



*Birch Bayh-Richard Lugar*  
**GOVERNMENT LEADER OF THE YEAR**

# DEDICATED PROBLEM SOLVER

Young Rises Above the Fray

By Matt Ottinger



Senator Todd Young's military background keeps national security and veterans issues at the forefront of his policymaking, making him a partner of groups like the American Legion.

A knack for building consensus, desire to get things done and love of public policy. These three traits define U.S. Sen. Todd Young and his growing legacy.

Those attributes were cultivated long before he entered politics.

He's a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and a proud Marine. Young also earned his stripes in the business world.

Before earning an MBA from the University of Chicago, he watched his parents navigate the family's central Indiana heating and cooling business.

"My dad sold industrial and commercial heating and cooling solutions – so burners, boilers, temperature controls, heat exchangers and so forth," Young shares. "And more than anything else, I learned from my dad how much hard work it takes to make a business viable and then to thrive."

Young explains his father "ate what he killed," invoking sales industry parlance on efficiency. He expected a lot from his son, whose jobs at the business included janitorial duty.

"He held me accountable for my actions and required that I showed pride in my work, so it was good to be exposed to the business and that from a young age, those expectations were set for me," Young points out.

It's this business-friendly mindset that's paved the way for Young to be named the Indiana Chamber's 2023 Birch Bayh-Richard Lugar Government Leader of the Year.

### All CHIPS in the middle

In addition to a growing catalogue of business-friendly initiatives, Young's contributions to commerce of late manifested in playing a

leading role in the passage of the CHIPS (Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors) and Science Act, which combined Young's Endless Frontier Act and funding for the CHIPS for America Act.

Signed into law in August of 2022, the act is aimed at boosting investment in domestic high-tech research and bringing semiconductor manufacturing back to the U.S., curbing a reliance on China for such products. Furthermore, the law provides more than \$52 billion in grants and other incentives for the semiconductor industry as well as a 25% tax credit for companies that invest in chip plants in the U.S.

"Reshoring our manufacturing capacity of semiconductors is essential if we want to wean ourselves off of dependency on countries that either don't share our values or might harm our interests in the future," Young declares.

He explains the computer chips "go into our missile systems, our nuclear missile submarines, our radars, but they also go into our automobiles, our consumer electronics, basically anything these days with an on/off switch."

Yet there is more at play.

"I think it's really important that we remember the CHIPS and Science Act is about a lot more than chips," Young clarifies. "The whole science component of this legislation is focused on a host of other technologies that will impact our military effectiveness and our 21st-century economy in very meaningful ways – from artificial intelligence to quantum computing to hypersonics, autonomous systems, battery storage and synthetic biology.

"Our ability to invest in research in these areas and turn those research findings into products and services will enhance the welfare of all of our citizens, especially here in Indiana as we contemplate a potential tech hub and playing a leading role in the biomanufacturing revolution occurring right now," he adds.

The impact of the CHIPS Act has global reverberations, although Indiana's businesses and educational institutions are undoubtedly



A focus on the future American workforce is one motivation for the passage of the CHIPS Act. Furthermore, Young believes his collaborative approach to governance, rather than grandstanding for media attention, is a key to passing meaningful legislation to help his constituents.



benefiting. Take Purdue University, for instance, which recently launched its Semiconductor Degrees Program in an effort to increase the skilled talent in the industry.

Vijay Raghunathan, Purdue’s director of semiconductor education, lauds the law’s potential.

“The bill also specifically calls for some pretty big initiatives – things like a national science semiconductor technology center, a national center for advanced manufacturing and packaging and a couple of others,” Raghunathan told *Inside INdiana Business, A Division of IBJ Media*, upon its passage. “These are all areas where I think workforce development would play a very big role, and that includes academia and universities like Purdue.”

### **‘A true public servant’**

The law also allocates \$10 billion for technology advancements to 20 regions across

the country, and Young believes the Hoosier state is poised to serve as such a tech hub.

“Our ability to invest in research in these areas and turn those research findings into products and services will enhance the welfare of all of our citizens, especially here in Indiana as we contemplate a potential tech hub and playing a leading role in the biomanufacturing revolution occurring right now,” Young remarks.

Indiana will receive nearly \$33 million in the first round of funding, which came from the U.S. Department of Defense. The Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, with a campus that touches several counties in southern Indiana, will be one of the locations of the newly created Microelectronics Commons, a national microelectronics manufacturing network.

Crane’s military significance is apropos for legislation directed by Young, whose

patriotism shines in his efforts. He reflects to when he first considered enlisting in the Navy.

“It was an extension of everything that I learned at home,” Young recounts. “But when I joined the military, I learned the importance of serving causes greater than myself and being immersed in an atmosphere where one competed against your peers so that you could be prepared to lead and to serve one day.”

Protecting the country remains a priority. In just one example, he takes a particular interest in preventing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from encroaching too far into American interests.

“One of the things we have not done to an extent that is needed is to invest more heavily in our own preparation,” Young asserts. “That can be for this multi-generational competition that we’re facing against the CCP.”

“We need to invest more in our workforce. We need to invest more in certain areas of applied research with both national security and economic growth implications. And we need to invest in various ways in getting more Americans to start new enterprises and grow those enterprises.”

