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CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF MCDONOUGH, STATE OF ILLINOIS

H.K. and J.C., through their father and legal guardian CLINTON FARWELL, AND M.W. through her mother and legal guardian ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, Plaintiffs, v. GOOGLE LLC, Defendant.	Case No. 2020LL00017 Judge. Hon. Heidi A. Benson

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR
FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

TO: See Attached Service List

1) Please take notice that on October 14, 2025 at 2:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard, the parties shall appear before the Honorable Heidi A. Benson, or any judge sitting in her stead, in the courtroom usually occupied by her, at the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court, McDonough County Courthouse, One Courthouse Square, Macomb, Illinois 61455 via the Court's Zoom hearing link to present the attached **MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT**, a copy of which is attached hereto and hereby served upon you.

2) The Zoom hearing link is as follows:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3098362777

No password is required.

Dated: September 15, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ *Dustin Clark*

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on September 15, 2025, a copy of the foregoing Notice of Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement was served via email to the following attorneys of record:

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H.K. and J.C., through their father and legal guardian CLINTON FARWELL, AND M.W. through her mother and legal guardian ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, Plaintiffs, v. GOOGLE LLC, Defendant.	Case No. 2020LL00017 Judge. Hon. Heidi A. Benson

PLAINTIFFS' UNOPPOSED MOTION FOR AND MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF
FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

After nearly five years of litigation, Plaintiffs H.K. and J.C., through their father and legal guardian Clinton Farwell, and M.W., through her mother and legal guardian Elizabeth Whitehead ("Plaintiffs" or "Class Representatives"), respectfully move on an unopposed basis for final approval of the class-wide Settlement Agreement ("Settlement Agreement" or "SA") between the Parties to this Action, to which the Court previously granted preliminary approval in its order filed May 15, 2025 ("Preliminary Approval Motion").[1]

In this putative class action, Plaintiffs allege that Defendant Google LLC ("Defendant" or "Google") violated the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act, 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.* ("BIPA"), by collecting, storing, and using putative class members' biometric identifiers and biometric information (collectively, "Biometric Data") in connection with its "G Suite for Education" (later known as Google Workspace for Education (together, "GWFE")) product, without providing requisite notice, obtaining informed written consent, or publishing and complying with a publicly available retention and destruction policy. Through the Consolidated Class Action Complaint ("Complaint" or "Compl."), Plaintiffs seek statutory damages and equitable remedies for Settlement Class Members ("Class Members"), as well as reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

The Settlement avoids numerous risks of non-recovery posed by continued litigation and provides meaningful monetary and non-monetary relief to Class Members.

The Settlement establishes a non-reversionary cash fund of $8,750,000.00, funded by Defendant, which if approved will be dispersed *pro rata* to Class Members who submit valid claims. Plaintiffs intend to submit a supplemental declaration from the Settlement Administrator, Eisner Amper (formerly Postlethwaite & Netterville ("P&N"), and generally referred to as the "Settlement Administrator" herein), describing all claim numbers, one week before the Final

[1] Unless otherwise defined herein, capitalized words and terms have the same meaning ascribed to them in the Settlement Agreement, Section 1 (Definitions).

Settlement Hearing (scheduled for October 14, 2025), on October 7, 2025. Class Members continue to submit claims at this time.

The deadline for requests for exclusion from, or objections to, the Settlement has passed, and no such requests or objections have been received. *See* concurrently filed Declaration of Brandon Schwartz ("Schwartz Decl."), ¶¶ 20-21. Thus, the reaction from Class Members to the Settlement to date has been resoundingly positive.

The Settlement also includes robust prospective relief for the benefit of all Illinois GWFE users, requiring Defendant to do the following:

(1) provide notice to Illinois GWFE users during enrollment in Voice Match or Face Match features of Google Assistant that such features may involve the creation of voice models and/or face models, as applicable; the purposes for creating such models, as applicable; and, if Defendant will store such models on its servers more than temporarily, the estimated length of retention. Nothing will require Defendant to use specific wording or terminology, or to provide information that does not accurately describe what Defendant is doing;

(2) the notice presented when a user enrolls in Voice Match or Face Match will require the user to affirmatively consent to the feature before it is enabled;

(3) Defendant will not sell, lease, or trade voice models or face models associated with any Illinois GWFE user's use of Voice Match or Face Match to any third party outside of Google; and

(4) Defendant will store, transmit, and protect from disclosure voice models or face models using reasonable security measures and in a manner that is at least as protective as the manner in which Defendant stores, transmits, and protects other confidential and sensitive information.

By any measure, the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate and warrants final approval. Thus, Plaintiffs respectfully request that the Court: (1) grant final approval of the Settlement; (2) grant final certification of the Settlement Class; (3) enter a Final Approval Order

and Judgment in accordance with the terms of the Settlement Agreement; and (4) grant Plaintiffs' previously filed Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Expenses and for Service Payment.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Nature of the Action

Plaintiffs alleged, *inter alia*, that Google created, collected, and stored Biometric Data (i.e., "face templates" or "scans of face geometry" as well as "voiceprints" and various other forms of personally identifying information) pertaining to Class Members when they used their GWFE accounts, and did so without providing sufficient notice and obtaining the required consent in violation of BIPA. Compl. ¶¶ 5-7, 9-11, 20, 25-46, 57-64. Specifically, Plaintiffs alleged that Google extracts a "face template" or "voiceprint" from each Class Member who has the Voice Match or Face Match feature enabled through their GWFE account.

Plaintiffs allege Google collected and stored Class Members' Biometric Data without first obtaining the written releases required by 740 ILCS 14/15(b)(3). *Id.* ¶ 34. Plaintiffs further allege Google never informed Plaintiffs or Class Members in writing of the specific purpose and length of time for which their Biometric Data were being "collected, stored and used" as required by 740 ILCS 14/15(b)(1)-(2), nor did Google publish a publicly available retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying Plaintiffs' and Class Members' Biometric Data as required by 740 ILCS 14/15(a). *Id.* ¶¶ 34-35. Plaintiffs and Class Members are Illinois residents who, while they were enrolled in a school in the State of Illinois, at any time between March 26, 2015, and the date of Preliminary Approval, had a voice model or face model created or had the Voice Match or Face Match feature enabled in their GWFE account. *Id.* ¶ 47. On behalf of themselves and the Class, Plaintiffs seek statutory damages, injunctive relief, and reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses to redress Defendant's alleged violations of BIPA. *Id.* ¶ 64.

B. The Litigation and Plaintiffs' Counsels' Efforts on Behalf of the Class

1. Investigations

Plaintiffs' counsel conducted comprehensive pre- and post-filing investigations concerning the factual and legal issues underlying the case. These efforts included:

- Researching the nature of Defendant's business, technologies, consumer-privacy practices, and public statements, both in general and specifically in the context of GWFE;

- Interviewing dozens of individuals in Illinois who used or created a GWFE account, including any disclosures they received or agreed to during the process, and their experience using "G Suite for Education" platform;

- Inspecting and analyzing these consumers' ChromeBooks and GWFE accounts, and various records reflecting their use of GWFE, among other interactions with Defendant;

- Researching and analyzing Defendant's technology used in connection with GWFE, including registered patents, patent applications, various papers, and public statements by the company concerning the service and its technology;

- Performing an in-depth analysis of the various versions of Defendant's Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, and other publicly accessible documents available to ChromeBook users during the statutory period;

- Researching the relevant law and examining the pertinent facts to assess the merits of potential BIPA claims against Defendant and defenses that Defendant might assert thereto; and

- Reviewing pieces of proposed legislation and related legislative materials under consideration by the Illinois legislature during the statutory period, including Senate Bill 2979 (signed into law Aug. 2, 2024), as well as lobbying efforts related thereto, and assessing the likelihood that BIPA would be amended in a manner that would affect Plaintiffs' and putative class members' rights on a retroactive basis, including their ability to pursue claims or recover statutory damages.

See 8/18/2025 Affidavit of Robert R. Ahdoot in Supp. of Mot. for Atty. Fees & Expenses and for Service Awards ("Ahdoot Aff.') ¶ 11.

As a result of these investigations, Plaintiffs were able to prepare complaints, engage in motion practice, and conduct discovery against Defendant aimed at maximizing the likelihood of class certification and recovering meaningful class-wide relief. *Id*. ¶ 12.

2. Litigating the Google ChromeBook BIPA Case

Plaintiffs H.K. and J.C. through their father and legal guardian, Clinton Farwell, first filed this putative class action in the Circuit Court for the 9th Judicial District, McDonough County Circuit Court of the State of Illinois on November 19, 2020, alleging claims for damages and other remedies based on alleged violations of BIPA, violation of California's Unfair Competition Law

("UCL"), Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §17200, predicated on violation of the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA"), 15 U.S.C. § 501, *et seq*., in connection with Google's ChromeBooks and its "G Suite for Education" platform (the "H.K. State Action") (ECF No. 1). Google filed a Notice of Removal of the Action to federal court on April 20, 2021 (the "H.K. Federal Action") (ECF No. 1).

On May 27, 2021, Google filed a motion to dismiss the H.K. Federal Action (ECF No. 11); thereafter, on July 1, 2021, Plaintiffs filed a First Amended Class Action Complaint (ECF No. 14), which added Plaintiff, M.W., through her mother and legal guardian, Elizabeth Whitehead, to the H.K. Federal Action. On August 2, 2021, Google filed a motion to dismiss the First Amended Class Action Complaint, asserting the Plaintiffs failed to state a claim under BIPA and that their BIPA claims were preempted by COPPA and SOPPA. (ECF No. 16). Plaintiffs opposed the motion to dismiss (ECF No. 18), to which Google filed a Reply on April 1, 2022 (ECF No. 20). On March 31, 2022, the District Court in the H.K. Federal Action denied and granted, in part, the Motion to Dismiss Plaintiffs' First Amended Complaint (ECF No. 20).

On May 3, 2022, after extensive meet and confer efforts, the Parties filed a Joint Discovery Plan (ECF No. 24) and thereafter commenced discovery. On May 31, 2022, Google filed its Answer and Affirmative Defenses, and later amended it on June 21, 2022. (ECF Nos. 26, 30). Google submitted its Initial Disclosures on October 28, 2022.

On November 2, 2022, Plaintiffs filed a motion for partial remand (ECF No. 32), seeking to sever Plaintiffs' section 15(a) claim and remand it to the Circuit Court of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, McDonough Court, which Google opposed on November 16, 2022.

While Plaintiffs' motion for remand was pending, the Parties continued discovery efforts. On January 10, 2023, Plaintiffs served detailed requests for production of documents and interrogatories, to which Defendant responded. Google also provided a partial production of documents but refused to produce further material in response to Plaintiffs' requests for production without entry of a protective order. The Parties were unable to reach agreement on the terms of a protective order covering Defendant's technology and Plaintiffs' and class members' personally

identifiable information. On May 26, 2023, Plaintiffs filed a Motion for Protective Order (ECF No. 35), which Google opposed on June 9, 2023 (ECF No. 36). The Court held a hearing on June 28, 2023 (ECF No. 38) giving direction to the Parties to resolve their differences. Again, the Parties could not do so and filed a joint motion to ask the Court to resolve their remaining differences (ECF No. 40). During this time, Plaintiffs continued their factual investigation of the claims.

On September 20, 2022, the Parties participated in an all-day mediation with the Honorable Stuart E. Palmer (Ret.), former Justice of the Illinois Appellate Court and Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Following the all-day mediation session, the Parties conducted extensive continued negotiations under the supervision of Judge Palmer. Judge Palmer has extensive experience in mediating class actions, including those alleging violations of BIPA. Ahdoot Aff. ¶ 13.

On August 21, 2023, the District Court in the H.K. Federal Action severed and remanded certain of Plaintiffs' causes of action to the Circuit Court of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, McDonough County. The Parties agreed after negotiation to stipulate to remand all remaining causes of action in the H.K. Federal Action to the Circuit Court of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, McDonough County, and consolidate with the cause of action that was remanded by the District Court in the H.K. Federal Action on August 21, 2023.

After extensive arm's-length negotiations, the Parties reached an agreement in principle to settle on the terms and conditions embodied in this Settlement Agreement. On October 31, 2023, the Parties informed the Court that they had reached an agreement in principle concerning a settlement of the Action and were in the process of finalizing a settlement agreement and requested that the Court stay deadlines, further discovery, and motion practice to allow those negotiations to continue. (ECF No. 46). The Court extended the stay several times.

3. Settlement Negotiations and Mediation

While the litigation was underway, the Parties engaged in extensive, arm's-length negotiations for more than one year, including a mediation session and numerous additional discussions facilitated by Judge Palmer. Ahdoot Aff. ¶ 16.

Prior to finalizing the Settlement, Plaintiffs' counsel obtained and reviewed discovery regarding the merits of Plaintiffs' claims and Defendant's defenses, Google's business practices with respect to GWFE, and the size and composition of a potential class. *Id.* ¶ 17. Thus, before entering the Settlement, Plaintiffs had a thorough understanding of the composition of the Settlement Class, the nature of Google's anticipated defenses on the merits, the likely nature of arguments that would be advanced at class certification, summary judgment, and trial, the complex technical issues surrounding the claims and defenses, and potential injunctive relief. *Id.*

On September 20, 2022, the Parties engaged in an all-day mediation session with Judge Palmer of JAMS,[2] with both sides represented by experienced counsel who fought hard for their clients. Ahdoot Aff. ¶ 18. After the mediation, the Parties had multiple extensive discussions mediated by Judge Palmer. *Id.* Over the course of many months, the Parties also participated in numerous phone conferences during which the myriad detailed terms of the Settlement were negotiated. *Id.* ¶ 19. This process extended for months, included several iterations and revisions of written proposals and counter proposals, and discussions with Google's in-house counsel and consultations with experts. *Id.* Numerous drafts and redlines of the Settlement Agreement and its many exhibits were exchanged, followed by lengthy discussions between the Parties and negotiations about a multitude of issues. *Id.*

The Parties also negotiated the logistics and substance of the notice and administration plan. *Id.* ¶ 20. Plaintiffs' counsel obtained bids from well-established, experienced, and highly regarded class action notice and administration firms. *Id.* After reviewing and comparing costs among multiple proposals, and obtaining further follow-up information from each potential administrator, the Parties agreed to engage the Settlement Administrator, subject to the Court's approval. *Id.* As a result, Plaintiffs maximized the amount that would be available to the Class by minimizing the notice and administration costs, while ensuring that the notice and administration

[2] The Parties submitted and exchanged confidential mediation statements detailing their respective views of the case and positions on settlement prior to commencement of mediation. Ahdoot Aff. ¶ 18.

plan complied with all rules, guidelines, and due process requirements. Ahdoot Aff. ¶ 21. Further, Plaintiffs worked closely with the Settlement Administrator to ensure that the content and form of all notice-related materials and other Settlement documents (as well as the Settlement Website) were consistent with the terms of the Settlement, complied with due process and applicable law, and were easily understood by Class Members. *Id.* ¶ 22; Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 6-16.

Upon finalizing the Settlement Agreement, Plaintiffs filed an Unopposed Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement, on October 25, 2024. A hearing on the Motion for Preliminary approval was conducted on December 9, 2024. The Court sought to protect the interests of minor Class Members and appointed Emily Sutton as Guardian ad Litem of minor Class Members for the purpose of reviewing the proposed settlement. (Order Appointing GAL for Settlement Review). The Parties met and conferred with the Guardian ad Litem, supplied her with information concerning the proposed class settlement in this action, answered her questions, and worked together to prepare an amendment and revised exhibits to the Settlement Agreement which responded to the Guardian ad Litem's input. Ms. Sutton reviewed these materials and appeared at the continued hearing on preliminary approval to report that she was satisfied and supported the Settlement. On May 15, 2025, the Court entered an Order granting preliminary approval, and set the Final Approval hearing for October 14, 2025.

III. THE SETTLEMENT'S TERMS

The key terms of the Settlement are as follows:

A. The Settlement Class

Plaintiffs request that the Court certify the following Settlement Class: "all Illinois residents who, while they were enrolled in a school in the State of Illinois, at any time between March 26, 2015 and the date of Preliminary Approval, had a voice model or face model created or had the Voice Match or Face Match feature enabled in their GWFE account." SA ¶ 1.9.[3]

[3] Excluded from the Settlement Class are: (a) any judge, magistrate, or mediator presiding over the Action and members of their families; (b) Defendant, Defendant's subsidiaries, parent companies, successors, predecessors, and any entity in which Defendant or its parents have a

The Class includes 791,228 Illinois residents. Schwartz Decl. ¶ 6.

B. Monetary Relief

The Settlement establishes a non-reversionary cash Settlement Fund of $8,750,000.00, funded by Google. *Id.* ¶ 3.2(a). Each Class Member is eligible to make one claim for payment. *Id.* ¶ 3.3(a). The Settlement Fund will be used to pay Settlement Payments to Class Members, Administration Expenses to the Settlement Administrator, any Taxes (for interest accrued on the Fund), and any Court-approved Fee and Expense Award to Class Counsel and Service Payments to the Class Representatives. *Id.* ¶ 3.2(a). The Settlement contemplates distribution of residual funds to Class Members in a second distribution, if economically feasible.[4] *Id.* ¶ 3.5. To the extent funds remain in the Settlement Fund after these efforts, subject to the Court's approval, such Residual Funds will be distributed to one or more 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) non-profit organization(s) selected by the Parties. SA ¶ 3.5.

Within 90 days after the Effective Date, the Settlement Administrator will each Class Member who submitted an Approved Claim a Settlement Payment equal to a *pro rata* share of the Net Settlement Fund (i.e., the amount remaining in the Settlement Fund after deductions are made to pay the Administration Expenses, Fee and Expense Award, and Service Payments). *Id.* ¶ 3.3(a)-(b). Settlement Payments will be sent via physical check, digital payment, or electronic deposit, as selected by each Claimant. *Id.* ¶ 3.3(b).

C. Significant Prospective Relief

The Settlement provides for significant prospective relief. Within 90 days after the Effective Date:

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controlling interest; (c) Class Counsel; and (d) the legal representatives, successors or assigns of any such excluded persons. SA ¶ 1.9.

[4] To the extent that a check issued to a Class Member is not cashed within 180 days after the date of issuance, or a digital payment is unable to be processed within 180 days of the first attempt, such funds shall be apportioned in a second distribution, if practicable, on a *pro rata* basis, to Class Members with Approved Claims who, in the initial distribution, cashed their check or successfully received payment electronically. SA ¶ 3.5.

(1) Defendant will provide notice to Illinois GWFE users during enrollment in Voice Match or Face Match features that such features may involve the creation of voice models and/or face models, as applicable; the purposes for creating such models, as applicable; and, if Defendant will store such models on its servers more than temporarily, the estimated length of retention. Nothing will require Defendant to use specific wording or terminology, or to provide information that does not accurately describe what Defendant is doing;

(2) The notice presented when a user enrolls in Voice Match or Face Match will require the user to affirmatively consent to the feature before it is enabled;

(3) Defendant will not sell, lease, or trade voice models or face models associated with any Illinois GWFE user's use of Voice Match or Face Match to any third party outside of Google; and

(4) Defendant will store, transmit, and protect from disclosure voice models or face models using reasonable security measures and in a manner that is at least as protective as the manner in which Defendant stores, transmits, and protects other confidential and sensitive information.

D. The Notice Plan Was Fully Implemented and the Claims Process Is Still Open

The Notice forms are attached to the Settlement as Exhibits 1 (Claim Form), 3 (Long Form Notice), 5 (Print Publication Notice), 6 (Summary Notice), 7 (Summary Notice – Postcard), and 8-9 (Targeted Media Online Notice).

The primary form of Notice has been a robust print and digital notice program in a manner specifically designed to reach Class Members. SA ¶¶ 6.3(b)(ii)-(vi); Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 6-16. The Settlement Website (www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com) is still live and communicates all important information, deadlines, and the Long Form Notice. SA ¶ 1.41; Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 15-16. The website allows for electronic submission of Claim Forms and displays the Long Form Notice (in both English and Spanish), Claim Form, and relevant Motions, Orders, and pleadings. *Id*. Additionally, a toll-free number, email, and physical mailing address is made available for

Class Members to contact the Settlement Administrator directly. SA ¶ 6.3(b)(v), and *see also* Exs. 3 (Long Form Notice), 5 (Publication Notice), and 6 (Summary Notice); Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 17-19.

