Michigan, the BMV is under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State. But, is their efficiency due to the fact Michigan has a better system, or that the BMV is under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State's office? Could we not simply adopt Michigan's system without wasting taxpayer dollars to legislate a new power structure?

Furthermore, adding another duty on the Secretary of State's Office would be unwise. According to Secretary of State, Todd Rokita's website, he "continues to work on reforming Indiana's election practices to ensure Indiana's elections are as fair, accurate and accessible as possible. Unfortunately, he has failed at his own aim.

The new addition to the election statute that kept many candidates off the ballot was totally exclusionary and serves no compelling government interest. When this information surfaced, Rokita did nothing to ensure ballot access. Instead, his office told the candidates to get an attorney and fight in State court. Obviously, he needs more time to ensure legislators are creating good election laws, and cannot afford to focus on BMV matters.

So why avoid moving the BMV to a new master? Because legislating a new power structure would be a waste of time and taxpayer dollars. Implementing the system used in Michigan, or at least the best parts of the system would suffice. The current BMV system is a concern, but it pales in comparison to healthcare reform, education or taxes. We cannot allow politicians to waste our time on issues that aren't of the greatest importance. If they don't have the political will to address the important issues, then they need to step aside and allow those of us with the will to lead the way.

Authorized by the Committee to Elect Steve Keltner, Amy LeBrun, Treasurer

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