According to Indiana Chamber President and CEO Kevin Brinegar, Young’s common cause with the Chamber in enhancing the state’s workforce and building prosperity with an emphasis on forward thinking make him a tremendous ally for Hoosier businesses.

“Senator Young is a true public servant in every sense of the word,” he praises. “What he helped accomplish with the ‘CHIPS Act’ is so far reaching that it will benefit not only America but the whole western world.”

### **The road to Washington**

Young and his wife, Jenny, married in 2005 and then worked together at a small law firm in Paoli that was started by Jenny’s great-grandfather in 1933. The couple currently resides in Johnson County and has four young children. In 2006, Young was elected to the first of three terms in Congress representing Indiana’s 9th district.

Young, a Carmel High School graduate, reflects on his early days and his entry into politics – an arena familiar to their family as Jenny is the niece of former U.S. Vice President, Senator and Congressman Dan Quayle.

“From a young age, I admired people who served in the way that Sen. Richard Lugar served – solving problems, helping people,” he shares. “But life is about preparation and opportunity and I thought that I might prepare myself for a day like that.”

Young would spend about a year and a half on Lugar’s staff in Washington, D.C., watching one of Indiana’s most esteemed statesmen in action.

"I had a front row seat into how he did his job," he recalls. "He was by reputation, but also in reality, someone who studied things in great detail and made a real effort to have commanded those subjects before he opened his mouth, or most certainly before he decided to offer legislative solutions to different problems."

Young left Lugar's office with a love of public policy – not politics per se, he clarifies – and wanting to impact the lives of Hoosiers.

"I thought that maybe someday I would run for office and take a shot at doing what he had done," he states. "And I have been incredibly blessed and fortunate to have had an opportunity to serve in this capacity."

Young would also go on to volunteer for the campaign of Gov. Mitch Daniels.

"(Daniels) approached his job the same sort of way; (he and Lugar) are what I would characterize as 'big idea public servants,'" he posits. "They don't aspire to influence status like many people on social media who spend a lot of time drawing attention to themselves, while really not offering much aside from their personality or image to the world."

### Tearing down walls

Speaking to how he approaches relations in Congress and beyond, Young declares, "The way to build teams in every facet of your life is to come up with important goals and work together towards achieving them, trying to crowd out any other distractions that might exist to (achieving) that singular mission."

When Young began his tenure in the Senate in January 2017, he joined Indiana Democrat Joe Donnelly. Despite party differences in a tumultuous environment, the two struck up a kinship over a shared desire to serve their

constituents back home.

"(Donnelly) and I had a great relationship working together on behalf of Hoosiers," Young reflects. "Most notably, we worked together to ensure that our law enforcement officers had sufficient resources and access to mental health treatment."

"And we stay in touch. In fact, he recently visited Washington D.C. and stopped by my office briefly, and we had a nice conversation."

Furthermore, Young also still speaks with the man he defeated, former Senator and Governor (and son of the Bayh-Lugar Award's other namesake), Evan Bayh.

"We've compared notes; I wouldn't say I've asked for any specific advice, but we have a very friendly relationship," Young explains. "I made a point of reconnecting with him soon after I was elected to the Senate."

"He was incredibly generous in taking time, not just to visit with me, but providing encouragement as I worked through some different facets of this job and we've struck up a really positive relationship."

### Noisemakers

When asked how he handles criticism for not being as vitriolic as some would like, Young shares that he doesn't dwell on negative reactions, taking solace in the fact that his motives are to improve the lives of Hoosiers.

"I receive a fair amount of blowback but it's from a narrow slice of the constituency, and it's typically the same individuals who have concerns; they usually revolve around not 'tubthumping' loudly enough," he suggests. "That's not fun. But when I receive that sort of feedback in person, I use it as an opportunity to educate people on what I'm actually doing and how that's far more important to the

future of our country and to their own lives."

Young clearly is not simply one to go along to get along. When asked what's surprised him about Washington, he remains critical of his colleagues who seem unwilling to take on the toughest challenges.

"I can't say that it's been a great surprise that so many of my fellow senators and congressmen have refrained from tackling our entitlement challenges," he criticizes. "But it's been disappointing to see (a lack of emphasis) on the imbalance between revenues coming in and the expenditures we've committed to as it relates to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid."

### A salute to solutions

Young expressed gratitude in earning the Indiana Chamber's honor.

"It's humbling because both Senators Lugar and (Birch) Bayh have earned such respect from Hoosiers and Americans, and even people outside of our country on account of their statesmanship and professionalism," he remarks.

Brinegar views Young's pragmatism and grace in a world filled with bellicosity as a model for others to follow.

"We are particularly grateful to him for his approach in the U.S. Senate and Congress. He's there to get things done," he stresses.

Young sees the recognition as validation that the solutions-oriented direction he brings to the Senate is appreciated by Hoosiers of all backgrounds.

"To me, that's incredibly gratifying because I think the only way we're going to unite this polarized country is to collectively focus on shared challenges, shared opportunities and on developing solutions and tackling problems together." ■



Senator Young (with Indiana Chamber Board Chairman Devin Anderson) spoke to Franklin College students in September at the school's Constitution Day Convocation. He discussed how Benjamin Franklin's legacy can help inspire a new generation of American innovators to uphold the U.S. Constitution.