The Due Process clause to the U.S. Constitution mandates providing the "best practicable" notice to the Settlement Class, *Shaun Fauley*, 2016 IL App (2d) 150236, ¶ 36 (citing *Phillips Petroleum Co. v. Shutts*, 472 U.S. 797, 812 (1985)), which means notice that is "reasonably calculated, under all the circumstances, to apprise interested parties of the pendency of the action and afford them an opportunity to present their objections." *Mullane v. Cent. Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U.S. 306, 314 (1950). The Notice Plan here is ongoing, has been robust, constitutes the best practicable notice under the circumstances, and meets all due process requirements. Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 9, 22. Prior to the Final Approval Hearing, the Parties will file a supplemental declaration from the Settlement Administrator updating the Court with the then-latest information regarding class members' submissions of Claim Forms, which is ongoing. *Id*. ¶ 24.

Class Members are able to submit Claim Forms electronically on the Settlement Website, or in traditional paper form by U.S. Mail, postmarked on or before October 16, 2025. *Id*.; SA ¶ 1.8; Settlement Website. The Settlement Administrator will submit a supplemental declaration updating the Court with the latest claims numbers on or before October 7, 2025, one week before the Final Approval Hearing.

E. The Settlement Administrator

Eisner Amper, an experienced and reputable national class action administrator and ranked as one of the top 100 U.S. accounting firms, is serving as Settlement Administrator, and has worked to provide notice, administer the claims process, and provide other services necessary to implement the Settlement. SA ¶ 1.38; Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 20-22; Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 6-16 & Exs. A-C. All Settlement Administration Expenses (including the costs of notice and administration of claims) will be paid out of the Settlement Fund. SA ¶¶ 3.2, 6.3(b)(ix).

F. Service Payments and Fee and Expense Award

Pursuant to ¶¶ 12.1-12.2 of the Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel timely filed their Applications for a Fee and Expense Award and for Service Payments on August 18, 2025.

Class Counsel requested Service Payments of no more than $5,000 to each of the Class Representatives, and a Fee and Expense Award to Class Counsel of no more than 40% of the Settlement Fund in addition to reasonable out-of-pocket litigation expenses incurred by Class Counsel. *Id.* The Class Notice informed Class Members of the maximum Service Payments and Fee and Expense Award that the Class Representatives and Class Counsel intend to request. SA ¶ 6.3(a) & Ex. 3. In addition, the Motion is available to Class Members on the Settlement Website. *See* <https://www.googleeducationbipasettlement.com/court-documents/>. Any such Court-approved payments will be paid to Class Representatives and Class Counsel from the Settlement Fund. SA ¶ 1.39.

G. Objection and Exclusion Deadline Rights

Any Class Member who wished to opt out of or object to the Settlement was required to do so on or before September 1, 2025 (the "Objection and Exclusion Deadline"). SA ¶¶ 1.28, 8.2. The Class Notice contained language consistent with the provisions of Sections 8 and 9 of the Settlement Agreement concerning objections and requests for exclusion. *Id.* ¶ 9.1 & Ex. 3. No Class Member has requested exclusion or filed an objection by the Objection and Exclusion Deadline. Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 20-21.

H. Release

Upon the Court's entry of the Final Order and Judgment, the Releasing Parties shall be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever released, relinquished, and discharged all Released Claims against all Released Parties. SA ¶¶ 1.31-1.34 (defining release-related terms), 11.1-11.3 (setting forth scope of the released claims and those being released).

IV. THE COURT SHOULD GRANT FINAL APPROVAL OF THE SETTLEMENT

Strong judicial and public policies favor the settlement of class action litigation, where the inherent costs, delays, and risks of continued litigation might otherwise overwhelm any potential benefit the Class could hope to obtain. *Quick v. Shell Oil Co.*, 404 Ill. App. 3d 277, 282 (3rd Dist. 2010); *Isby v. Bayh*, 75 F.3d 1191, 1198-99 (7th Cir. 1996).

Courts review proposed class action settlements using a well-established two-step process. 4 Alba Conte & Herbert B. Newberg, NEWBERG ON CLASS ACTIONS § 11.25, at 38-39 (4th ed. 2002) ("NEWBERG"); *see e.g.*, *Kaufman v. Am. Express Travel Related Servs. Co.*, 264 F.R.D. 438, 447 (N.D. Ill. 2009); *GMAC Mortg. Corp. of Pa. v. Stapleton*, 236 Ill. App. 3d 486, 492 (1st Dist. 1992). The first step is a preliminary, pre-notification hearing to determine whether the proposed settlement is "within the range of possible approval." NEWBERG, § 11.25, at 38–39; *Armstrong v. Bd. of Sch. Dirs. of City of Milwaukee*, 616 F.2d 305, 314 (7th Cir. 1980), *overruled on other grounds by Felzen v. Andreas*, 134 F.3d 873 (2d Cir. 1998). The preliminary approval stage is an "initial evaluation" of the fairness of the proposed settlement based on the written submissions and informal presentation from the settling parties. MANUAL FOR COMPLEX LITIGATION, § 21.632 (4th ed. 2004) ("MANUAL"). If the Court finds the settlement proposal is "within the range of possible approval," the case proceeds to the second step in the review process: the final approval hearing. NEWBERG, § 11.25, at 38–39. This procedure safeguards the due process rights of unnamed Class Members and allows the Court to fulfill its role as the guardian of their interests. NEWBERG § 11.25. We now are at the second step of this two-step process.

A. The Settlement Merits Final Approval

The Settlement is a fair, reasonable, and adequate resolution to this litigation, the Class satisfies each of the class certification requirements of Section 2-801, and the Notice Plan was the best practicable under the circumstances. Accordingly, the Court should (A) grant final approval of the Settlement; (B) grant final certification of the Settlement Class; (C) enter a Final Approval Order and Judgment should be entered in accordance with the material terms of the Settlement Agreement; and (D) grant Plaintiffs' previously filed Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Expenses and for Service Payment.

A court may approve a class settlement on a finding that it is fair, reasonable, and adequate. 735 ILCS 5/2-801. In assessing the fairness, reasonableness, and adequacy of a class settlement, Illinois courts consider the following factors: "(1) the strength of the case for plaintiffs on the

merits, balanced against the money or other relief offered in settlement; (2) the defendant's ability to pay; (3) the complexity, length and expense of further litigation; (4) the amount of opposition to the settlement; (5) the presence of collusion in reaching a settlement; (6) the reaction of members of the class to the settlement; (7) the opinion of competent counsel; and (8) the stage of proceedings and the amount of discovery completed." *City of Chicago v. Korshak*, 206 Ill. App. 3d 968, 972 (1st Dist. 1990); *see also Armstrong*, 616 F.2d at 314. "Although this standard and the factors used to measure it are ultimately questions for the fairness hearing that comes after a court finds that a proposed settlement is within approval range, a more summary version of the same inquiry takes place at the preliminary phase." *Kessler v. Am. Resorts Int'l*, Nos. 05-cv-5944, 07-cv-2439, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 84450, at *17 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 14, 2007) (citing *Armstrong*, 616 F.2d at 314).

Each of these factors confirms the fairness, reasonableness, and adequacy of the Settlement presently before the Court, warranting its final approval.

B. The Settlement Provides Substantial Relief to the Settlement Class, While Avoiding Significant Risks of Non-Recovery Posed by Continued Litigation

The first factor in evaluating the fairness of a settlement is the strength of the plaintiff's case on the merits balanced against the relief obtained in the settlement. *City of Chicago*, 206 Ill. App. 3d at 972; *Steinberg v. Sys. Software Associates, Inc.*, 306 Ill. App. 3d 157, 170 (1st Dist. 1999); *Am. Int'l Grp., Inc. v. ACE INA Holdings*, Nos. 07-cv-2898, 09-cv-2026, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 25265, at *17 (N.D. Ill. Feb. 28, 2012); *Synfuel Techs., Inc. v. DHL Express (USA), Inc.*, 463 F.3d 646, 653 (7th Cir. 2006).

In this case, the amount offered by the Settlement—$8,750,000 cash recovery on a non-reversionary basis—is substantial. The Settlement also includes robust prospective relief that will benefit all Illinois GWFE users, by requiring Defendant to provide additional disclosures to Illinois GWFE users during enrollment in Voice Match or Face Match features that such features may involve the creation of voice models and/or face models, obtain affirmative consent to the feature before it is enabled, and use reasonable security measures in a manner that is at least as protective

as the manner in which Defendant stores, transmits, and protects other confidential and sensitive information. (*See supra* Section III.C, "Significant Prospective Relief.")

The reasonableness of the Settlement's benefits is underscored by the many substantial risks of non-recovery that continued litigation would have posed absent settlement. *Smith v. CRST Van Expedited, Inc.*, No. 10-cv-1116-IEG (WMC), 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 6049, at *9-10 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 14, 2013) (where "the settlement avoids the risks of extreme results on either end, *i.e.,* complete or no recovery . . . . it is plainly reasonable for the parties at this stage to find that the actual recovery realized and risks avoided here outweigh the opportunity to pursue potentially more favorable results through full adjudication," such that "[t]hese factors support approval").

Plaintiffs are confident in their case. However, there are significant risks and possible impediments to achieving a successful outcome should the case continue, principally Google's anticipated defenses to the merits of Plaintiffs' claims. Google denied Plaintiffs' allegations that it collected "biometric identifiers" or "biometric information," as those terms are defined in BIPA, and asserts at least 16 affirmative defenses to Plaintiffs' claims, including the defenses of consent, good faith, extraterritoriality (and, relatedly, the dormant Commerce Clause), statute of limitations, substantial compliance, and due process, among others (ECF No. 30 at 27-35). Moreover, Defendant maintains that the Illinois Student Online Personal Protections Act ("SOPPA") precludes Plaintiffs' claims because SOPPA, and not BIPA, governs the collection of biometric data in schools. Each of these defenses exposes Plaintiffs and the Class to significant risk that a verdict will be returned in Google's favor.

First, even if Plaintiffs survived Defendant's opposition to class certification or its SOPPA pre-emption challenge at the summary judgment stage, Plaintiffs would bear the burden at trial of proving that the data Defendant allegedly collected constituted "biometric identifiers" or "biometric information" within the meaning of BIPA. While Plaintiffs are confident that the data Defendant collected did in fact constitute "biometric identifiers" or "biometric information," there is significant risk that a jury would disagree and find in favor of Google. Absent the Settlement, at least some of these questions would have to be resolved through competing expert testimony and

other complex evidence presented by the Parties. *See, e.g., In re Facebook Biometric Info. Priv. Litig.*, No. 3:15-cv-03747-JD, 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 81044, at *11 (N.D. Cal. May 14, 2018) ("The parties unleash volleys of other competing evidence, but this summary is enough to show that a jury will need to resolve the genuine factual disputes surrounding facial scanning and the recognition technology."). While Plaintiffs are confident of their case, a court or jury could side with the Defendant on these case-dispositive and highly technical questions.

Second, there is significant risk that Defendant could succeed in establishing consent to the alleged collection and storage of Plaintiffs' Biometric Data during their enrollment in GWFE and in the relevant features, disclosures made to schools and school administrators that required notice to parents, and through Plaintiffs' agreement to Defendant's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy. Thus, there is a risk that the court or a jury could conclude that Plaintiffs consented to Google's conduct, or that Google adequately complied with BIPA's disclosure requirements, which would also result in a verdict in Google's favor.

Third, even if Plaintiffs were found not to have consented to Defendant's alleged collection of Biometric Data, Defendant would likely argue at summary judgment and at trial that Plaintiffs' claims are barred by the Illinois extraterritoriality doctrine because they seek to hold the company liable for violations of BIPA that occurred outside of Illinois. (ECF No. 30 at 27-28) (asserting extraterritoriality argument in its amended answer). And even if the violations alleged in the complaint are found to have occurred in Illinois, Defendant would argue that, to comply with BIPA in Illinois, it would be forced to change its practices nationwide (not just in Illinois), unduly burdening interstate commerce in violation of the dormant Commerce Clause. *Id.* (asserting dormant Commerce Clause argument). Defendant's extraterritoriality and dormant Commerce Clause defenses presented significant risks to Plaintiffs, both on the merits and at settlement class certification. *See, e.g.*, *Patel v. Facebook, Inc.*, 932 F.3d 1264, 1276 (9th Cir. 2019) ("If the violation of BIPA occurred when Facebook's servers created a face template, the district court can determine whether Illinois extraterritoriality doctrine precludes the application of BIPA"); *id.* ("[I]f future decisions or circumstances lead to the conclusion that extraterritoriality must be

evaluated on an individual basis, the district court can decertify the class"); *Nat'l Solid Waste Mgmt. Ass'n v. Meyer*, 63 F.3d 652, 657 (7th Cir. 1995) (explaining how states cannot regulate conduct in neighboring states under the dormant Commerce Clause).

Fourth, Defendant argues that Plaintiffs do not state when Google allegedly first violated BIPA, and contends that Plaintiffs' claims accrued outside of the five-year limitations period and are therefore barred. *See Tims v. Black Horse Carriers, Inc.,* 2023 IL 127801, ¶ 42, 216 N.E.3d 845, 854 ("[W]e find that the five-year limitations period contained in section 13-205 of the Code controls claims under the Act."). Google would raise this issue in a motion for summary judgment, and there is some possibility that it would succeed.

Fifth, in support of its "good faith" defense, Defendant contended that "[it] is not liable because it relied in good faith upon a reasonable interpretation of BIPA's statutory language and any alleged violation was not negligent, intentional, or reckless." (ECF No.30 at 28-29). If Google were to successfully employ this defense, Class Members will be unable to recover even the minimum statutory damages of $1,000, which are only recoverable for violations committed "negligently"—much less the enhanced statutory damages of $5,000, which are only recoverable for violations committed "recklessly" or "intentionally." 740 ILCS 14/20(1)-(2).

Sixth, Google also raised a First Amendment defense in its Answer. (ECF 30 at 31-32). Specifically, Google argued "BIPA violates the First Amendment by unconstitutionally inhibiting Google's ability to collect, create, and share information with its users, and by inhibiting the collection of information necessary for Google to engage in expressive activity, without a sufficient governmental interest." *See, e.g., Sorrell v. IMS Health, Inc.*, 564 U.S. 552, 570 (2011) ("[T]he creation and dissemination of information [and "other 'upstream' activities that make expression possible"] are speech within the meaning of the First Amendment."). If accepted, this defense has the potential to completely eliminate Google's liability under BIPA.

Seventh, even if Class Representatives successfully certified the Class, they could still lose at trial. And even assuming they prevailed at trial, Google still could argue that Plaintiffs should not recover statutory damages, since statutory damages under BIPA are discretionary, not

mandatory. 740 ILCS 14/20 ("A prevailing party may recover for each violation [statutory damages]"); *Watson v. Legacy Healthcare Fin. Servs., LLC*, 2021 IL App (1st) 210279, ¶ 9 n.4 ("[W]e observe that damages [under BIPA] are discretionary not mandatory.").

Finally, any judgment (or order granting class certification) that the Class obtained could be reversed on appeal, or reduced on due process grounds. *See, e.g.*, *In re Capital One Tel. Consumer Protection Act Litig.*, 80 F. Supp. 3d 781, 792 (N.D. Ill. 2015). Indeed, the risk of a class-wide judgment being reduced on due process grounds is significant. The Illinois Supreme Court noted that "[i]t also appears that the General Assembly chose to make damages discretionary rather than mandatory under the Act." *Cothron*, 2023 IL 128004, ¶45. And in *Rogers v. BNSF Railway Co.*, for example, a federal court vacated a jury's statutory damage award in a BIPA class action and ordered a new trial on damages pursuant to *Cothron*'s guidance. 2023 WL 4297654, at *8, 13 (N.D. Ill. June 30, 2023). In *Golan v. Veritas Entm't, LLC*, No. 14-cv-00069 ERW, 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 144501, at *7-8 (E.D. Mo. Sep. 7, 2017), a class of TCPA plaintiffs won a judgment at trial for $1.6 billion ($500.00 for each of approximately 3.2 million violations), only to have the trial court remit the award to $32 million—or approximately $10.00 per violation—on the grounds that the $1.6 billion awarded by the jury was so annihilative as to violate the Due Process clause of the U.S. Constitution. The trial court's decision in *Golan* was recently affirmed, in its entirety, by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eight Circuit. *Golan v. FreeEats.com, Inc.*, 930 F.3d 950 (8th Cir. 2019). The possibility of a similar outcome here, even if the Class were to prevail at trial years from now, further underscores the reasonableness of the immediate, certain, and meaningful relief provided by the Settlement.

Notably, the relief provided by this Settlement exceeds the relief historically obtained through settlements in data-privacy class actions. *See, e.g.*, *Goldschmidt v. Rack Room Shoes, Inc.*, No. 1:18-cv-21220-KMW (S.D. Fla.) (ECF Nos. 82-1, 86) (approving settlement that provided $5 cash and a $10 voucher to each claiming class member in action alleging violation of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, which allows for statutory damages of $500 or $1,500 per violation); *In re Vizio, Inc., Consumer Privacy Litig.*, No. 16-ml-02693-JLS-KES (C.D. Cal.) (ECF Nos. 282-1,

337) (approving settlement that provided between $13 and $31 to each claiming class member in action alleging violation of the Video Privacy Protection Act, 18 U.S.C. 2710, which allows for statutory damages of $2,500 per violation); *Kinder v. Meredith Corp*., No. 1:14-cv-11284 (E.D. Mich.) (ECF Nos. 79, 81) (approving settlement that estimated a $50 and provided reportedly $32.40 to each claiming class member in action alleging violation of Michigan's Preservation of Personal Privacy Act, which allowed for statutory damages of $5,000 per violation).

The Settlement also compares favorably with previously approved settlements in other BIPA cases alleging collection of "scan[s] of . . . face geometry" and related data. *See e.g., Miracle-Pond et al. v. Shutterfly, Inc.*, No. 2019-CH-07050 (Ill. Cir. Ct.) (on September 9, 2021, Judge Raymond W. Mitchell granted final approval to a $6.75 million settlement in a BIPA class action on behalf of at least 954,000 class members); *In re Facebook Biometric Information Privacy Litig*., No. 3:15-cv-03747-JD (N.D. Cal.) (ECF No. 445-2 (copy of settlement agreement), 511-2 at 3 (size of the class) (finally approved $650 million settlement for a class size of at least 7 million settled after class certification, resolution of appeals, and on the eve of trial).

Based on the substantial monetary and non-monetary relief provided by the Settlement, and the significant risks posed by continued litigation (including loss at summary judgment, class certification, or an appeal), the first and most important factor weighs heavily in favor of granting final approval of the Settlement.

C. A Class-Wide Judgment Could Be Severe

The second factor considers Defendant's ability to satisfy a judgment at trial. *City of Chicago*, 206 Ill. App. 3d at 972. In Plaintiffs' view, if Defendant were ultimately held to have violated BIPA and Plaintiffs were able to secure $1,000 statutory damages per class member, then damages would exceed $650 million. This figure could reach into the billions if Plaintiffs were able to prove that Defendant obtained multiple "biometric identifiers" from each class member, or that Defendant's violations were reckless or intentional. 740 ILCS 14/20(a)(2) & (b); *see also Cothron v. White Castle Sys., Inc.*, 2023 IL 128004 (2023) (finding that a BIPA claim accrues each time a person's biometric identifier is scanned and each time it is transmitted). While there is little

doubt that Defendant is a very profitable company, a verdict in this amount could have a severe impact. Accordingly, the second factor weighs in favor of granting final approval.

D. Continued Litigation Would Be Complex, Costly, and Lengthy

The third factor asks whether the settlement allows the class to avoid the inherent risk, complexity, time, and cost associated with continued litigation. *City of Chicago*, 206 Ill. App. 3d at 972; *see also Nat'l Rural Telecomms Coop. v. DIRECTV, Inc*., 221 F.R.D. 523, 526 (C.D. Cal. 2004) ("The Court shall consider the vagaries of litigation and compare the significance of immediate recovery by way of the compromise to the mere possibility of relief in the future, after protracted and expensive litigation.").

This would be lengthy and very expensive litigation if it were to continue, involving extensive motion practice, including, *inter alia*, motion for class certification (and possibly a motion for decertification), a motion to disseminate pre-trial notice to the class, motions for summary judgment, and various pretrial motions, as well as the retention of additional experts, preparation of expert reports, conducting expert depositions, and motions challenging the qualifications of retained experts. *Cotton v. Hinton*, 559 F.2d 1326, 1331 (5th Cir. 1977) ("[C]lass action suits have a well-deserved reputation as being most complex."). The case would probably not go to trial for well over a year. And even if Class Members recovered a judgment at trial greater than the $8,750,000.00 Settlement Fund in this Settlement, post-trial motions and the appellate process would deprive them of any recovery for years, and possibly forever in the event of a reversal.

Rather than embarking on years of protracted and uncertain litigation, Plaintiffs and their counsel negotiated a Settlement that provides immediate, certain, and meaningful relief to all Class Members. *See DIRECTV, Inc*., 221 F.R.D. at 526. Accordingly, the third factor weighs in favor of finding the Settlement fair, reasonable, and adequate.

