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Covering Ten Years of Indiana Politics

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**SOX, CUB FANS VIRTUALLY ALIKE ACCORDING TO SCARBOROUGH SURVEY:** You're not gonna believe this, Sox fans. You're better educated, wealthier and more white-collar than the general public. In short, you're almost identical -- gulp -- to Cubs fans. Hard to swallow but it's true, according to thousands of in-depth surveys conducted by Scarborough of Sox and Cubs fans who attended games or watched them on TV or listened to them on the radio in the last year (*Chicago Sun-Times*). In fact, Sox fans are remarkably similar to Cubs fans in nearly every demographic category measured by Scarborough, even down to political affiliation. The average Sox and Cubs fan is a 45-year-old white male. Sox fans tend to be more diverse, but the number of Hispanic fans of each club is almost identical, despite the many Latino players and coaches on the South Side. Sox fans earn on average \$78,644, slightly less than Cubs fans. A quarter of both Sox and Cubs fans earn more than \$100,000, while 2 percent earn more than \$250,000. Three-quarters of both own their homes. And nearly half of Sox fans are white-collar, just slightly less than the number of Cubs fans. The number of blue-collar fans -- 23 percent -- is identical. "There is a perception in Chicago that Cubs fans are these kinds of people and white Sox fans are these kinds of people," said Chicagoan Bill Nielsen, director of sales for Scarborough's sports division. "These numbers are a perception buster." On Saturday, the White Sox play in their first world series since 1959. The Cubs last appeared in the series in 1945.

**IFPI STUDY REVEALS PROPERTY TAX DISPARITIES:** Despite a massive overhaul of the state's property tax system, wide disparities remain in 85 percent of Indiana's counties between what a home is assessed at and what it actually sold for, a new study shows (Schneider, *Indianapolis Star*). Taxpayers can have little confidence that they are shouldering their fair share of the property tax burden, said officials with the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute, which did the study. The disparities mean the owner of a home that would sell for \$100,000 might find his home assessed at \$80,000, while the owner of another home with the same sale price might find her home assessed at \$120,000 -- even in the same county or township, said Steven Johnson, president of the institute. "If we needed more proof that the system isn't fixed, it came today," said Karl Berron, a lobbyist for the Indiana Association of Realtors and a member of the steering committee that received the report Thursday. The \$850,000 study, commissioned by the state in 2003, the year the tax restructuring took effect, found "systemic inconsistency" in assessment practices throughout the state. The disparities are even greater for commercial property, according to the study, with problems found in 90 percent of counties.

**INDIANA LAWYER COVERS HPR FORUM:** In the last legislative session, Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson didn't get all he wanted in terms of government restructuring in the state's largest county (Johnson, *Indiana Lawyer*). Even though Indianapolis Works crashed and burned in the General Assembly, the underlying idea of the plan -- reconsidering the way local government functions in the state -- has been simmering under the surface of Indiana politics for quite some time, and not just in Indianapolis. Several population centers in the state -- including Evansville, Fort Wayne, and Richmond -- have considered similar plans to Indianapolis Works, all in an effort to make local government more efficient, thereby saving taxpayers money. At a forum Oct. 4, longtime Indiana political commentator Brian Howey brought together several key state and local leaders to discuss the