E. There Is No Opposition to the Settlement

The fourth and sixth factors consider the amount of opposition to the Settlement and the reaction of the Class to the Settlement. *City of Chicago*, 206 Ill. App. 3d at 972. Notice has been

disseminated in accordance with the Court's Preliminary Approval Order, and the Objections and Exclusions Deadline has passed without any requests for exclusion or objections received. Schwartz Decl. ¶¶ 20-21. No Class Member has objected to the Settlement or requested exclusion. Such absence of objections or requests for exclusion supports a finding that the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate.

Following the Court's appointment a Guardian ad Litem, the Parties met and conferred with the Guardian ad Litem, supplied her with information concerning the proposed class Settlement in this action, answered her questions, and worked together to prepare an amendment and revised exhibits to the Settlement Agreement which respond to the Guardian ad Litem's input. The Guardian ad Litem reviewed these materials and reported to the Court at the preliminary approval hearing that she is satisfied with the Settlement and supports approval of the Settlement. This independent assessment of the Guardian ad Litem further supports a finding that the Settlement is is fair, reasonable, and adequate.

Plaintiffs and their Counsel also strongly support the Settlement, which they believe is fair, reasonable, and adequate and in the best interest of the Settlement Class. *See infra* Section G (opinions of Class Counsel on Settlement's fairness).

Accordingly, the fourth and sixth factors weigh in favor of granting final approval.

F. The Settlement Was Negotiated Free of any Collusion

The fifth factor considers the presence of any collusion by the Parties in reaching the settlement. *City of Chicago*, 206 Ill. App. 3d at 972.

Where a proposed class settlement is the result of zealous, arm's-length negotiations before an experienced mediator, the settlement may be presumed fair and reasonable and entered into without any form of collusion. NEWBERG, § 11.42; *Shaun Fauley, Sabon, Inc. v. Metro. Life Ins. Co.*, 2016 IL App (2d) 150236, ¶ 21 (approval warranted where

there was "no evidence that the proposed settlement was not the product of 'good faith, arm's-length negotiations'").

Such is the case here. The Settlement was achieved after a robust pre-filing investigation, more than four years of zealous litigation, a comprehensive exchange of discovery, and over a year of arm's-length negotiations overseen by a highly-experienced and well-respected mediator. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 3-4, 6-7, 16-18. The Parties engaged in intense back-and-forth negotiations regarding every detail of the Settlement. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 19-20.

Because the Settlement is the product of zealous, lengthy, and collusion-free negotiations between the Parties, the fifth factor weighs in favor of finding the Settlement fair, reasonable, and adequate.

G. Competent Counsel Strongly Endorse the Settlement

The seventh factor is the opinion of competent counsel as to the fairness, reasonableness, and adequacy of the settlement. *City of Chicago*, 206 Ill. App. 3d at 972. Courts rely on affidavits in assessing Class Counsel's qualifications under this factor. *Id.* at 974.

Plaintiffs' counsel and Class Counsel (at the law firms Ahdoot & Wolfson, PC, Carey Rodriguez, LLP, Hedin LLP, and Bursor & Fisher, P.A.) have extensive experience litigating complex data-privacy class actions, including class actions alleging claims for violation of BIPA. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 27-31 & Ex. 1; Affidavit of Philip L. Fraietta ¶¶ 4-7 & Ex. 1; Affidavit of Frank S. Hedin ¶¶ 4-6 & Ex. 1; Affidavit of John C. Carey ¶¶ 5-6.

Plaintiffs' counsel strongly endorse the Settlement, which they believe is in the best interest of the Settlement Class. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 23-25. As explained above, Defendant's defenses—and the resources that Defendant had committed to defending the case through trial and appeal—present numerous risks of total non-recovery by the Class had the litigation continued. Considering the substantial benefits provided by the Settlement—including the $8,750,000.00 non-reversionary cash Settlement Fund from which all Class Members are entitled to receive a pro rata share, without the need to wait for the litigation and subsequent appeals to run their course—Class Counsel consider the Settlement an excellent outcome for the Settlement Class. Ahdoot Aff. ¶ 25.

Accordingly, the seventh factor weighs in favor of finding the Settlement fair, reasonable, and adequate. *GMAC*, 236 Ill. App. 3d at 497 (experienced and competent counsel's support for a proposed class settlement weighs in favor of approving the settlement).

H. The Settlement Is the Product of Extensive Litigation and Discovery

The eighth and final factor considers the stage of the proceedings and the amount of discovery that has been completed at the time the settlement is reached. *City of Chicago*, 206 Ill. App. 3d at 972; *Lane v. Facebook, Inc.,* 696 F.3d 811, 819 (9th Cir. 2012).

Prior to commencing this litigation, Plaintiffs' counsel conducted wide-ranging investigations into every aspect of the claims and potential defenses. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 4, 6-7 . During the litigation, the Parties collectively prepared and filed multiple complaints, motions, and comprehensive pre-mediation briefs, among numerous other materials. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 8-11, 18. Plaintiffs' counsel served comprehensive discovery requests to Defendant; obtained and reviewed Defendant's documents and ESI concerning every aspect of Plaintiffs' claims, Defendant's defenses, and issues pertaining to class certification. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 12, 17. Armed with this information, Plaintiffs and their counsel had "a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses" of the case, *see In re Warner Commc'ns Sec. Litig*., 618 F. Supp. 735, 745 (S.D.N.Y. 1985), *aff'd* 798 F.2d 35 (2d Cir. 1986), and were in a strong position to negotiate a fair, reasonable, and adequate settlement on behalf of the Settlement Class, at mediation and beyond. Defendants also directed significant written discovery to plaintiffs J.C. and M.W., through their legal guardians, and reviewed their document productions.

Settlement negotiations also were thorough, and lengthy. The parties engaged in extensive, arm's-length negotiations over the course of more than one year, including during an all-day session of mediation overseen by a well-respected mediator, Judge Palmer, where counsel for each Party zealously advocated its position. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 16-18. With the supervision and assistance of Judge Palmer, negotiations continued on numerous settlement terms until just before the filing of the Motion for Preliminary Approval. Ahdoot Aff. ¶¶ 18-19. In addition, following the Court's appointment of a Guardian ad Litem, the Parties met and conferred with her, provided information

concerning the proposed Settlement, addressed her questions, and extensively revised the terms of the Settlement and exhibits as necessary, to fully reflect the interest of the class.

Where, as here, a settlement is the product of arm's-length negotiations between experienced counsel after significant discovery has occurred, the Court may presume the settlement to be fair, adequate, and reasonable. *Rodriguez v. W. Publishing*, 563 F.3d 948, 965 (9th Cir. 2009) ("We put a good deal of stock in the product of an arms-length, non-collusive, negotiated resolution."); NEWBERG § 11.41 (class settlement may be presumed fair if it "is the product of arm's length negotiations, sufficient discovery has been taken to allow the parties and the court to act intelligently, and counsel involved are competent and experienced.").

Accordingly, the eighth and final factor weighs in favor of finding the Settlement fair, reasonable, and adequate, warranting its final approval.

I. The Class Meets the Elements for Certification Under 735 ILCS 5/2-801

In its Preliminary Approval Order, the Court found that all applicable requirements of Section 2-801 of the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure were met and certified the Settlement Class. *See* Prelim. App. Order ¶¶ 2-3, 5. There is no reason for the Court to depart from its previous decision, and no party argues otherwise.

V. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiffs respectfully request that the Court grant this Motion and enter an order that: (1) grant final approval of the Settlement; (2) grant final certification of the Settlement Class; (3) enter a Final Approval Order and Judgment should be entered in accordance with the material terms of the Settlement Agreement; and (4) grant Plaintiffs' previously filed Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Expenses and for Service Payment. Prior to the Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiffs will submit a supplemental declaration from Settlement Administrator, listing all claim numbers. Immediately following the Final Approval Hearing, or at a time the Court may deem appropriate, Class Counsel will submit to the court an updated version of the proposed Final Approval Order and Judgement attached to the Settlement Agreement as

Exhibit 2, updated to conform to the Court's ruling, including with appropriate figures inserted for attorneys fees, expenses, and service awards.

Dated: September 15, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ *Dustin Clark*

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FILED
McDonough Co. Circuit Court
9th Judicial Circuit
Date: 9/15/2025 5:10 PM
Ian A. Fischer
2020L17

CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE NINTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
COUNTY OF MCDONOUGH, STATE OF ILLINOIS

H.K. and J.C., through their father and legal guardian CLINTON FARWELL, and M.W., through her mother and legal guardian ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, Plaintiffs, v. GOOGLE LLC, Defendant.	Case No. 2020LL00017 Judge: Hon. Heidi A. Benson

DECLARATION OF BRANDON SCHWARTZ REGARDING NOTICE PLAN AND SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION

I, Brandon Schwartz, hereby declare and state as follows:

1. I am the Director of Notice for EisnerAmper[1], a full-service administration firm providing legal administration services, including the design, development, and implementation of unbiased complex legal notification programs.

2. In the *Affidavit of Brandon Schwartz on Settlement Notice Plan* ("Schwartz Affidavit"), filed on October 25, 2024, and submitted along with my C.V., I detailed the proposed Notice Plan to administer the claims process in the above-referenced matter (the "Action").[2] As

[1] As of May 21, 2023, the Directors & employees of Postlethwaite & Netterville (P&N), APAC joined EisnerAmper as EAG Gulf Coast, LLC.

[2] Capitalized terms used herein and not otherwise defined have the same meaning ascribed to them as in the Settlement Agreement.

stated in the Schwartz Affidavit, EisnerAmper designed the Notice Plan to give notice to the Settlement Class Members in the most practicable manner possible. To do so, EisnerAmper designed, and the Court approved, a multifaceted approach utilizing a combination of (1) online display, (2) social media, (3) print notice, (4) search advertising; (5) direct notice via US Mail (if available), (6) toll-free settlement hotline, and (7) Settlement Website.

3. On May 15, 2025, the Court approved the Notice Plan, related notice forms, and appointed EisnerAmper as the Settlement Administrator in the *Order Granting Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement* ("Preliminary Approval Order"). Preliminary Approval Order ¶ ¶7-9.

4. In the Preliminary Approval Order, the Court conditionally certified a Settlement Class defined as "all Illinois residents who, while they were enrolled in a school in the State of Illinois, at any time between March 26, 2015 and the date of Preliminary Approval, had a voice model or face model created or had the Voice Match or Face Match feature enabled in their Google Workspace for Education or G Suite for Education (together, "GWFE") account."[3]

5. Beginning on June 18, 2025, EisnerAmper began to implement the Notice Plan in accordance with its requirements. This declaration will discuss the implementation of the Notice Plan and Settlement Administration.

Notice Plan Summary

6. On or about June 16, 2025, EisnerAmper received an Excel file from Defendant's Counsel that included a school-issued email account, name, and the Google Workspace for

[3] Excluded from the Class are: (a) any judge, magistrate, or mediator presiding over the Action and members of their families; (b) Defendant, Defendant's subsidiaries, parent companies, successors, predecessors, and any entity in which Defendant or its parents have a controlling interest; (c) Class Counsel; and (d) the legal representatives, successors or assigns of any such excluded persons.

Education or G Suite for Education (together, "GWFE") account creation date for a total of 791,228 records. The Defendant-provided data is used for verification of submitted Claims.

Digital Banner Notice

7. Pursuant to the Preliminary Approval Order, EisnerAmper caused digital banner notices to run across a network of sites, as well as Facebook and Instagram. Digital notices were targeted to individuals in accordance with the Schwartz Affidavit (¶10), and allowed website visitors to identify themselves as potential Class Members and click through to the Settlement Website. In total, 94,070,398 impressions were generated during the campaign to date, which is 4,203,807 more than described in the Schwartz Aff. (¶13). Screenshots of the digital banners are attached as **Exhibit A.** The social media campaign will continue until the Claim Deadline.

8. The Notice program includes social media notices which continue to be disseminated as of the date of this filing. EisnerAmper also used Defendant-provided data, including school email account information, to identify school districts and refine the geo-fence strategy, which allowed for more precise targeting and improved behavioral signals, such as interest in education tools, online learning, and related activities. For teens and young adults, targeting relied on behavioral, interest, and contextual triggers, including G-Suite usage, gaming, sports, pop culture, and alumni or student affinity categories. These layers align with the online habits and interests of this demographic, thereby improving the likelihood that they would see the notice.

9. The Notice program is ongoing and, in total, an estimated additional 93,089,875 impressions are expected to be generated.

Print Notice

10. Pursuant to the Preliminary Approval Order, EisnerAmper caused the Summary Notice to be published in seven circulated newspapers in Illinois ("Print Notice"). The Print Notice was placed in seven publications and appeared three times on non-consecutive days. The Notice also appeared in the online version of each publication in substantially similar form to the Print Notice.

11. A summary of the Print Notice campaign is a follows:

Publication	***Distribution Area***	***Est. Circulation***	***Run Dates***
Chicago Tribune	Chicago, IL	233,029	June 25, July 2, and July 9, 2025
The News-Gazette	Champaign/Urbana, IL	21,000	June 25, July 2, and July 9, 2025
The Journal Star	Peoria, IL	25,097	June 25, July 2, and July 9, 2025
The Register Star	Rockford, IL	14,979	June 25, July 2, and July 9, 2025
The State Journal	Springfield, IL	14,000	June 25, July 2, and July 9, 2025
The Herald-Whig	Quincy, IL	5,820	June 25, July 2, and July 9, 2025
The Southern Illinoian	Carbondale, IL	3,000	June 26, July 1, and July 8, 2025

12. A copy of the Print Notice as it appeared in each publication is attached as **Exhibit B.**

Search Advertising

13. Pursuant to the Preliminary Approval Order, EisnerAmper caused search-based advertising notice to be placed on Google.com. Keywords related to the litigation were used to

prompt the sponsored search ads, such as "Google Education lawsuit," "G Suite for Education class action," "Google School Email," "Google Workspace Student," which allowed users to click through to the Settlement Website. In total, 2,935 impressions have been generated to date. Screenshots of the sponsored search ads are attached as **Exhibit C**.

14. Search-based advertising on Google.com utilizing the select use of keywords developed for the initial notice program continues as of this filing.

Settlement Website

15. On June 18, 2025, EisnerAmper took the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com, live. Visitors to the Settlement Website can download the Class Notices (including the Long Form Notice available in Spanish), the Claim Form, and court documents such as the *Plaintiffs' Unopposed Motion for Preliminary Approval*, the Settlement Agreement, the *Plaintiffs' Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Expenses and for Service Payment* and the *Court's Preliminary Approval Order*. Visitors are also able to electronically submit Claims, address updates, find answers to frequently asked questions ("FAQs"), important dates and deadlines, and contact information for the Settlement Administrator.

16. As of September 12, 2025, the Settlement Website has received 81,611 page views from 67,115 unique visitors.

Dedicated Toll-Free Hotline

17. EisnerAmper established a toll-free hotline, 1-844-768-1451, dedicated to this Settlement. The toll-free hotline is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and utilizes an interactive voice response (IVR) system where Settlement Class Members can obtain essential information regarding the Settlement and get response to FAQs. Settlement Class Members have

the option to leave a voicemail and receive a call back from the Settlement Administrator. The toll-free hotline appeared in the Class Notices and in multiple locations on the Settlement Website.

Email Support

18. EisnerAmper established the email address, info@googleeducationbipasettlement.com, to provide email support, allowing Settlement Class Members to direct specific questions and requests to the Settlement Administrator. The email address is included in the Class Notices and displayed on the Settlement Website.

Settlement P.O. Box

19. EisnerAmper maintains a designated P.O. Box for the administration of the Settlement: Google Education BIPA Settlement Administrator, P.O. Box 3395, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. EisnerAmper monitors the Settlement P.O. Box for Settlement-related mail such as Claim Forms, objections, exclusion requests, and inquiries about the Settlement. EisnerAmper promptly handles all mail received at the Settlement P.O. Box.

Exclusions and Objections

20. The deadline for Settlement Class Members to request to be excluded from the Settlement was September 1, 2025. To date, EisnerAmper has not received any exclusion requests.

21. The deadline for Settlement Class Members to object to the Settlement was September 1, 2025. To date, EisnerAmper has not received any objections.

Conclusion

22. In class action notice planning, execution, and analysis, we are guided by due process considerations under the United States Constitution and by case law pertaining to the

recognized notice standards under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 23 ("FRCP 23"). This framework directs that a notice plan be optimized to reach the class and, in a settlement notice situation such as this, that the notice or notice plan itself not omit any material information regarding legal rights – or the ability to exercise other options – to class members in any way. All of these requirements were met in this case, and in my opinion, the above-described Notice Plan was consistent with other effective class action notice programs.

23. It is my opinion, based on my expertise and experience and that of my team, that the methods of notice dissemination implemented by this Settlement, and the Court's Preliminary Approval Order, provided effective notice of the Settlement, provided the best notice that is practicable, adhered to FRCP 23, followed the guidance set forth in the Manual for Complex Litigation 4th Ed. and Federal Judicial Center (FJC) guidance, and met the requirements of due process, including its "desire to actually inform" requirement.

24. The deadline to submit a Claim is October 16, 2025. Class members continue to submit claims as of this filing, and EisnerAmper will submit a supplemental declaration detailing then-current claims information on or before October 7, 2025, one week in advance of the Final Approval Hearing scheduled for October 14, 2025.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Executed this 12th day of September 2025 in Portland, Oregon.

Brandon Schwartz

Exhibit A: Digital Notice

Springfield, IL

As of 1:52 pm CDT

77°

Cloudy/Wind

Day 78° • Night 65°

WIND ADVISORY

Advertisement

Weather Today in Springfield, IL

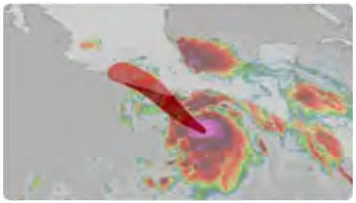
Feels Like

77°

5:29 am 8:29 pm

High / Low	78°/65°	Wind	↗ 22 mph
Humidity	72%	Dew Point	67°
Pressure	↓ 29.72 in	UV Index	6 of 11
Visibility	10 mi	Moon Phase	Last Quarter

Rapid Intensification



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U.S. News | Education

Kids, parents disagree on the value of college in 2025

EDUCATION 3:18 p.m. ET June 17

Advertisement

Arkansas families sue to block Ten Commandments in public schools

Attorneys for the families said the law "violates longstanding U.S. Supreme Court precedent and the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment."

EDUCATION June 13, 2025

The GOP's student loan overhaul is getting closer to becoming law

Senate Republicans advanced a legislative package that would slash the number of student loan repayment plans and increase regulations on colleges.

EDUCATION June 12, 2025

Trump asks Supreme Court to let him gut Education Department

The Trump administration is appealing a court order blocking mass layoffs and other

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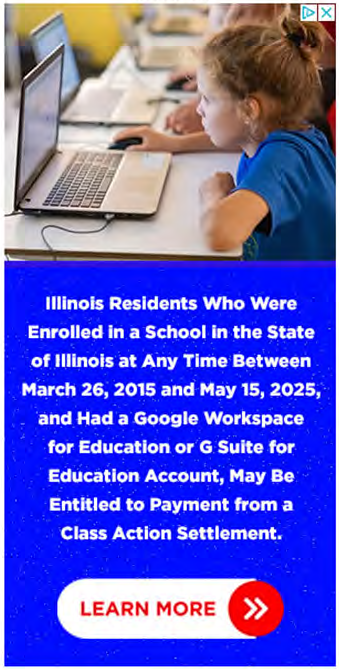

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Education

IBM. AI agents all over the place? Manage them from one place.

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Former Downers Grove teacher faces additional charges related to sex abuse case

BY MICHELLE MULLINS
June 17, 2025 at 5:36 p.m.

Christina Formella, a former Downers Grove South teacher, faces dozens of new charges in alleged...

Students complained about Bloom Trail teacher years before sexual assault charges brought, records show

BY OLIVIA STEVENS
June 17, 2025 at 2:14 p.m.

Students and parents had complained about Bloom Trail teacher Ronald Giglio's behavior before he was...

A year after encampments swept Chicago-area universities, 3 pro-Palestinian protesters speak out

BY IKRAM MOHAMED
June 17, 2025 at 5:00 a.m.

Chicago student activists, who over a year ago erected encampments in support of Palestinians, speak...

Outgoing CPS chief Martinez optimistic for district's future: 'There is no limit to what our children can do'

BY KATE ARMANINI
June 16, 2025 at 7:10 p.m.

Outgoing Chicago Public Schools CEO Pedro Martinez expressed optimism for the district's future two days...

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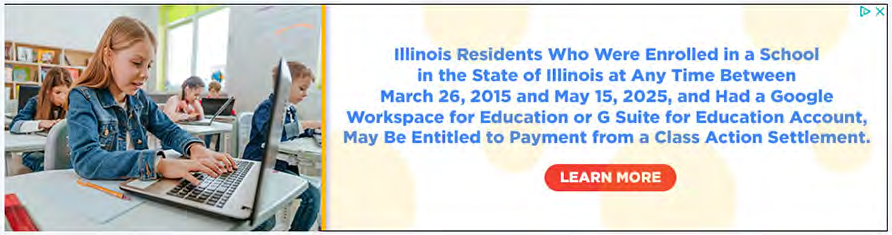
BY HPE — Get your data AI ready with a flexible, open data platform.



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5 Places In Rockford To Have A Special Back-To-School Dinner

These family-friendly restaurants are sure to be a hit with kids and parents alike!

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Rockford Teacher 'Goes Above And Beyond' For Students

Fourth-grade teacher Katie Kennedy was recognized for her upbeat attitude.

News | Nov 2022

Altercation Captured On Video; IL School Board Member Resigns

A Rockford school board member resigned after he was captured on camera in an agitated confrontation with a teacher who was recording.

News Partner | Mar 2022

Rockford Public Schools: RPS 205 To Celebrate

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PACE PRO MAX TRAVEL BAG
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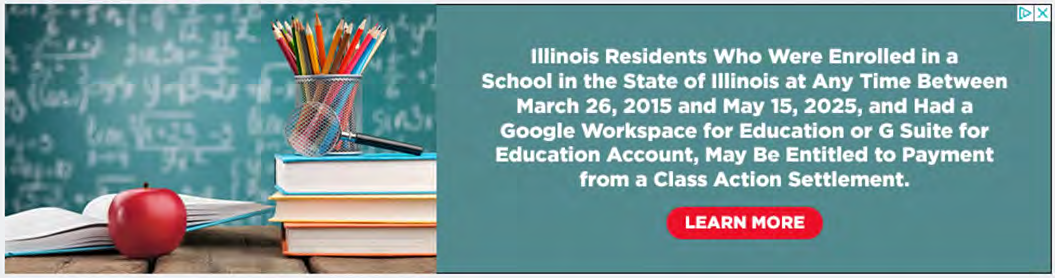

Panthers relied on Marchand's 'magic' in Cup run
EDMONTON OILERS 16h - Greg Wyshynski

Rangers re-sign fan fave Rempe to 2-year deal
NEW YORK RANGERS 2h

Bennett wins Conn Smythe after NHL-high 15 goals
FLORIDA PANTHERS 18h - Kristen Shilton

Olympic hockey slate set: U.S. opens vs. Latvia
21h

U.S. hockey names first 6 players for '26 Olympics
OTTAWA SENATORS 2d

Seattle signs 2 ahead of inaugural PWHL season

Panthers in awe of Brad Marchand's 'will to win' in Cup run

Greg Wyshynski
Jun 17, 2025, 10:59 PM ET

Share Like 1.6K

SUNRISE, Fla. -- After 14 years, Brad Marchand was reunited with the Stanley Cup. He lifted and kissed the silver chalice moments after the Florida Panthers won Game 6 against the Edmonton Oilers 5-1, closing out their series and capturing the Cup for a second straight season Tuesday night.

"It feels completely different. I have so much more respect and appreciation for how difficult it was to get here, how hard it is and the amount of things that need to go right to win. Everything has to line up perfectly," said Marchand, who won the Stanley Cup with the Boston Bruins in 2011. "My situation's a perfect example of that. I shouldn't have been here, but it worked out."

Marchand, 37, was a driving force behind the Panthers' Stanley Cup win. He had 10 goals and 10 assists in 23 games, skating a plus-17 with linemates Anton Lundell and Eetu Luostarinen. While he didn't score in Game 6, Marchand had six goals in six games in the Stanley Cup Final with two game-winning goals.

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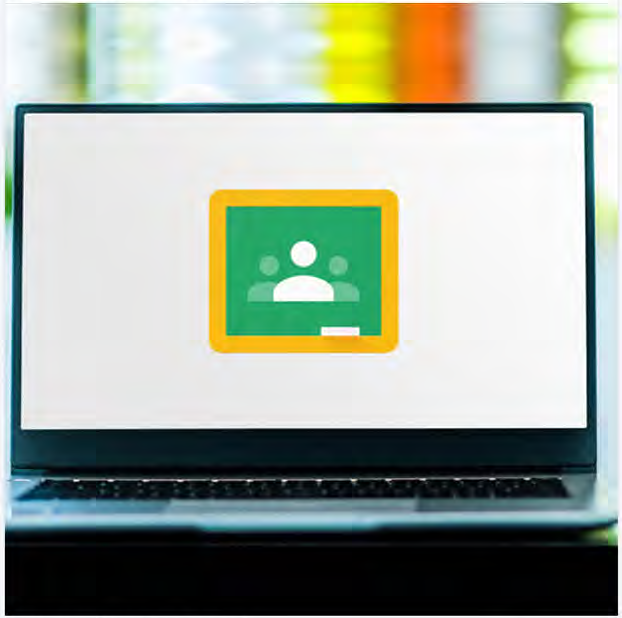

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Exhibit B: Print Notice

Illinois Beach State Park-area agencies issue call for support

By Joseph States

The drowning of a 20-year-old at Illinois Beach State Park last week has reignited calls from area fire departments for state and federal support as they face increased water emergency calls after a $73 million shoreline restoration project.

Fire chiefs from the Beach Park, Zion and Winthrop Harbor fire departments held a news conference Monday, highlighting the increase in water incidents they've seen in recent years, and pushing for funding for a new rescue boat, additional water rescue training and beach patrol staffing.

While the area departments have been pooling their resources to help address the issues, including buying two waverunners and successfully fundraising for a 40-year-old 24-foot boat, Winthrop Harbor Fire Chief Rocco Campanella said they need help from the state and federal government.

"Our fire department is fundraising through pancake breakfasts just to pay for basic supplies," he said.

It's an echo of concerns raised last year after several drownings they suggested have gone unaddressed by state and federal officials. At the time, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources said it was aware of the concerns and had "sat in on several logistical meetings" with the fire departments.

But "things have not changed" since, Campanella said. Despite efforts by local officials to advocate for them, he said their concerns "fall on deaf ears."

Attempts to get a response from IDNR were unsuccessful.

Last fall, local and state officials celebrated the completion of the Illinois Beach State Park shoreline restoration project, lauding the investment into preserving miles of shoreline from severe erosion, creating new habitat for threatened species and rejuvenating area communities.

The restoration has proven popular with visitors. According to Beach Park Fire Chief Tom Stahl, 2024 saw more than 2 million annual visitors, up from 1.2 million in 2015, making it the second-most-visited state park in Illinois.

And yet, "not one cent" of the project's $73 million budget went to address the increase in water incidents that is now straining the resources of the area's smaller communities, Campanella said.

From 2016 to 2022, he said they had about 30 responses on Lake Michigan. They've since matched that number in just the last two years, he said, since the construction of the rock breakwaters.

Last year, Beach Park had two fatal water incidents, its first since 2020. And last week's ultimately fatal water rescue was the sixth call this summer, Campanella said. This is all despite the fire departments not having liability or jurisdiction to respond to rescues on Lake Michigan, according to the fire chiefs.

"Where the sand and water meet, our jurisdiction is over," he said.

But that hasn't stopped them from responding. With the most recent incident, Campanella said he was one of the first people on the scene, along with a diver. While he couldn't say where the swimmer had been before their arrival, Campanella said they found the young man 20 feet off the rock wall, about 10 to 12 feet underwater. Other people he was with were still on the rock wall when they arrived, he said.

It was such a "fresh" drowning that they chose to override safety rules and attempt a rescue, Campanella said. A diver managed to locate the victim after 10 minutes. Despite attempting CPR and transferring him to an ambulance, the man, later identified as Luis Espinosa-Contreras from Waukegan, died.

Zion Fire Chief Justin Stried said the departments weren't equipped or staffed enough to handle these "major incidents," and that they, "cannot expect our local taxpayers to support all of the needs required to handle a water or boating emergency."

While lifeguards would be ideal, Campanella admitted it was not realistic on miles of beach. Instead, during the news conference, he said the departments needed $750,000 for a new boat capable of handling waves over two feet, $150,000 for training to meet modern water rescue standards and another $150,000 for seasonal staffing to patrol the beaches during peak times.

According to Campanella, attempts to apply for a federal port security grant to pay for the new boat have failed, with the money going to "more affluent communities" on the North Shore.

In a statement last year, IDNR said it was working on a lakefront safety plan to "help visitors understand the risks" of swimming in Lake Michigan and educate them on safety measures and what to do in emergencies.

That included informational signage and additional warnings that no lifeguards are on duty, and plans to install 50 new signs with throw rings and rope bags.

While the fire chiefs praised the renovations along the beach, the influx of visitors needs to be protected. Public safety "is not optional, it's essential," Campanella said.

Beach Park Fire Chief Tom Stahl said that while the departments were "doing everything we can" with limited resources, they need the support, funding and investment in public safety infrastructure to match the growth in the park's popularity.

"These are not just numbers," Stahl said. "They are lives lost, families changed forever."

Flags for the fallen

Student-athletes at Notre Dame College Prep in Niles work together to put more than 3,700 American flags into the campus lawn Tuesday in advance of the Fourth of July holiday. The annual tradition is meant as a show of gratitude from the next generation to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

An Illinois State Court Authorized This Notice.

All Illinois Residents Who, While They Were Enrolled in a School in the State of Illinois, at Any Time Between March 26, 2015 and May 15, 2025, Had a Google Workspace For Education or G Suite For Education Account May Be Entitled to Get a Payment from a Class Action Settlement.

Si desea recibir esta notificación en español, llámenos o visite nuestra página web.

An **$8.75 million settlement** has been reached in a class action lawsuit against Google LLC ("Google"), which claims that Google violated Illinois law by collecting and storing biometric data of class members in Illinois through its Google Workspace for Education (previously known as "G Suite for Education") platform without the proper notice and consent. Google denies that it collected or stored biometric data without proper notice and consent, or that it violated Illinois law or any other law. The Court has not decided who is right. For more information or to submit a claim for payment please visit the Settlement Website www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

Who is Included? You are a Class Member in this Settlement if at any time between March 26, 2015 and May 15, 2025, you had a voice model or face model created or had the Voice Match or Face Match feature enabled in your Google Workspace for Education or G Suite for Education (together, "GWFE") account while enrolled in a school in the State of Illinois.

What are the Settlement Terms? The Settlement provides monetary payments to Class Members who submit a valid Claim or Claim Form postmarked or submitted on www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com by **October 16, 2025**. Without admitting liability, Google has also agreed to take certain actions, to the extent it is not already doing so, that will benefit Illinois GWFE users. Google will establish an $8.75 million Settlement Fund. After deducting Court-approved attorneys' fees and expenses, service payments for the Plaintiffs, and the costs of settlement notice and administration from the Settlement Fund, the remaining funds will be made available, if the settlement is approved, to pay Class Members' valid claims. Class Members who file valid Claims will be eligible to receive an equal *pro rata* portion of the $8.75 million Settlement Fund after the deductions listed above. Class Counsel estimate, based on their experience in prior similar matters, that the amount of each valid claim will be between approximately $30.00 and $100.00; however, the actual cash amount an individual will receive could be less than or greater than that estimated amount, and will depend on the final amount of Court-approved deductions from the Settlement Fund and the total number of valid Claims submitted by Class Members before the Claims Deadline of **October 16, 2025**.

How Can I Get a Payment? The only way to get a payment is to submit a Claim Form. If you submit a Claim Form, you will give up the right to sue Google or any Released Parties in a separate lawsuit about the claims made in this case and released by the Settlement. You must submit a Claim Form by **October 16, 2025**. You must submit your Claim online at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com or file a paper Claim Form postmarked by **October 16, 2025**. Paper Claim Forms are available at the Settlement Website or by calling 1-844-768-1451. Claim Forms must be completed by an adult of 18 years or older. ***If you are a minor, the Claim Form must be completed by your parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian completes the Claim Form the payment will be made to them, and in such an event, such payment must be used solely for the minor's benefit***.

Your Other Options. If you do nothing, your rights will be affected, and you won't get a payment. If you file a Claim Form, object to the Settlement or do nothing, you are choosing to stay in the Settlement Class. You will be legally bound by all orders of the Court and you will not be able to start, continue or be part of any other lawsuit against Google about the allegations of the case or other Released Claims. If you don't want to be legally bound by the Settlement or receive any benefits from it, you must exclude yourself by **September 1, 2025**. If you do not exclude yourself, you may object to the Settlement by **September 1, 2025**. The Long Form Notice available on the Settlement Website explains how to exclude yourself or object.

The Final Approval Hearing: The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on **October 14, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.** to consider whether to approve the Settlement and award Service Payments of up to $5,000 to the Class Representatives, attorneys' fees of up to 40% of the Settlement Fund, and, reimbursement of expenses, as well as consider any objections. Motions for these fees and expenses will be posted on the Settlement Website when they are filed with the Court. You may appear at the hearing, either yourself or through an attorney hired by you, but you don't have to. The hearing may be held remotely using the Court's Zoom videoconference link (us06web.zoom.us/j/3098362777) at the Court's discretion. For more information and updates, call or visit the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

More Information: This notice is only a summary. Complete information about all of your rights and options, as well as a Claim Form, a more detailed Long Form Notice, the Settlement Agreement, and other relevant documents are available at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com, by emailing info@GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com, or by calling toll-free 1-844-768-1451.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The dates and deadlines may be changed without further notice to the Settlement Class, so please check the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE THE COURT OR THE COURT CLERK'S OFFICE TO INQUIRE ABOUT THIS SETTLEMENT OR THE CLAIM PROCESS.

www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com 1-844-768-1451

Vote now for your favorite Northwest Indiana business in the 2025 Post-Tribune's Neighbors' Choice Awards!

Voting is open now thru July 13, 2025 for the following categories:

Auto Sales • Education • Entertainment-Leisure • Financial Planning • Food-Dining
Home Improvement-Builder-Real Estate • Medical-Health • Pampering
Professional Services • Supportive Living • Wellness-Fitness

Visit the site below to nominate the best businesses:

chicagotribune.com/neighborschoice25

Keeping the planet fit

I like to support causes I believe in; there are so many worthy ones, and the least I can do is contribute what I can to help.

I think it started with the Jerry Lewis telethons for Muscular Dystrophy each Labor Day weekend. I watched as a teen, sprawled on the couch, while live entertainment mingled with sad stories.

Jerry begged me to CALL NOW, and I vowed to be a giver when I grew up.

ROBIN GARRISON LEACH

Special to The Herald-Whig
robinwrites@yahoo.com

All my adult life, I've rounded up my totals at stores to help various causes, given to many important charities and donated blood.

There's joy in knowing I can make a difference. And as long as the cause is legit, I feel proud of myself for my caring nature.

So, it stands to reason that I have chosen to give money, every month, to a place right here in town. It's not necessarily a charity, but I consider it that, since it's business that benefits others. And that's a noble cause.

I am a card-carrying member of Planet Fitness. It has been accepting monthly contributions from me for quite a while.

And because I've only taken advantage of my membership once or twice, I have chosen to consider myself a part of what keeps the gym open for other, more worthy members.

At first, I joined Planet Fitness for selfish reasons. I thought I needed muscle strengthening. Cardiovascular training. Fat burning. Other healthy things. For some reason, I foolishly believed I would go there several times a week.

I paid a great introductory rate, stopped by and oohed and ah-ed at the machines, the atmosphere, and the empowering essence of the very air inside the cavernous, metal-centric layout.

Friendly children only a few years older than my grandchildren showed me around, proudly pointing here and there: lockers, changing rooms, exercise charts, QR codes, sectioned rotation areas.

I followed behind, nodding often and trying to remember as frantically as my brain was able. I didn't want to appear old (although I'm sure my tour guide intuited it), so I didn't ask any questions. I'd been to a gym before. I could figure it out.

On that first visit, I chose a gleaming gray bicycle, climbed aboard, and pedaled to nowhere for an indeterminate amount of time at an unimpressive speed. Once I began to feel tired/sweaty (soon), I pulled my legs from the straps of the pedals and studied the readout on the machine.

I'd traveled a measly mile or so, on flat ground, with wheels that spun with the ease of a marble on oil. Not impressive.

But it was comforting to know I could still whirl my legs and hold onto a handlebar. It reminded me of riding my bike as a girl…except it wasn't fun.

I wrangled my leg from the fork of the frame and hop-skipped onto stable ground. My behind was achy from the seat, and my thighs muscles whimpered.

Now, I know exercise is beneficial to my health. My heart needs to beat faster now and then, because it's probably becoming a tired metronome whose rhythm has been unchanged for years.

If only I enjoyed it. Craved it like cookies. Looked forward to it like an afternoon nap.

So, I have chosen to consider my monthly fee—which is thankfully small—as a charitable donation that helps keep the facility open for other more motivated exercisers. The cost each month also leaves the door open that I MAY go again SOMEDAY.

Until that day comes, as I drive by using only slight foot flexing and a limp grip of lazy hands, I smile to know my money is going to someone else's good use.

Nothing feels better. Except that afternoon nap.

Four area libraries share in state technology grant

STAFF REPORT

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Four area libraries will share in state grants for needed technology enhancements.

The Illinois Secretary of State's office is awarding more than $1.1 million in grants to 88 public libraries in underserved communities. To qualify, libraries must have a low tax base in relation to the population of their service area.

Libraries in Hamilton, Nauvoo, Pittsfield and Warsaw each will get $12,500.

Libraries can use the grants to help fund such things as adding hardware and software, expanding online collections and e-resources, buying digital devices and mobile apps, increasing Wi-Fi capacity and internal accessibility, buying adaptive technologies that accommodate service needs for persons with disabilities and incorporating patron self-checkouts.

Tracy announces re-election bid for 2026 state senate race

STAFF REPORT

QUINCY — State Senator Jil Tracy is hoping that area voters will give her another term in Springfield after announcing her bid for re-election in 2026.

"I am running for re-election to be a voice for the hardworking families of Illinois who feel unheard in Springfield," Senator Tracy said in a statement released by her campaign.

Tracy, currently serving as the senator for the 50th District and as Senate Republican Whip, has focused her campaign platform on fighting what she calls tax-and-spend policies of Gov. JB Pritzker.

"Under Governor Pritzker, we've seen reckless budgets, higher taxes, and a sanctuary state agenda that puts a huge burden on our taxpayers," Tracy said. "I will continue to fight against these irresponsible policies – blocking any new tax hikes, opposing unlawful sanctuary measures, and protecting our families' values and freedoms from big-government overreach."

Tracy was appointed to serve as the representative for Illinois's 93rd Congressional District in 2006, serving in the position through 2015, when she announced she was running to replace John Sullivan for what was then the 47th Senate District. After running unopposed in both the Republican primary and general election, she secured a full term in 2018.

Throughout her public service, Tracy has championed the conservative principles of fiscal responsibility, limited government, and individual liberty. In the legislature, she has focused on spurring economic growth, restoring fiscal stability, and enacting job-creating reform. In announcing her re-election effort, Tracy vows to continue being a check and balance on the Pritzker administration's power, and to protect Illinois families' rights, wallets, and way of life.

Tracy

The 50th Senate District includes all or portions of twelve counties in west-central Illinois: Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Morgan, Pike, Schuyler, and Scott.

ALL WOMEN HONOR FLIGHT

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Great River Honor Flight's 76th mission was its first all women flight. A total of 37 veterans took part in the trip from June 18-19. Pictured are the veterans at the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Adams County Bicentennial Pepsi cans available now at area retailers

STAFF REPORT

QUINCY — Refreshment Services Pepsi has partnered with the Adams County Bicentennial Commission to release a limited-edition Bicentennial commemorative Pepsi can.

The custom cans mark the 200th anniversary of the county in a unique collaboration between the commission, Refreshment Service Pepsi, and can manufacturer Wis-Pak.

Scott Ruffner, general manager of Refreshment Service Pepsi, said the project has been in the works since last September.

"We worked closely with Bicentennial Chairperson Chuck Scholz to ensure the design captured the spirit of Adams County," Ruffner said. "After receiving final approval from Wis-Pak in March, we were excited to go into production."

The cans started showing up at area retailers in May and will remain available through July, or while supplies last. They can be found at local retailers such as County Market, Niemanns, Hy-Vee, Walmart, Ayerco, and other stores carrying Pepsi 24-pack cubes.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

"These cans are more than just a collectible," Ruffner added. "They're a reminder of our roots. We proudly say: Live Local – Mixed Here. Bottled Here. Sold Here. This is just another way we're supporting the community that supports us."

Cans will also be available throughout the county at local summer events to mark the Bicentennial celebration.

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Israel kills 40 in Gaza after Iran truce

Hamas sources signal openness to resume talks

Nidal al-Mughrabi and Emma Farge
REUTERS

Palestinians gather to receive aid in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza Strip, on June 23. In recent days, Palestinians have reported killings of people by Israeli fire as they waited at roadsides to grab flour from aid trucks. EBRAHIM HAJJAJ/REUTERS

CAIRO – Israeli forces killed at least 40 Palestinians in Gaza and ordered new evacuations on June 24, local medics and residents said, in further bloodshed shortly after Israel and Iran agreed to a ceasefire in their air war.

The Israel-Iran deal announced by President Donald Trump raised hopes among Palestinians of an end to over 20 months of war in Gaza that has widely demolished the territory and displaced most residents, with malnutrition widespread.

"Enough! The whole universe has let us down. (Iran-backed Lebanese group) Hezbollah reached a deal without Gaza, and now Iran has done the same," said Adel Farouk, 62, from Gaza City.

"We hope Gaza is next," he told Reuters via a chat app, speaking before two explosions rang out in Tehran, with Trump accusing both sides of violating the deal, though voicing particular unhappiness with Israel, rebuking it with an obscenity in an extraordinary outburst of frustration.

In Gaza, deadly violence continued with little respite.

Marwan Abu Naser, of the Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat in central Gaza, said it had received 19 dead and 146 injured from crowds who tried to reach a nearby aid distribution center of the United States-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

Abu Naser told Reuters the casualties resulted from gunfire.

Israel's military said that a gathering overnight was identified adjacent to forces operating in Gaza's central Netzarim Corridor, and it was reviewing reports of casualties.

Responding to a Reuters request for comment, the GHF said in an email that there has been no incident near their aid site, which it added was located several miles south of the Netzarim Corridor.

U.N. aid trucks entering Gaza also use area roads, and Palestinians have in the past few days reported killings of people by Israeli fire as they waited at roadsides to grab bags of flour from the trucks.

Israel has been channeling much of the aid it lets into Gaza through the GHF, which operates a handful of distribution sites in areas guarded by Israeli forces.

The United Nations rejects the GHF delivery system as inadequate, dangerous, and a violation of humanitarian impartiality rules. Israel says it is needed to prevent the Hamas militants it is fighting from diverting aid deliveries. The Palestinian Islamist group denies doing so.

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the United Nations' Palestinian aid agency UNRWA, told reporters in Berlin on June 24 that the new mechanism was an "abomination" and "a death trap."

Separately, 10 other people were killed by an Israeli air strike on a house in the Sabra neighborhood of Gaza City, while 11 were killed by Israeli gunfire in the southern city of Khan Younis, medics said, raising the day's toll to at least 40.

Israel says militants use built-up residential areas for operating cover. Hamas denies this.

Palestinians said they wished the Israel-Iran ceasefire announced by Trump had applied to Gaza.

Adding to their frustration, the Israeli military dropped leaflets over several areas in north Gaza ordering residents to leave their homes and head toward the south, in what appeared to herald renewed Israeli military strikes.

"Coming back to combat areas represents a risk to your lives," the army statement said.

Sources close to Hamas told Reuters there had been some new efforts to resume ceasefire talks with Israel. They said Hamas was open to discussing any offers that would "end the war and secure Israel's withdrawal from Gaza." But these echoed longstanding Hamas conditions that Israel has always rejected.

Hamas has said it is willing to free remaining hostages in Gaza under any deal to end the war, while Israel says it can only end if Hamas is disarmed and dismantled. Hamas refuses to lay down its arms.

Palestinians standing atop a building look at the rubble of a home hit in an Israeli strike west of Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip, on June 23.
BASHAR TALEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The war in Gaza was triggered when Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's subsequent air and ground war in Gaza has killed around 56,000 Palestinians, according to its Hamas-run health ministry, while displacing almost the entire population of more than 2 million and spreading a hunger crisis.

United Nations rights office: Weaponization of food a war crime

The United Nations' human rights office said on June 24 that the "weaponization" of food for civilians in Gaza constitutes a war crime, in its strongest remarks yet on the new model of aid distribution.

More than 410 people have been killed by gunshots or shells fired by the Israeli military while trying to reach distribution sites of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation since it began work in late May, U.N. human rights spokesperson Thameen Al-Kheetan told reporters at a Geneva news briefing.

The death toll came from Palestinian health authorities and other sources including nongovernmental organizations and is in the process of being verified by his office, he added.

"Desperate, hungry people in Gaza continue to face the inhumane choice of either starving to death or risk being killed while trying to get food," he said, describing the system as "Israel's militarized humanitarian assistance mechanism."

"The weaponization of food for civilians, in addition to restricting or preventing their access to life-sustaining services, constitutes a war crime and, under certain circumstances, may constitute elements of other crimes under international law."

Asked whether Israel was guilty of that war crime, he said: "The legal qualification needs to be made by a court of law."

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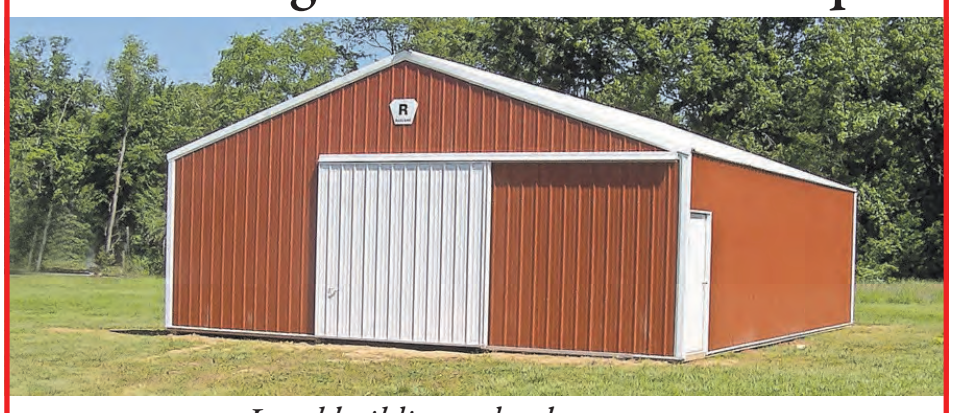

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OUR COMMUNITIES

OPINION: JIM DEY

GOP will be depending on the kindness of political strangers

Superminority legislative Republicans — shaken by what they perceive as a potential policy disaster — are turning to two unlikely possible saviors:

The first is Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who makes no secret of his disdain for the GOP.

The second is the Illinois Supreme Court's Democratic supermajority — five Democrats and two Republicans.

Republicans are asking Pritzker to veto legislation that would allow out-of-state businesses to be sued in state court by out-of-state plaintiffs for out-of-state disputes involving exposure to toxic substances. It was passed in the final hours of the recent legislative session at the behest of the trial lawyers lobby.

Critics say the legislative goal is to get these tort cases heard in plaintiff-friendly venues like Madison, St. Clair and Cook counties.

The Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, however, characterized the bill as a matter of fairness made necessary because President Donald Trump is "gutting environmental, patient, worker and consumer protections."

It said the legislation recognizes "the privilege of doing business here comes with the responsibility of not hurting Illinoisans," even though the legislation targets citizens of other states.

House GOP Leader Tony McCombie and Senate GOP Leader John Curran contend the legislation would further burnish Illinois' anti-business reputation.

At the same time, the GOP is asking the high court — again — to strike down the proposed legislation as unconstitutional. Republican lawmakers contend the Democrats' May 31 action as the General Assembly approached adjournment violates the Illinois Constitution's "three-readings rule," which requires a bill to have been read on three separate days in both the House and Senate before passage.

The high court has repeatedly declined to enforce the constitutional mandate. So it would be no surprise if it delivered another "thank-you-sir-may-I-have-another" beatdown to the GOP rather than reverse itself.

The lawsuit, filed June 17 in Sangamon County by Chicago lawyer John Fogerty, characterizes the legislation as "yet-another anti-business measure designed to enrich trial lawyers" introduced and passed in hours as a consequence of a "gut-and-replace" tactic.

The three-readings rule and the so-called "gut and replace" tactic have made news over recent years.

The state Constitution's three-readings rule — Article I, Section 8, Provision (d) — is clear. But Democrats have been evading it by amending a pre-existing piece of legislation in toto and then voting on it.

In other words, gut a so-called shell bill and replace it with a new measure. That process is sanctified when legislative leaders certify that the bill was passed according to the rules, even if the legislative record shows otherwise.

The legislature's Freedom Caucus — conservative Republicans at odds with their more moderate GOP colleagues — recently filed a similar challenge to passage of the 2025-26 budget.

Lead Democratic sponsors were Senate President Don Harmon and state Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-St. Clair County.

There are two separate issues: the lawsuit and the law.

As matters stand, the trial and appellate courts — precedent-bound — must dismiss the GOP lawsuit.

Once they do, Republicans can ask the Supreme Court to reconsider its past rulings on "three readings," a request justices would most likely refuse.

On the political side, Republicans hope Pritzker will follow the example of Democratic New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, who has twice vetoed similar legislation.

The legislation was passed on party-line votes in the House and Senate.

The News-Gazette earlier reported that state Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, voted in favor along with state Sen. Paul Faraci, D-Champaign, and state Rep. Carol Ammons, D-Urbana.

But Rose's "ves" vote was on an earlier version of the legislation. He voted in opposition to the "gut and replace" final product.

Jim Dey is a staff writer for The News-Gazette. His email is jdey@news-gazette.com.

ELECTION 2026

Pritzker set to announce bid for third term on Thursday

Governor yet to confirm '28 presidential bid

By RICK PEARSON
Chicago Tribune (TNS)

CHICAGO — Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker allegedly plans to announce Thursday that he will seek a third term next year, answering a question about his immediate political future but leaving unanswered whether he will pursue a longer-term goal of running for president in 2028.

Multiple sources close to Pritzker's campaign confirmed to the Tribune on Tuesday that the governor will make the announcement at in-person events in Chicago and Springfield, though exact details of what it will entail have not yet been finalized. Democratic supporters on Monday were invited to a campaign announcement for Pritzker but were not told the details.

He is the first incumbent governor to seek a third term as chief executive since the late former Republican Gov. James R. Thompson, who went on to serve four terms. Illinois has no term limits on its constitutional offices.

Audrey Richardson/ Chicago Tribune/TNS

Gov. J.B. Pritzker is expected to confirm Thursday that he's running for re-election in 2026.

Pritzker's decision becomes the most significant in a series of moves in the early 2026 political season that is poised to remake Illinois' political landscape. The generational domino effect has already seen longtime politicians opt to retire or pursue higher office, moves that have created new openings for political ladder-climbers beneath them.

But the governor's move also allows Illinois' ruling Democrats to breathe a sigh of relief, leaving in place the powerful billionaire force who has led them both politically and financially for the past 6½ years. It also helps the party avoid the prospect of a fractious, contentious and costly primary battle to succeed him.

With his two-term running mate, Juliana Stratton, among the contenders seeking to replace retiring senior U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, Pritzker does have to decide who will join him on the ticket as lieutenant governor — and who has his confidence to succeed him if he embarks on a successful presidential bid.

Pritzker spent $350 million of his own wealth in his two successful runs for governor and heavily invested in the state Democratic Party that he funded and controlled. He has spent tens of millions of dollars on building up the state Democratic Party and local ward, township and county organizations, and contributed to the leadership funds of House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch and Senate President Don Harmon to ensure state legislative supermajorities.

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Trump, GOP face test on megabill

Senators voice concerns as deadline approaches

David Morgan
REUTERS

Republicans control the Senate by a 53-47 majority and the House by 220-212. One Republican from each chamber has opposed the tax-cut and spending legislation from the beginning due to the debt. SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump and his allies in the Senate face a political free-for-all over passage of his sweeping tax-cut and spending legislation, which Republican congressional leaders hope to enact in the coming days despite growing resistance from different party factions.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, House Speaker Mike Johnson and administration officials are pressing Republican lawmakers to pass the One Big Beautiful Bill Act so Trump can sign it into law before the July 4 Independence Day holiday.

But hard-line Republicans have redoubled their push for additional spending cuts after an official forecast that the bill would add at least $2.8 trillion to the $36.2 trillion U.S. debt. Other lawmakers, looking to minimize the impact of cuts on social programs including Medicaid, have also voiced adamant opposition to the bill's language.

Republicans control the Senate by a 53-47 majority and the House by 220-212. One Republican from each chamber has opposed the legislation from the beginning due to the debt.

Thune aims to begin Senate action by the middle of this week and complete passage by the weekend, sending the bill back to the House for final approval.

Trump is expected to turn up the heat on senators this week, according to Republican lawmakers who view him as "the closer."

"Great unity in the Republican Party, perhaps unity like we have never seen before. Now let's get the Great, Big, Beautiful Bill done," Trump said in a social media post on June 22.

Lawmakers are still waiting for the Senate parliamentarian, the chamber's nonpartisan gatekeeper, to decide whether the legislation qualifies for the privileged status needed to circumvent Democrats and the 60-vote Senate filibuster and pass it with only 51 votes.

"The Senate Republican bill is, simply put, bigger cuts, bigger betrayal," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said. "It makes even deeper cuts to health care. It destroys American clean energy. It raises costs on working and middle-class families. And it rewards those at the very top."

Pushback in Senate

Some Republicans are pushing back on Thune's schedule in hopes of gaining more time to negotiate bigger savings.

"There's no way. There's no way," Sen. Ron Johnson, a leading fiscal hawk who wants to cut federal spending back to pre-COVID pandemic levels, said when asked if he could support the bill this week.

The Wisconsin Republican said he is coordinating with fellow hard-line Sens. Mike Lee and Rick Scott, who want to glean additional savings from green tax credits and the Medicaid health care program for lower-income Americans, respectively.

Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin said "there's no way" he could support the tax and spending bill in its current form. JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

"If we had all the money in the world, why would you make a change? We don't. We're running $2 trillion deficits," Scott told reporters.

The legislation has yet to pass muster with the Senate parliamentarian, who has said Republican efforts to restrict food assistance, curtail the ability of judges to block government policies, slash funding for financial watchdogs and reverse Biden vehicle policy violate budgetary rules.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said last week the House version of the bill could lead to a $2.8 trillion increase in the federal deficit over the next decade.

That figure would reach a total of $3.4 trillion if the cost of rising interest payments due to increased borrowing needs were included, according to the agency, which took into account the bill's potential impact on economic activity.

The report contradicted Republican claims that tax cuts would lead to buoyant economic growth and pay for themselves by generating higher revenues from increased business activity.

In a Senate floor speech last week, Thune cited a White House Council of Economic Advisers projection that the legislation would increase federal revenue by $4.1 trillion, saying it would more than offset the CBO's deficit estimate.

Medicaid hit

A revised Senate version of the legislation would reduce Medicaid provider taxes from 6% to 3.5% by 2031 in states that expanded the program to able-bodied recipients under the Affordable Care Act. That provision is opposed by several Senate Republicans who say it would undercut funding for rural hospitals.

"They cannot defund rural hospitals," said Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican who has positioned himself in the debate as a champion of Medicaid.

But Republicans signaled the time for negotiations would soon come to an end and predicted that wavering members would ultimately support the legislation.

"Some people are going to have to settle for a ham and egg sandwich without the ham. That's just the way it is," said Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana.

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Insurers vow to reform prior authorizations

Ken Alltucker
USA TODAY

Large health insurance companies vowed to cut down the use of and improve a common tool to vet requests before letting doctors bill for medical services or prescriptions.

UnitedHealthcare, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, Kaiser Permanente, Humana and other health insurance companies on June 23 announced plans to "streamline, simplify and reduce prior authorizations." Doctors and patients have long criticized prior authorizations, saying the practice routinely delays or denies care. The changes to prior authorization will be phased in over the next year and a half, the companies said. In all, insurers said the changes would apply to 257 million Americans covered by private commercial insurance, Medicare Advantage and Medicaid managed care plans.

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Mehmet Oz praised the insurance reforms during a June 23 news conference in Washington, DC.

Oz noted the federal government could adopt regulations to enforce change if the insurance companies don't follow through on promised improvements.

"I am optimistic, hopeful that we won't have to do that, but it's always in our back pocket if we need it," Oz said.

Prior authorization requires doctors or hospitals to ask a patient's health insurance company before performing certain procedures or prescribing certain drugs.

Doctors complain the process is burdensome and often used to delay or deny medically necessary care. Insurance companies counter that authorizations are a vital tool to prevent unnecessary tests and treatments that inflate medical bills.

During his confirmation hearing in March, Oz said prior authorizations were "misused in some cases." He suggested a clearly defined list of services for which such plans could require preauthorization.

Nearly 1 in 5 adults with health insurance said they experienced a prior authorization problem in the past year, according to a 2023 survey by KFF, a health policy nonprofit.

Oz said private insurance companies that administer Medicare Advantage plans partially or fully denied 3.2 million preauthorization claims in 2023.

The health insurers vowed changes will bring faster access for patients and fewer challenges, according to a statement shared by America's Health Insurance Plans, a trade group.

The group said health insurers would "reduce the scope of claims" subject to prior authorization. Insurers also said they would implement measures to ensure continuity of care when patients switched insurance plans and to give clearer explanations on decisions.

The large health insurers also will seek to standardize computer systems to process prior authorization requests. The idea is to put "patients over paperwork" and allow insurers, doctors and hospitals to exchange digital information in a standard way, Oz said.

Judge blocks Trump plan to bar Harvard international students

Nate Raymond
REUTERS

Harvard University said the ruling will allow it to host international students while the case moves forward.
FAITH NINIVAGGI/REUTERS FILE

BOSTON – A federal judge on June 23 blocked President Donald Trump's administration from implementing his plan to bar foreign nationals from entering the United States to study at Harvard University.

U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs in Boston issued an injunction barring Trump's administration from carrying out its latest bid to curtail Harvard's ability to host international students amid an escalating fight pitting the Republican president against the prestigious Ivy League school.

The preliminary injunction extends a temporary order the judge issued on June 5 that prevented the administration from enforcing a proclamation Trump signed a day earlier that cited national security concerns to justify why Harvard could no longer be trusted to host international students.

She ruled after Trump's June 20 announcement that his administration could announce a deal with Harvard "over the next week or so" to resolve the White House's campaign against the university, which has waged a legal battle against the administration's various actions against the school.

Trump signed the proclamation after his administration had already frozen billions of dollars in funding to the nation's oldest and wealthiest university, threatened Harvard's tax-exempt status and launched several investigations into the school.

The proclamation prohibited foreign nationals from entering the United States to study at Harvard or participate in exchange visitor programs for an initial period of six months, and directed Secretary of State Marco Rubio to consider whether to revoke visas of international students already enrolled at Harvard.

But Burroughs said Trump's administration was likely violating Harvard's First Amendment free speech rights by retaliating against it for refusing to meet its demands to cede control over the school's curriculum and admissions and by targeting it based on what officials viewed as the university's left-leaning orientation.

The judge said that "at its root, this case is about core constitutional rights that must be safeguarded: freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and freedom of speech, each of which is a pillar of a functioning democracy and an essential hedge against authoritarianism."

"Here, the government's misplaced efforts to control a reputable academic institution and squelch diverse viewpoints seemingly because they are, in some instances, opposed to this Administration's own views, threaten these rights," she wrote.

Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Harvard said the ruling will allow it to continue hosting international students and scholars while this case moves forward. It added it will continue to defend the rights of the school, its students and scholars.

The university has filed two separate lawsuits before Burroughs, an appointee of President Barack Obama, seeking to unfreeze around $2.5 billion in funding and to prevent the administration from blocking the ability of international students to attend the university.

People gather for a protest outside the closed offices of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau on Feb. 12. President Donald Trump's call to eliminate the bureau means staff has been drastically reduced.
KENT NISHIMURA/USA TODAY FILE

Trump's CFPB rollback has cost Americans

Douglas Gillison
REUTERS

President Donald Trump's rapid pullback of the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has cost Americans at least $18 billion in higher fees and lost compensation for consumers allegedly cheated by major companies, according to an analysis released June 24 by two organizations.

The increased consumer costs from the CFPB's rollback of regulations on bank fees, wholesale dismissal of cases against banks and other lenders and the apparent failure to disburse funds intended for harmed borrowers run counter to Trump's campaign pledges to ease the cost of living, according to the Student Borrower Protection Center and the Consumer Federation of America.

Representatives for the White House and CFPB did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Since Trump took control of the CFPB in February, calling for its elimination, administration officials have sought to reduce the workforce by about 90% and sharply curtail its industry oversight.

Administration officials accuse the agency and its former leadership of exceeding their legal powers, burdening free enterprise and engaging in politicized enforcement of consumer laws.

However, in a statement on June 24, the two organizations listed actions Trump's team had taken that they said shifted costs onto consumers.

Under former President Joe Biden, the agency had sought to cap credit card late fees at $8 and overdraft fees at $5. The Trump administration's move to end those policies should together cost consumers $15 billion a year, according to the statement.

The dismissal of 22 enforcement cases that were pending when Biden left office in January – including actions against JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo and Capital One – involved more than $3 billion in alleged harm to consumers.

The CFPB has also scrapped or revised settlements it had already concluded with Toyota and a payments processor, meaning about $50 million in redress payments will never be made, the statement said.

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PROVIDED

SIC's Dr. Frank Barbre, Board of Trustees Vice Chair and ICCTA Representative (center), accepts the Linden A. Warfel Trustee Education Award from Lin Warfel himself and Patricia Murphy, President of ICCTA.

PROVIDED

Dr. Frank Barbre thanks the ICCTA for offering board of trustee members an excellent professional development program at the ICCTA Awards Banquet in Normal this month.

Dr. Barbre receives Linden A. Warfel Trustee Education Award

HARRISBURG — Southeastern Illinois College Board of Trustees Vice President and Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) Representative Dr. Frank Barbre was recently awarded the prestigious Linden A. Warfel Trustee Education Award for completing more than 100 ICCTA professional development programs.

Presented by the ICCTA, the award recognizes trustees who demonstrate exceptional commitment to ongoing education and leadership in community college governance. It is named in honor of former ICCTA president Linden A. Warfel, a long-serving advocate for Illinois community colleges.

"Trustees who go above and beyond to pursue continuous learning strengthen not only their institutions but the entire community college system in Illinois," SIC President Dr. Karen Weiss said. "Dr. Barbre's dedication to service and professional growth is commendable and reflects the high standards of leadership we value at Southeastern."

Barbre has served on the SIC Board of Trustees since 2005. He has been a strong advocate for community college access and innovation in Southern Illinois and played a key role in bringing the new SIC Stanford D. Williams Career and Training Center to fruition in Carmi. The center benefits White County high school students through dual credit opportunities, as well as traditional and nontraditional students interested in the trades, local industries in need of skilled workers, and the community as a whole.

The ICCTA provides advocacy, training, and support for trustees across Illinois' public community colleges. Fewer than 10% of trustees statewide earn the Warfel Award, making Barbre's accomplishment a significant milestone.

"I'm honored to receive this award and proud to represent Southeastern Illinois College through the ICCTA," Barbre said. "Lifelong learning is at the heart of what we do as community colleges, and that includes those of us who serve in leadership roles."

Southeastern Illinois College extends its congratulations to Dr. Barbre for this well-earned recognition and thanks him for two decades of dedicated service to the college and its mission.

For more information about the SIC Board of Trustees, visit sic.edu/board.

Fosters to celebrate 60th anniversary

Dr. Robert D. Foster and Leona M. Foster are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary. Robert D. Foster and Leona M. Lingle were married June 27,1965, in Salem, IL. They now reside in Carbondale, IL. They have two daughters, Teri Foster and fiancé James Gunther of Spring Grove, IL and Julie Doty and husband Chad of Peoria, IL and three grandchildren, Nicholas, Mia and Sophia Doty. The Fosters are both retired school teachers from the Carbondale school districts.

Collins named to Baldwin Wallace University dean's list

BEREA, OH — Sallee Collins of Tamaroa, a graduate of Pinckneyville Community High School majoring in acting (BFA), has been named to the dean's list for the spring 2025 semester at Baldwin Wallace University, according to Interim Provost Linda Chase. The dean's list recognizes students who earn a grade point average of 3.8 or higher while enrolled in 12 or more graded hours during the semester.

Baldwin Wallace University, founded in 1845, was one of the first colleges to admit students without regard to race or gender. An independent, coeducational university of 3,200 students, BW offers coursework in the liberal arts tradition in more than 65 academic areas. Located in Berea, 12 miles from downtown Cleveland, BW offers students the cultural, educational and business advantages of a major metropolitan area.

Justin A. Torner

Drone images of campus. FAA Licensed Pilot, Registered Flight Plan

Asbery named to University of Iowa dean's list for spring semester

IOWA CITY, IA — Cullen Asbery of Mount Vernon was among the more than 8,000 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa named to the dean's list for the 2025 spring semester.

Guidelines for inclusion on the list are:

Degree seeking undergraduate students in the Carver College of Medicine, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Public Health, Tippie College of Business and University College who achieved a grade-point average (GPA) of 3.50 or higher on 12 semester hours or more of UI graded coursework during a given semester or summer session and who have no semester hours of "I" (incomplete) or "O" (no grade reported) during the same semester are recognized by inclusion on the dean's list for that semester.

Undergraduate students in the Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine may qualify for the dean's list with fewer than 12 semester hours of graded credit, if deemed appropriate by the college

College of Nursing students participating in clinical courses who have a total of 12 semester hours of earned credit, with eight semester hours of graded credit with a GPA of 3.50 or higher

As a top global university, Iowa is the ideal destination for learning, discovery, and innovation. With over 200 areas of study to choose from, students are encouraged to mix and match majors, minors, and certificates to earn a degree that reflects their unique interests.

An Illinois State Court Authorized This Notice.

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Celebrate Independence Day at the Kaskaskia Bell State Memorial

SPRINGFIELD — The Kaskaskia Bell State Memorial on Kaskaskia Island in southwest Illinois will host its 55th annual patriotic ceremony celebrating our nation's independence at 1 p.m. Friday, July 4.

The 320-year-old village of Kaskaskia is home to the Liberty Bell of the West. The 650-pound bell was cast in 1741 and presented by France as a gift to the Catholic Church of the Illinois Country. Originally located at the Immaculate Conception Parish at Kaskaskia, the bell was rung by villagers to celebrate their July 4, 1778, liberation from the British by American Colonel George Rogers Clark. In later years, it became known as the Liberty Bell of the West.

The Kaskaskia Bell State Memorial is at 203 First St. in Kaskaskia. The July Fourth program begins at 1 p.m., and the food stand opens at 11 a.m. Visitors should bring chairs.

This year's program will feature a presentation by historian, public speaker and Southern Illinois native Tim Heggemeier on "George Rogers Clark and his Long Knives Across Randolph County."

Other participants in the ceremony will include the Rev. Sebastian Ukoh; members of VFW Post 3553 and American Legion Post 487; the Steve Colonel family; the Chester Municipal Band; the mayors of Chester and Perryville, Missouri; area scout troops; the French Marines de Fort de Chartres; and Fort Kaskaskia staff.

The Southern File Photo

The Kaskaskia Bell State Memorial is home to the Liberty Bell of the West, which was cast in 1741 and presented by France as a gift to the Catholic Church of the Illinois Country.

The Kaskaskia Bell State Memorial, managed by IDNR, is located on an island in the Mississippi River about 60 miles southeast of St. Louis. The town was once physically connected to the rest of Illinois by a peninsula until the Mississippi River changed course in 1881. The site is accessible by land only from Missouri. Visitors can reach the site through St. Mary, Missouri; take Missouri Highway 61 to the Old Channel Bridge, turn east, then follow Kaskaskia Bell markers for approximately 5 miles to the state memorial site.

City's fireworks display to return to SIU campus

CARBONDALE — The City of Carbondale and Southern Illinois University Carbondale have announced the return of the annual fireworks display on SIU campus The event will take place at 9:15 p.m. Friday, July 4.

For the best viewing, spectators are advised to park in Banterra Center parking lots 18 and 56. Overflow parking will be directed to lot 89, north of the Banterra Center. It is recommended to arrive early, as the main parking lots are usually full and closed by 9 p.m.

While waiting for the fireworks to begin, enjoy an array of delicious treats from our fantastic vendors, including Honeybeez Snowballz offering classic sno-cones as well as nachos, hot dogs and cake balls, the iconic American Ice Cream Truck and Pelzer's Tropical Sno's shaved ice.

Please refer to the SIU parking map at https://parking.siu.edu/_common/files/fy22-rules-and-regs-map.pdf for more information on lot locations and handicap accessible spots.

Road closures will start at 6 p.m., including parking lots 37 and 52. Cars must be cleared from these areas by 6 p.m. Douglas Drive and Saluki Drive will be closed from Evergreen to Lincoln, and from Douglas to Arena Drive, until after the fireworks display.

Parking along Route 51 or other roadways for viewing purposes is prohibited.

In the event of rain, the fireworks display will be postponed to Saturday, July 5, at 9:15 p.m.

For further details, please contact the City of Carbondale at 618-713-0711.

The Southern File Photo

The fireworks display in Carbondale will return to the SIU campus on Friday, July 4.

Carbondale city offices will be closed on July 4

CARBONDALE — In observance of Independence Day, city offices will be closed Friday, July 4, and reopen Monday, July 7.

During this time, walk-in customer service at city offices will not be available. However, residents are reminded that emergency services will continue to operate without interruption.

Utility bill payments can be conveniently made during the closure through the following methods:

Online Payment: Residents can pay utility bills at the city's official website. Online services offer a secure and convenient option for making bill payments.

Dropbox: A secure dropbox is available at city hall for residents to drop off their payments anytime, day or night.

In Person: Upon reopening on July 7, 2025, residents can make utility bill payments in person during regular business hours.

Additionally, be aware of the refuse and recycling holiday schedule, which can be viewed on the city's website. Residents need to stay informed about any schedule changes to ensure proper disposal and recycling practices.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this time. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the City of Carbondale at 618-549-5302.

Carbondale city offices will be closed Friday.

The Southern File Photo

Officials urge common sense during fireworks season

BY PAUL WILCOXEN
PWILCOXEN@THESOUTHERN.COM

MARION — As Fourth of July celebrations ramp up across Southern Illinois, Marion Fire Chief Tim Barnett is urging residents to use common sense and put safety first — especially when fireworks are involved.

State law limits consumer fireworks, but local rules and enforcement differ. In Marion, sales are banned — yet nearby vendors still sell them, and people still set them off.

Barnett said that puts first responders in a challenging position. "The fire department's role isn't to police behavior — it's to respond when something goes wrong," he said.

"There are minimum setbacks for lighting these things," Barnett added, noting that the Illinois State Fire Marshal provides guidance on safe distances. "You need to be in wide open spaces."

He noted that state law requires fireworks to be handled by trained, licensed individuals, but many still set them off — sometimes without problems, sometimes with.

Most injuries involve hands, fingers or legs and many affect the eyes

SEE SENSE/PAGE A6

PAUL WILCOXEN | The Southern

The Marion Fire Department is advising people to stay safe this Fourth of July weekend.

PAUL WILCOXEN | The Southern

Boxes of sparklers are displayed ahead of Independence Day celebrations. Though often considered harmless, sparklers can burn at temperatures up to 2,000 degrees and are a leading cause of fireworks-related injuries in children.

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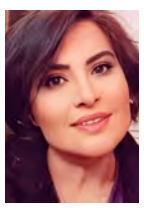
After attacks, Iran targets dissidents

Prisoner describes new detention site as being 'slow death'

By Sarah El Deeb
Associated Press

A building of the Evin prison sits damaged Sunday in Tehran, Iran, after an Israeli strike June 23.
VAHID SALEMI/AP



Seydal

Mohammadi

BEIRUT — Sayeh Seydal, a jailed Iranian dissident, narrowly escaped death when Israeli missiles struck Tehran's Evin Prison, where she was held. She had just stepped out of the prison's clinic moments before it was destroyed.

The June 23 strikes on Iran's most notorious prison for political dissidents killed at least 71 people, including staff, soldiers, visiting family members and people living nearby, Iranian judiciary spokesman Asghar Jahangir said Sunday. In the ensuing chaos, authorities transferred Seydal and others to prisons outside Tehran — overcrowded facilities known for their harsh conditions.

When she was able to call her family several days ago, Seydal pleaded for help.

"It's literally a slow death," she said of the conditions, according to a recording of the call provided by her relatives, in accordance with Seydal's wishes.

"The bombing by the U.S. and Israel didn't kill us. Then the Islamic Republic brought us to a place that will practically kill us," she said.

Iran's pro-democracy and rights activists fear they will pay the price for Israel's 12-day air campaign aiming to cripple the country's nuclear program. Many now say the state, reeling from the breach in its security, has intensified its crackdown on opponents.

Israel's strike on Evin — targeting, it said, "repressive authorities" — spread panic among families of the political prisoners, who were left scrambling to determine their loved ones' fates. A week later, families of those who were in solitary confinement or under interrogation still haven't heard from them.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, a veteran activist who has been imprisoned multiple times in Evin, said Iranian society, "to get to democracy, needs powerful tools to reinforce civil society and the women's movement."

"Unfortunately, war weakens these tools," she said in a video message to The Associated Press from Tehran. Political space is already shrinking with security forces increasing their presence in the streets of the capital, she said.

Many now fear a potential wave of executions targeting activists and political prisoners. They see a terrifying precedent: After Iran's war with Iraq ended in 1988, authorities executed at least 5,000 political prisoners after perfunctory trials, then buried them in mass graves that have never been accessed.

During Israel's military campaign, Iran executed six prisoners who were sentenced to death before the war.

The Washington-based Human Rights Activists in Iran documented nearly 1,300 people arrested, most on charges of espionage, including 300 for sharing content on social media in just 12 days.

Parliament is fast-tracking a bill allowing greater use of the death penalty for charges of collaboration with foreign adversaries. The judiciary chief called for expedited proceedings against those who "disrupt the peace" or "collaborate" with Israel.

"We know what that means. That means show trials and executions," said Bahar Ghandehari, director of advocacy and media at the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran.

Evin Prison, located in an upscale neighborhood on Tehran's northern edge, housed an estimated 120 men and women in its general wards, as well as hundreds of others believed to be in its secretive security units under interrogation or in solitary confinement, according to Human Rights Activists.

The prisoners include protesters, lawyers and activists who have campaigned for years against Iran's authoritarian rule, corruption and religious laws, including enforcement of Islamic attire for women. Authorities have crushed waves of nationwide protests since 2009 in crackdowns that have killed hundreds and jailed thousands.

The Israeli strikes hit Evin during visiting hours, causing shock and panic.

Seydal, an international law scholar who joined protest movements over the past two decades and has been in and out of jail since 2023, recounted to her family her near-brush with death in the prison clinic. The blast knocked her to the ground, a relative who spoke to Seydal said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Visiting halls, the prosecutor's office and several prisoner wards were also damaged, according to rights groups and relatives of prisoners. One missile hit the prison entrance, where prisoners often are waiting to be taken to hospitals or court.

"Attacking a prison, when the inmates are standing behind closed doors and they are unable to do the slightest thing to save themselves, can never be a legitimate target," Mohammadi said. She was released in December when her latest sentence was briefly suspended for medical reasons.

During the night, buses began transferring prisoners to other facilities, according to Mohammadi and families of prisoners. At least 65 women were sent to Qarchak Prison, according to Mohammadi. Men were sent to the Grand Tehran Penitentiary, housing criminals and high-security prisoners. Both are located south of Tehran.

Mohammadi told the AP that her immediate fear was a lack of medical facilities and poor hygiene. Among the women are several with conditions needing treatment, including civil rights activist Raheleh Rahemi, 73, who has a brain tumor.

In her call home, Seydal called Qarchak a "hellhole." She said the women were packed together with no hygiene care and limited food or drinkable water.

"It stinks. Just pure filth," she said.

"She sounded confused, scared and very sad," her relative said. "She knows speaking out is very dangerous for her. But also being silent can be dangerous for her."

On Sunday, Seydal, 47, made another call to her family, saying she was briefly taken back to Evin to bring her belongings. The stench of "death" filled the air, her relative quoted her as saying.

Seydal was first sentenced in 2023. In early 2025, her furlough was canceled, and she was assaulted by security and faced new charges after she refused to wear a chador at the prosecutor's office.

Disappearances in Evin are not uncommon. Guards sometimes remove political prisoners from wards for interrogation. In some cases, they are sentenced in secret trials and executed.

JIMMY SWAGGART 1935-2025

La. televangelist's prostitution scandals crippled his ministry

Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — Televangelist Jimmy Swaggart, whose multimillion-dollar ministry and huge audience dwindled following his prostitution scandals, has died. He was 90.

Swaggart's death was announced Tuesday on his public Facebook page. Swaggart had been in ill health.

The Louisiana native was best known for being a captivating Pentecostal preacher with a massive following before being caught on camera with a prostitute in New Orleans in 1988, one of a string of successful TV preachers brought down in the 1980s and '90s by sex scandals. He continued preaching for decades, but with a reduced audience.

Swaggart encapsulated his downfall in a tearful 1988 sermon, in which he apologized but made no reference to a prostitute. "I have sinned against you," Swaggart told parishioners. "I beg you to forgive me."

He announced his resignation from the Assemblies of God later that year, shortly after the church said it was defrocking him for rejecting punishment it had ordered for "moral failure." The church had wanted him to undergo a two-year rehabilitation program, including not preaching for a full year.

Swaggart said at the time that he knew dismissal was inevitable but insisted he had no choice but to separate from the church to save his ministry and Bible college.

Born on March 15, 1935, Swaggart grew up poor, the son of a preacher, in a music-rich family.

He excelled at piano and gospel music, playing and singing with talented cousins who took different paths: rock 'n' roller Jerry Lee Lewis and country singer Mickey Gilley.

In his hometown of Ferriday, Louisiana, Swaggart said he first heard the call of God at age 8.

"Everything seemed different after that day in front of the Arcade Theater," he said in a 1985 interview with the Jacksonville Journal-Courier in Illinois. "I felt better inside. Almost like taking a bath."

He preached and worked part time in oil fields until he was 23. He then moved entirely into his ministry: preaching, playing piano and singing gospel songs with the fervor of Lewis at Assemblies of God revivals and camp meetings.

Swaggart started a radio show, a magazine and then moved into television.

He called Roman Catholicism "a false religion," and claimed that Jews suffered for thousands of years "because of their rejection of Christ."

Jimmy Swaggart grew up with musical cousins Jerry Lee Lewis and Mickey Gilley.
MARK AVERY/AP 1987

"If you don't like what I say, talk to my boss," he once shouted as he strode in front of his congregation at his Family Worship Center in Baton Rouge, where his sermons moved listeners to speak in tongues and stand up as if possessed by the Holy Spirit.

Swaggart's messages stirred thousands of congregants and millions of TV viewers, making him a household name by the late 1980s. Contributors built Jimmy Swaggart Ministries into a business that made an estimated $142 million in 1986.

His Baton Rouge complex still includes a worship center and broadcasting and recording facilities.

Swaggart's downfall came in the late 1980s as other preachers faced similar scandals. Swaggart said publicly that his earnings were hurt in 1987 by the sex scandal surrounding rival televangelist Jim Bakker and a former church secretary at Bakker's PTL ministry organization.

The following year, Swaggart was photographed at a hotel with Debra Murphree, a prostitute who told reporters that the two did not have sex but that the preacher had paid her to pose nude. She later posed nude for Penthouse magazine.

The surveillance photos that crippled Swaggart's career apparently stemmed from his rivalry with preacher Marvin Gorman, whom Swaggart had accused of sexual misdeeds. Gorman hired the photographer who captured Swaggart and Murphree on film. Swaggart later paid Gorman $1.8 million to settle a lawsuit over the sexual allegations against Gorman.

More trouble came in 1991, when police in California detained Swaggart with another prostitute. The evangelist was charged with driving on the wrong side of the road and driving an unregistered Jaguar. His companion, Rosemary Garcia, said Swaggart became nervous when he saw the police car and weaved when he tried to stuff pornographic magazines under a car seat.

Swaggart is survived by his wife, Frances, sons Donnie and Matt, and daughter Jill.

Barcelona sees hottest June since 1914 as Europe sizzles

By Samuel Petrequin and Joseph Wilson
Associated Press

PARIS — Barcelona recorded its hottest June in more than a century, the summit of Paris' iconic Eiffel Tower was closed to visitors and hundreds of French schools shut Tuesday as Europe sizzled in its first major heat wave of the summer.

Health warnings remained in effect in several European countries. The worst was felt in Southern Europe while punishing temperatures were forecast to reach 104 degrees in Paris and to stay unusually high in Belgium and the Netherlands.

The abnormally hot weather "is exposing millions of Europeans to high heat stress" with temperatures in June more typical of July and August, said Samantha Burgess of the European Center for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts. This June is likely to be among the five hottest on record, it said.

Barcelona's Fabra Observatory reported an average temperature for last month of 78.8 degrees, breaking records since books were started in 1914. The previous hottest average for June was 78.08 degrees in 2003. The same weather station said that a single-day high of 100 degrees for June was recorded Monday.

Barcelona is usually spared the worst heat in Spain, thanks to its location between hills and the Mediterranean in Spain's northeastern corner. But most of the country has been gripped by the extreme heat.

"We are seeing these temperatures because we are experiencing a very intense heat wave that has come early in the summer and that is clearly linked to global warming," Ramón Pascual, a delegate for Spain's weather service in Barcelona, said Tuesday.

Pascual added that the inhabitants of the Mediterranean region are not being helped by the rising sea temperatures, which greatly reduces any cooling effects of a nearby body of water.

"With water surface temperatures from78 to 86 degrees, it is difficult for our nights to be refreshing," he said.

Spain also saw a new high mark for June established on Saturday when 114 was recorded in the southern province of Huelva.

In France, the national weather agency Météo-France placed several departments under the highest red alert, with the Paris region particularly hard hit. More than 1,300 schools in the country were partially or fully closed.

Visitors to the Eiffel Tower without tickets were told to postpone their visits as the summit of the city's landmark was closed until Thursday. The operators said the closure was "to ensure everyone's comfort and safety."

Farther south, 17 of Italy's 27 major cities were experiencing a heat wave, according to the Health Ministry.

There were torrential rains in Italy's north Monday and parts of Bardonecchia near Turin were covered in sludge after the Frejus river burst its banks.

Temperatures were expected to reach 98.6 degrees by Wednesday in large parts of the Czech Republic, including the capital. The Prague zoo distributed up to 10 metric tons of ice daily across the park, with special attention given to polar bears native to the Arctic.

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How Can I Get a Payment? The only way to get a payment is to submit a Claim Form. If you submit a Claim Form, you will give up the right to sue Google or any Released Parties in a separate lawsuit about the claims made in this case and released by the Settlement. You must submit a Claim Form by **October 16, 2025**. You must submit your Claim online at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com or file a paper Claim Form postmarked by **October 16, 2025**. Paper Claim Forms are available at the Settlement Website or by calling 1-844-768-1451. Claim Forms must be completed by an adult of 18 years or older. ***If you are a minor, the Claim Form must be completed by your parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian completes the Claim Form the payment will be made to them, and in such an event, such payment must be used solely for the minor's benefit***.

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The Final Approval Hearing: The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on **October 14, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.** to consider whether to approve the Settlement and award Service Payments of up to $5,000 to the Class Representatives, attorneys' fees of up to 40% of the Settlement Fund, and, reimbursement of expenses, as well as consider any objections. Motions for these fees and expenses will be posted on the Settlement Website when they are filed with the Court. You may appear at the hearing, either yourself or through an attorney hired by you, but you don't have to. The hearing may be held remotely using the Court's Zoom videoconference link (us06web.zoom.us/j/3098362777) at the Court's discretion. For more information and updates, call or visit the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

More Information: This notice is only a summary. Complete information about all of your rights and options, as well as a Claim Form, a more detailed Long Form Notice, the Settlement Agreement, and other relevant documents are available at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com, by emailing info@GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com, or by calling toll-free 1-844-768-1451.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The dates and deadlines may be changed without further notice to the Settlement Class, so please check the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE THE COURT OR THE COURT CLERK'S OFFICE TO INQUIRE ABOUT THIS SETTLEMENT OR THE CLAIM PROCESS.

www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com 1-844-768-1451

HANNIBAL, MO.

Carolyn L. Casteel

AUG. 15, 1923 — JUNE 28, 2025

Carolyn L. Casteel, age 101, longtime Pittsfield business owner, died peacefully on Saturday afternoon at Liberty Village in Pittsfield, Il.

She was born August 15, 1923 on the family farm southwest of Pittsfield, Il. daughter of the late Harry and Alpha Doane Long.

She married Jean T. Casteel in December of 1948 and he preceded her in death on January 7, 1992.

Surviving are her nieces and nephews, Harold Kay (Marcia) Dehart, Allen (Chris) Horton, Crystal (Martin) Russell, Steve (Julie) Horton, Arlee (Pete) Grimsley, Mike (Gayle) Horton, Rhonda Johnson, Kathy (Brad) Willman, Roger (Joyce) Cooper, Susan (Tom) Foran, Tom Casteel, Marcia (Skip) Stevens, Michael (Jennifer) Casteel, and Carolyn Sue Fitzpatrick; and several great nieces and great nephews.

Carolyn was preceded in death by her parents; husband; a brother, Alfred Long; two sisters, Lucile Dehart Long and Dorothy Horton.

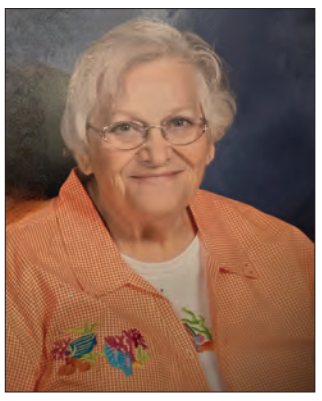
Carolyn was a graduate of Pittsfield High School and attended Gem City Business College in Quincy, Il. Carolyn, with her husband Jean, were owner/operators of Casteel Color Wheel in Pittsfield which opened in 1950. She and Jean rented a building prior to buying the store where it became the Color Wheel. She loved working with her customers on all of their projects involving the store. She was a lifetime member of the Pittsfield First Christian Church and always enjoyed the followship of those who attended with her. She was also a longtime Rotarian with the Pittsfield Rotary Club. Carolyn loved to travel and traveled extensively to many Rotary meetings throughout the United States and the world. She was an avid football and basketball spectator during her lifetime. She and Jean were part of a small group that started Little League in Pittsfield, Il.

Funeral services will be held 11 a.m. Wednesday at Pittsfield First Christian Church in Pittsfield with burial to follow in Pittsfield West Cemetery. Visitation will be held from 9 a.m. until the time of service Wednesday at the church. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Pittsfield First Christian Church or Pikeland Foundation and sent to Airsman-Hires Funeral Home, Box 513, Pittsfield, Il. 62363. Condolences may be sent to the family online at www.airsman-hires.com.

HANNIBAL, MO.

Mary Lou Atkins

NOV. 27, 1933 — JUNE 29, 2025



Mary Lou Atkins, 91 passed away at 5:00 AM Sunday, June 29, 2025, at The Illinois Veterans Home in Quincy, IL. Mary was formerly from Hannibal, MO. A special thanks to the Illinois Veterans home staff and Blessing Hospice staff for excellent Hospice Care.

Mary was born on November 27, 1933, in Quincy, IL, to George Leroy and Ruby L. Pults. She was married to Jim Atkins on May 13, 1961, at Hydesburg United Methodist Church. He preceded her in death on September 1, 2023. The love they exhibited during their long marriage was a beautiful example to their family.

Survivors include two daughters: Kathy Baum (Jim) of Quincy, IL and Karla Cannon of Hannibal, MO; nine grandchildren: Melanie Harvey (Jeremy), Jenny Herbig (Jarad), Jenny Manchik, Jamie Hamilton (Ben), Brad Baum (Emily), Brooke Van Horn, Michael Van Horn (Ashley), Shawn Van Horn (Mary) and Adrianna Rakowski (Timothy); 19 great grandchildren,1 great great grandson. Mary is also survived by two sisters, Carolyn (Sue) Guthrie, and Dorothy Pults plus many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her husband and parents, Mary was also preceded in death by her four brothers, Leroy, George, Ronald and Donald Pults; and brother-in-law, Ron Guthrie.

Mary was a long-time member of Hydesburg United Methodist Church, where she made many lifelong friends. Mary was an excellent cook and baker and used these talents for church dinners, helping with the "popcorn stand" at the Folk-Life in her younger years.

Professionally, Mary had a long career in the receiving room at J.C. Penney's in Hannibal, MO. Later, she would also work at the Hannibal Walmart Store, retiring due to ill health.

Mary's home was the gathering place for holidays where she would prepare many delicious delights. Afterwards, Mary would enjoy a spirited game of pitch. She also loved playing games such as Mexican Train Dominoes and was the first one at the Bingo table at the Veterans Home. Mary was also a certified "Master Gardener" through the local extension center and grew beautiful flowers and a thriving vegetable garden.

Mary was fun-loving and adventurous. Mary also belonged to a camping group, traveling all over in their 5th wheel campers. Once, when her car wouldn't start, she drove the Yanmar garden tractor into town (8 miles) to get to work. She loved spoiling her grandkids. Her purse was always full of treats or coloring pages for them. In her later years at the Vet's Home she made sure she had treats, candy, and gum, for the children of the employees. Mary was very generous and kindhearted. Most of all she was a cherished mom and grandmother to her family and a loyal friend to many.

Friends and Family are invited to Mary's Life Celebration at a visitation that will be held from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Wednesday, July 2, 2025, at the James O'Donnell Funeral Home in Hannibal, MO.

Funeral Services will be at 11:00 AM, Wednesday, July 2, 2025, at James O'Donnell Funeral Home in Hannibal, MO. Rev Tom Lemon will officiate. Burial will be at Grand View Burial Park in Hannibal, MO.

Pallbearers will be Shawn Van Horn, Michael Van Horn, Jeremy Harvey, Collin Harvey, Chris Heming, and Timothy Rakowski.

Memorial contributions may be made to Hydesburg United Methodist Church, or donor's choice.

Online condolences may be made and video tribute may be viewed at www.jamesodonnellfuneralhome.com

QUINCY

Theodore "Ted" R. Neumann

DEC. 1, 1950 — JUNE 30, 2025

Theodore "Ted" Ray Neumann, 74, of Quincy, passed away Monday, June 30, 2025, at his son's home surrounded by family.

Ted was born December 1, 1950, in Quincy, IL to Carl and Bertha (Stopp) Neumann. A graduate of Quincy Senior High School in 1968, he went on to master the plumbing trade through an apprenticeship program. His dedication to his craft earned him a respected place as a union plumber with Local 161 (now Local 25) of the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union, where he contributed his expertise for 30 years.

Beyond his professional achievements, Ted was a man of many passions. His journey as a Boy Scout with the Grace United Methodist Church pack culminated in the achievement of the Eagle Scout rank, a clear indication of his leadership qualities and commitment to community service. Ted's love for the outdoors was unparalleled. Whether he was mushroom hunting, fishing, or hunting for squirrel, deer, and quail, he was in his element. His adventures often took him to his favorite retreat, "The Wilderness," a family camp in Missouri where he made countless memories with friends and family over bowls of freshly picked blackberries served over ice cream. His memory will be treasured by all who knew him, and he will be deeply missed.

Ted Neumann is survived by his wife of 30 years, Joan Lehnen Neumann; his mother, Bertha Neumann; six children, Chad Neumann (Tristin) of Quincy, Matt Neumann (Molly) of Oakland Township, MI, Randy Neumann (Michelle) of Chatham, IL, Rusty Neumann (Kelly) of Springfield, IL, Amiee Chang (Ernie) of St. Charles, MO, and Nicki Kamphaus (Caleb) of Quincy; fourteen grandchildren, Blaine, Blake, Bailey, Kayla, Grace, Daneil, Mason, Alexis, Alexandria, Landon, Kaden, Remington, Colton, and Everly; five great-grandchildren, Nolan, Stella, Syden, Luke, and Elaina; and his sister, Janet Canavan (Kent).

Theodore was preceded in death by his father, Carl T. Neumann; his brothers, William and Robert Neumann; and a son, Brandon Turner.

A Graveside Service will be at 10:00 am Saturday, July 5, 2025, at Greenmount Cemetery in Quincy. Pastor Kory Hollensteiner will officiate.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Quincy Humane Society.

Online condolences may be shared and video tribute may be viewed at www.ODonnellCookson.com.

HANNIBAL, MO

Sandra Dee Chacon

Sandra Dee Chacon, 68, of Hannibal, passed away at 7:23 PM, Monday, June 30, 2025, at Hannibal Regional Hospital in Hannibal, MO.The family will host a life celebration at a later date. Arrangements for cremation are under the direction of the James O'Donnell Funeral Home in Hannibal, MO.

QUINCY, IL.

Mary Louise Tieken

Mary Louise Tieken, age 92, of Quincy, died on Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 3:52 am in her home. Visitation: Thursday, July 10, 2025, 9-11 a.m. at The Crossing Church 48th Street campus. Service: Thursday, July 10, 2025, 11 a.m. at The Crossing Church 48th Street campus. Inurnment of Mary's ashes will be held at a later date in Mendon Cemetery, Mendon, Illinois

LAPRAIRIE, ILL.

Christine D. Humke

Christine D. Humke, 69, of LaPrairie, passed away on Sunday, June 29, 2025, at City of Hope Cancer Center Chicago in Zion, Ill. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, July 8, at Faith Baptist Church in Camp Point. Burial will follow at Evergreen Cemetery in Camp Point. Visitation will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday at Faith Baptist Church and again on Tuesday morning from 9 a.m. until the time of services.

HANNIBAL, MO.

William Scott Meyer II

William Scott Meyer II, 72, of Hannibal, MO, passed away at 5:00 AM, Monday, May 12, 2025, at his home in Hannibal. Friends and Family are invited to Scott's Life Celebration on Thursday, July 3, 2025, from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the James O'Donnell Funeral Home in Hannibal, MO. At 2:30 PM there will be a speaker, and memories shared in honor of Scott.

CANTON, MO

Mary Ann Otte

Mary Ann Otte, 87 of Canton, Missouri passed away Monday, June 30, 2025 at the Lewis County Nursing Home in Canton. Arrangements are with Arnold's Funeral Home in Canton.

QUINCY

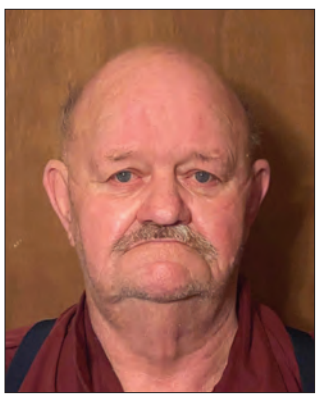
Robert E. Sronce

Robert E. Sronce, age 93, of Quincy, died on Saturday, June 28, 2025 in his home. Visitation: 4 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at Hansen-Spear Funeral Home. Service: 11 a.m. on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at Hansen-Spear Funeral Home. Burial: Greenmount Cemetery, Quincy, IL.

KEOKUK, IOWA

James "Jim" L. Steeples

MAY 29, 1947 — JUNE 27, 2025



James "Jim" L. Steeples, 78, of Quincy, passed away Friday, June 27, 2025, at his home in Quincy, IL.

Born on May 29, 1947, in Keokuk, IA, Jim was the beloved son of Duane A. and Jeannine (Cullen) Steeples. His life was a testament to his strength, kindness, and unwavering commitment to his family and country.

Jim graduated from Keokuk High School and went on to honorably serve his country in the United States Navy from 1965-1975, including fighting in the Vietnam War. Following his military service, Jim embarked on a career as an over-the-road truck driver for Gully, a role he held for 12 years. His entrepreneurial spirit later led him to own and operate his own truck for five years before retiring. Jim carried this same sense of duty and commitment into his work with the American Legion Post #37, where he served as an adjutant and historian. His involvement with the Army National Guard of IL further exemplified his unwavering commitment to his country.

On August 17, 1968, Jim married the love of his life, Patricia Louise Mahoney, in Lomita, California, and she survives him. Their union was blessed with two children, Jim (Tammy) of Quincy and Shawn (Michelle) of Plainville, IL. Jim's legacy continues through his eight grandchildren, Angela Smith (Eric Mating), Jennifer Stickler, Adam Wiechert, Jessey Beaston (Aaron), Jeff Steeples, Allie Jensen (Shawn), Terry Sheets Jr. (Taelor), and Jesse Sheets, as well as his eighteen great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren, who brought him immeasurable joy. He is also survived by his two brothers, Robert Steeples (Debbie) and Rick Steeples; one sister, Patty Jones (Rick); and two aunts, Deanna Iverson and Jayne Galle. Jim was preceded in death by his parents.

Jim was a man of many interests and talents. He was an enthusiastic member of the "Traveling Trompers," a friend group with whom he shared many camping adventures at Mark Twain Lake, Nauvoo State Park, and Riverview Park Valley. His passion for square dancing led him to join the Twain Twirlers. His creative spirit found expression in woodworking, crafting cherished Christmas decorations for his family. A man who enjoyed a good game, Jim was fond of gambling, playing slots at the casino, and scratch-offs. Card games like poker and pinochle were among his favorites, as was riding motorcycles, a passion that began in California and continued in Illinois.

Above all, Jim was a devoted family man. He took great joy in staying connected with his grandchildren online and cherished the family reunions. The quiet moments spent with his loved ones were the ones he treasured most. His presence was a comforting and constant source of love and support, and he will be deeply missed.

Friends and Family are invited to Jim's Life Celebration at a visitation that will be Tuesday, July 8, 2025, from 9:00 am to 10:00 am at O'Donnell-Cookson Life Celebration Home in Quincy, IL. A Memorial Service will follow at 10:00 am with Rev. Orville Jones officiating. Burial will follow at Sunset Cemetery with full military honors provided by the American Legion Post #37 and the United States Navy Funeral Honors Detail.

Memorial contributions may be made to American Legion Post #37 or the Illinois Veteran's Home Activity Fund.

Online condolences may be shared and video tribute may be viewed at www.ODonnellCookson.com.

CARTHAGE, ILL.

Lois Bloyd

Lois Bloyd, 88, passed away on Friday, June 27, 2025, at Hickory

Grove Assisted Living in Carthage. Arrangements are pending at Printy Funeral Home in Carthage.

An Illinois State Court Authorized This Notice.

All Illinois Residents Who, While They Were Enrolled in a School in the State of Illinois, at Any Time Between March 26, 2015 and May 15, 2025, Had a Google Workspace For Education or G Suite For Education Account May Be Entitled to Get a Payment from a Class Action Settlement.

Si desea recibir esta notificación en español, llámenos o visite nuestra página web.

An **$8.75 million settlement** has been reached in a class action lawsuit against Google LLC ("Google"), which claims that Google violated Illinois law by collecting and storing biometric data of class members in Illinois through its Google Workspace for Education (previously known as "G Suite for Education") platform without the proper notice and consent. Google denies that it collected or stored biometric data without proper notice and consent, or that it violated Illinois law or any other law. The Court has not decided who is right. For more information or to submit a claim for payment please visit the Settlement Website www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

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www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com 1-844-768-1451

Rockford fires officer who had been found 'not guilty' of battery

Jeff Kolkey
Rockford Register Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Months after he was acquitted by a jury of misdemeanor battery charges, a Rockford Police Department officer accused of smashing a handcuffed man's head into a window has been fired.

Officer Frank Fabiani was terminated after an internal police department review of the May 14, 2022, incident, according to a June 24 termination letter written by Rockford Police Chief Carla Redd.

In the letter, Redd writes that Fabiani violated department general orders and rules of conduct after handcuffing Alize Jones, a suspect in a domestic violence investigation.

"While Alize Jones was handcuffed behind his back, Ofc. Fabiani used his hand to make forceful contact with Alize Jones' neck," Redd wrote. "The force of the contact caused Alize Jones to fall backwards into the wall behind him and his head to strike a window, shattering it."

Redd said Jones was standing still, had made no threats and was not resisting arrest at the time of the incident.

Fabiani failed to follow police general orders calling for "de-escalation techniques and other alternatives to higher levels of force" whenever possible, Redd wrote. She also said that Fabiani's actions had brought discredit to the department and that he mistreated a suspect under his authority among other infractions.

Attorneys for Fabiani did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Winnebago County prosecutors charged Fabiani with misdemeanor battery. A jury in February acquitted him after a trial.

Fabiani had been placed on administrative leave after the incident pending the outcome of the internal investigation and criminal case.

It was the second time Fabiani had ben charged with battery while on duty with the Rockford Police Department. Battery charges had previously been dropped after Fabiani had been charged following the arrest of William "Sage" Patrick Gettings, an activist who had been accused of resisting arrest, spitting on an officer and trying to take Fabiani's gun out of its holster.

Authorities said Gettings had not complied with the Fabiani's commands during a June 2020 traffic stop before a confrontation ensued. Later, charges against Gettings were dropped. Charges of battery filed against Fabiani were also eventually dropped.

Jeff Kolkey writes about government, economic development and other issues for the Rockford Register Star. He can be reached via email at jkolkey@rrstar.com and on X @jeffkolkey.

Senate passes Trump's spending bill

Measure heads back to House for final approval

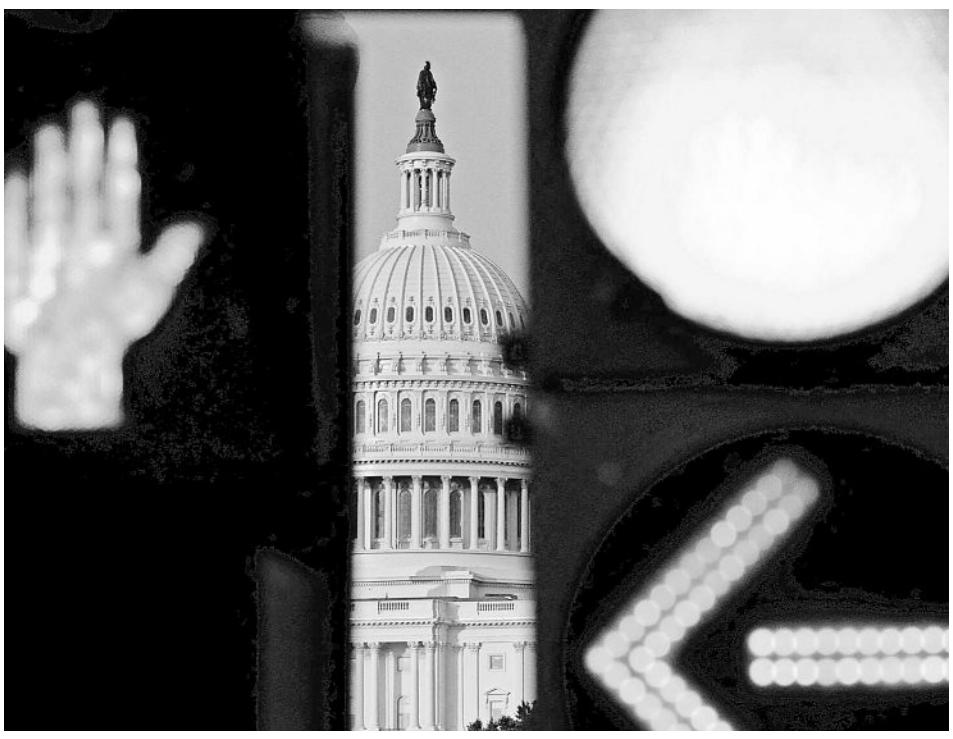
Phillip M. Bailey and Savannah Kuchar
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – By the narrowest possible margin, the Senate approved President Donald Trump's signature second-term policy bill July 1 in a major legislative victory for the president after a tense debate with his party.

The 900-page measure passed on a 51-50 vote after a weekend of caustic debate. Three Republicans defected: Susan Collins of Maine, Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Rand Paul of Kentucky. That required Vice President JD Vance to break the tie in a dramatic flourish and send the bill back to the House for final approval.

Assuming he can muster a majority in the GOP-controlled House, the president is now on the cusp of cementing his second-term agenda into law. The Senate bill preserves the 2017 tax cuts, invests billions into the military and border security and fulfills a major 2024 campaign promise by extending federal tax breaks for low-wage tipped workers, such as waiters and hairstylists. It also deeply cuts the Medicaid health insurance program, which prompted bipartisan opposition.

Here are the key moments from the legislative approval and what the fallout could be.



The bill's passage came after weeks of wrangling by Senate leadership, which grappled with opposition to the Medicaid cuts from some key Republicans.
NATHAN HOWARD/REUTERS

Opposition to Medicaid cuts

The biggest point of contention was Medicaid, which provides health insurance to more than 71 million low-income Americans.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office before the Senate bill passed, the upper chamber's plan cuts roughly $1 trillion from Medicaid and would dump about 11.8 million recipients over the next decade. It also has a $300 billion cut to food stamps.

Conservative supporters of the bill defended the reforms as much-needed savings that won't hurt the most vulnerable. They spotlighted efforts to keep states from spending health care funds on undocumented immigrants and defended imposing an 80 hour per month work requirement for able-bodied recipients ages 19 to 64 who don't have dependents.

But political observers of various stripes called out the reductions as unprecedented.

"What do I tell 663,000 people in two years or three years when President Trump breaks his promise by pushing them off of Medicaid because the funding is not there?" Tillis asked during a fiery June 29 Senate floor speech.

Midterm ramifications

Speaking of Tillis, the Tar Heel State Republican over the weekend – after Trump threatened holdouts with primary challenges – announced he was forgoing his reelection bid in the critical swing state next year.

Lawmakers who pursue bipartisan solutions are an "endangered species" in Washington, he said.

Republicans understood the ramifications. "His announcement is a big setback for the Senate and the Republican conference," Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, wrote on X.

For years North Carolina has had razor-thin margins in multiple statewide contests and next year's Senate race was already forecast to be a toss-up by reputable prognosticators such as Larry Sabato at the University of Virginia and the Cook Political Report.

Thune earns leadership stripes

Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota, wasn't the Make America Great Again movement's first choice for Senate majority leader. But the 63-year-old kept most of the GOP herd together and twisted many arms to deliver Trump his defining legislative win.

Moderates such as Tillis and Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska pushed back on the Medicaid cuts. Fiscal conservatives said the bill's cuts didn't go far enough; they complained the legislation adds $3.3 trillion to the national deficit over a decade and requires a $5 trillion increase in the debt ceiling. MAGA activists demanded Thune fire the chamber's parliamentarian, who ruled key provisions had to be removed or overhauled because they violated the rules that were used to pass the bill with a simple majority vote, avoiding a filibuster.

In the final hours, Thune reportedly was working behind the scenes all night to strike deals on amendments that could secure Republican holdouts such as Murkowski, who ultimately voted for the measure.

With the help of Vance's tiebreak, Thune bought himself some credit with the White House and perhaps with some in the MAGA movement.

Musk vows to oppose

The Musk-Trump relationship continued to deteriorate as their war of words escalated amid the final hours of Senate debate.

Musk, the world's richest person, repeatedly trashed the bill on X. He called out Republican lawmakers, some by name, who voted for the bill after campaigning on cutting government spending. He vowed to use his deep pockets against GOP incumbents in the 2026 midterms. And he threatened to form a new party, writing in a June 30 post that the bill showed "that we live in a one-party country – the PORKY PIG PARTY!! Time for a new political party that actually cares about the people."

Time will tell if the spat will have political repercussions – or result in another apology by Musk, who in June expressed regret for a flurry of personal attacks against the president.

Back to the House

Now the House has the task of reconciling changes to its original version – a 1,000-page bill that squeaked through in May by a 215-214 vote.

The Senate made plenty of changes, which means Trump's agenda could face further hurdles among hard-line Republicans. The narrowness of the House vote gives fiscal hawks a negotiating advantage should they choose to force Trump's hand.

Some conservative members immediately began signaling trepidation about the Senate alterations.

Whether the reconciliation can happen before July 4, which is Trump's imposed deadline for Congress, remains up in the air.

Contributing: Lauren Villagran, Joey Garrison, Sarah D. Wire and Sudiksha Kochi, USA TODAY

Bolonga

Continued from Page 2A

fice's hotline. The FSIS then investigated the complaint and determined that the products contained meat or poultry source materials not listed on the product labels.

There have not been any confirmed reports of adverse reactions caused by these products, and the FSIS does not expect any.

What to do if you believe you purchased recalled products

Consumers are urged not to consume the recalled products, and restaurants are urged not to serve them. They should immediately be discarded or returned to their place of purchase.

Consumers with questions about the recall can contact Gaiser's Manager Steven Shuchinski at 908-686-3421 or gaisers@verizon.net.

Consumers with food safety questions can call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 888-MPHotline (888-674-6854) or send questions via email to MPHotline@usda.gov. Consumers who need to report a problem with a meat, poultry or egg product can use the online Electronic Consumer Complaint Monitoring System 24 hours a day at https://foodcomplaint.fsis.usda.gov/eCCF.

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NATION / WORLD

U.S. CONGRESS

Senate advances Trump bill slashing taxes and Medicare

V.P. Vance cast tie-breaking vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans hauled President Donald Trump's big tax breaks and spending cuts bill to passage Tuesday by the narrowest of margins, pushing past opposition from Democrats and their own GOP ranks after a turbulent overnight session.

The outcome capped an unusually tense weekend of work at the Capitol, the president's signature legislative priority teetering on the edge of approval or collapse. In the end, that tally was 50-50, with Vice President J.D. Vance casting the tie-breaking vote.

Three Republican senators — Thom Tillis of North Carolina, Susan Collins of Maine and Rand Paul of Kentucky — joined all Democrats in voting against it.

"In the end, we got the job done," Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota said afterward.

The difficulty for Republicans, who have the majority in Congress, to wrestle the bill to this point is not expected to let up. The package now goes back to the House, where Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana had warned senators not to overhaul what his chamber had already approved. But the Senate did make changes, particularly to Medicaid, risking more problems ahead. House GOP leaders scheduled a vote today and vowed to put it on Trump's desk by his July Fourth deadline.

Andrew Harnik/Getty Images/TNS

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., walks off the Senate floor Tuesday after the Senate passes President Donald Trump's 'One, Big, Beautiful Bill' at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Vice President J.D. Vance was the tie-breaking vote.

It's a pivotal moment for the president and his party, as they have been consumed by the now 887-page "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," which was its formal title before Democrats filed an amendment to strip out the name. Republicans are investing their political capital in delivering on their sweep of power in Washington.

Trump acknowledged it's "very complicated stuff" as he departed the White House for Florida.

"I don't want to go too crazy with cuts," he said. "I don't like cuts."

What started as a routine but laborious day of amendment voting, in a process called vote-a-rama, spiraled into an all-night slog as Republican leaders bought time to shore up support.

The droning roll calls in the chamber belied the frenzied action to steady the bill. Grim-faced scenes played out on and off the Senate floor, amid exhaustion.

Thune worked around the clock, desperately reaching for last-minute agreements between those in his party worried the bill's reductions to Medicaid will leave millions more people without care and his most conservative flank, which wanted even steeper cuts to hold down deficits ballooning with the tax cuts.

The GOP leaders had no room to spare. Thune could lose no more than three Republican senators, and two — Tillis, who warned that millions of people will lose access to Medicaid health care, and Paul, who opposes raising the debt limit by $5 trillion — had already indicated opposition.

Attention quickly turned to two other key senators, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Collins, who also raised concerns about health care cuts, as well as a loose coalition of four conservative GOP senators pushing for even steeper reductions.

Murkowski in particular became the subject of GOP leaders' attention, as they sat beside her for talks. Then all eyes were on Paul after he returned from a visit to Thune's office.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said Republicans "are in shambles because they know the bill is so unpopular."

An analysis from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found 11.8 million more Americans would become uninsured by 2034 if the bill became law. The CBO said the package would increase the deficit by nearly $3.3 trillion over the decade.

Pressure built from all sides. Billionaire Elon Musk said anyone who voted for the package should "hang their head in shame" and warned he would campaign against them. But Trump had also lashed out against the GOP holdouts, including Tillis, who abruptly announced his own decision over the weekend not to seek re-election.

MIDEAST CONFLICT

Trump presses Hamas to OK ceasefire

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday that Israel has agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and warned Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen.

Trump announced the development as he prepares to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for talks at the White House on Monday. The U.S. leader has been increasing pressure on the Israeli government and Hamas to broker a ceasefire and hostage agreement and bring about an end to the war in Gaza.

"My Representatives had a long and productive meeting with the Israelis today on Gaza. Israel has agreed to the necessary conditions to finalize the 60 Day CEASEFIRE, during which time we will work with all parties to end the War," Trump wrote, saying the Qataris and Egyptians would deliver the final proposal.

"I hope, for the good of the Middle East, that Hamas takes this Deal, because it will not get better — IT WILL ONLY GET WORSE," he said.

Trump's promise that it was his best and final offer may find a skeptical audience with Hamas. Even before the expiration of the war's longest ceasefire in March, Trump has repeatedly issued dramatic ultimatums to pressure Hamas to agree to longer pauses in the fighting that would see the release of more hostages and a return of more aid to Gaza's civilian populace.

Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer was in Washington on Tuesday for talks with senior administration officials to discuss a potential Gaza ceasefire, Iran and other matters. Dermer was expected to meet with Vice President J.D. Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and special envoy Steve Witkoff.

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U.S. Marshals operation recovers 60 missing kids

Officials say 8 in custody after two-week initiative

C. A. Bridges
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

A massive investigation into child sex trafficking resulted in the rescue of 60 "critically missing" children in Florida's Tampa Bay area, Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier announced at a June 23 news conference.

Operation Dragon Eye was led by the U.S. Marshals Service Middle District of Florida and involved 20 agencies, state officials said. Eight people were arrested, with charges including human trafficking, child endangerment, drug possession and drug trafficking.

The investigation was focused on recovering or safely locating "critically missing" children in Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties. The children's ages ranged from 9 to 17, officials said.

"I have to curtail my enthusiasm because of the sensitivity of the victims involved in this operation, but the successful recovery of 60 missing children, complemented with the arrest of eight individuals, including child predators, signifies the most successful missing child recovery effort in the history of the United States Marshals Service; or to my knowledge, any other similar operation held in the United States," said William Berger, U.S. Marshal for the Middle District of Florida.

The Marshals Service defines critically missing children as "those at risk of crimes of violence or those with other elevated risk factors, such as substance abuse, sexual exploitation, crime exposure, or domestic violence."

Operation Dragon Eye was a two-week initiative "geared to recover or safely locate the most critically missing youth," the U.S. Marshals Service said in a release. According to Uthmeier, 17 boys and 43 girls were recovered in the operation.

The operation had three primary objectives:

- "Recover critically missing youth"
- Provide the youth with "essential services, including appropriate placement"
- "Deter bad actors exploiting missing child vulnerabilities"

> **"We're proud to have supported the U.S. Marshals Service and our partners in Florida to recover these missing children and provide critical support to those who need it most."**
>
> **Callahan Walsh**
> Executive director of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

"The unique part of this operation was the fact that underaged critically missing children ranging from age 9 to 17 were not only recovered but were debriefed and provided with physical and psychological care," Berger said. "This operation further included follow-up assistance in hopes that these youth will not return to the streets to be further victimized."

Since the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act was passed in 2015, the Marshals Service has located or recovered nearly 4,000 missing children. The Marshals Service located or recovered missing children in 66% of the cases it received, according to a released statement. Of those recovered, 61% were found within seven days.

Callahan Walsh, executive director of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, applauded the agencies that collaborated in Operation Dragon Eye.

"We're proud to have supported the U.S. Marshals Service and our partners in Florida to recover these missing children and provide critical support to those who need it most," Walsh said in a statement. "NCMEC is honored to stand alongside these teams and will continue working tirelessly to help make sure that every child has a safe childhood."

Contributing: Mike Snider, USA TODAY

California Gov. Newsom files suit against Fox News

Sarah D. Wire
USA TODAY

California Gov. Gavin Newsom is suing as an individual, not in his capacity as governor. DANIEL COLE/REUTERS FILE

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has accused Fox News of defamation in a $787 million lawsuit, saying it intentionally misled viewers during immigration enforcement protests in his state.

The June 27 filing, brought in a Delaware federal court, says Fox News reporters and hosts incorrectly reported what President Donald Trump said and edited video of Trump's comments to make it appear Newsom lied about when the two men spoke during the events.

Filings in the case repeatedly reference the $787 million settlement Fox agreed to in 2023 with Dominion, a voting machine company, after the news network repeated Trump's false claims that the 2020 election was stolen using their equipment.

"If Fox News wants to lie to the American people on Donald Trump's behalf, it should face consequences – just like it did in the Dominion case," Newsom said in a statement provided to USA TODAY. "I believe the American people should be able to trust the information they receive from a major news outlet. Until Fox is willing to be truthful, I will keep fighting against their propaganda machine."

Fox dismissed the lawsuit in a statement. "Gov. Newsom's transparent publicity stunt is frivolous and designed to chill free speech critical of him," the statement reads. "We will defend this case vigorously and look forward to it being dismissed."

According to the filing, Newsom brought the case after Fox News host Jesse Watters and reporter John Roberts claimed he lied about when he last spoke by phone with Trump during June protests in Los Angeles.

Newsom's filing claims he last spoke with Trump for approximately 16 minutes by phone on June 7, one day before the president deployed 2,000 California National Guard troops over Newsom's objections to quell protests in Los Angeles. "At no point (on June 7) did President Trump raise the demonstrations in Los Angeles which had begun that day, nor discuss the use of the National Guard," the filing states. "And when Governor Newsom attempted to discuss the situation in Los Angeles, President Trump steered the topic away."

Trump told reporters on June 10 he had spoken with Newsom "a day ago," implying a conversation took place the same day he deployed 700 Marines to Los Angeles.

Newsom disputed Trump's claim in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, minutes later, saying: "There was no call. Not even a voicemail. Americans should be alarmed that a President deploying Marines onto our streets doesn't even know who he's talking to."

Newsom's lawyers argue Watters' program edited a video of Trump to support the president's claim and make Newsom look like he lied about their communication. They also allege that Roberts hedged Trump's words to make it appear that he was talking about the June 7 call and that Newsom was lying.

Newsom is suing as an individual, not in his capacity as governor. Newsom's lawyers argue in the filing that the incident meets the legal standard for defamation and potentially harmed the governor's standing with voters in future elections. Additionally, they claim it violated California's Unfair Competition Law, which outlaws "deceptive and unfair business practices."

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

U.S. revokes visas for Bob Vylan after duo's Glastonbury chants

The United States has revoked visas for members of Britain's Bob Vylan punk-rap duo after they led chants during their set at the Glastonbury music festival in England over the weekend that the State Department and the BBC, who broadcast the event, said were antisemitic.

"The @StateDept has revoked the US visas for the members of the Bob Vylan band in light of their hateful tirade at Glastonbury, including leading the crowd in death chants. Foreigners who glorify violence and hatred are not welcome visitors to our country," U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau said in a post on X on June 30.

On June 30, the BBC said it regretted not stopping its livestream of the June 28 event, and police said they had launched a criminal investigation.

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2 sentenced in human smuggling operation

Amanda Lee Myers
USA TODAY

Three years ago to the day after 53 immigrants died while trapped in a tractor-trailer in sweltering Texas heat, two of the smugglers responsible learned that their freedom is effectively over.

A federal judge sentenced Felipe Orduña-Torres to two life sentences and Armando Gonzales-Ortega to 83 years in prison on June 27 – the third anniversary of the tragedy in San Antonio.

"These individuals are effectively going away for the rest of their lives," and that is justice, Justin Simmons, the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Texas, said at a news conference after the sentencing.

Defense attorneys for Orduña-Torres and Gonzales-Ortega did not immediately respond to a request for comment on June 27.

They unsuccessfully argued in March that the case should be thrown out, saying that no forensic evidence placed the men at the scene of the tragedy and no reliable witnesses positively identified them as being responsible.

There were 64 immigrants from Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico packed into the tractor-trailer in Laredo, Texas, after arriving from various stash houses. They included eight children and a pregnant woman, according to court records.

As smugglers made a three-hour journey from Laredo to San Antonio, temperatures outside soared past 100 degrees, the heat inside became unbearable and "chaos ensued," according to the indictment in the case.

"Some aliens screamed and banged on the walls for help," the indictment said. "Some passed out, unconscious. Others clawed at the sides of the trailer attempting to escape. When the doors to the trailer were opened, 48 of the aliens were either already dead or died on site."

Five more later died at nearby hospitals, and the smugglers either fled or hid.

The death toll makes the tragedy "the deadliest human smuggling operation in U.S. history," said Craig Larrabee, special agent in charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations in San Antonio.

The family members of the victims watched the sentencing via video from Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. Many wrote letters about how the deaths of their loved ones impacted them, and those were read out loud in the courtroom.

"You could hear that pain in the letters," Simmons said, saying the impact to the families is immeasurable.

Simmons

The men charged in the case as smugglers ran their operation from November 2021 through June 2022, prosecutors said.

Federal prosecutors identified Orduña-Torres as a leader and organizer and Gonzales-Ortega as a coordinator.

They "worked in concert to transport and facilitate the transportation of the migrants, sharing routes, guides, stash houses, trucks, trailers, and transporters in order to consolidate costs, minimize risks, and maximize profit," according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas.

Prosecutors said that some of the smugglers, including Orduña-Torres, knew that the trailer's refrigeration unit was not working but allowed the dangerous journey to proceed.

The migrants had paid roughly $12,000 per person to make it to the United States safely. That adds up to $768,000 for just that one operation.

"My message to those who are south of the border and may be considering coming across in a manner similar to this: Cartels do not care about you," Simmons said. "They do not care about your hopes and dreams. They do not care about your desire for a better life. They care about money."

Five other defendants have pleaded guilty and have sentencing hearings later this year, while another is scheduled to go on trial Sept. 29.

Faith leaders arrested protesting GOP mega bill

Sarah D. Wire
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Inside the U.S. Capitol, the Senate was preparing to vote June 30 on a bill that makes tax cuts, slashes Medicaid and SNAP benefits and scales up border security.

Outside, about 25 faith leaders and religious believers blocked the street to pray. They carried caskets covered with statistics of how many people would lose Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits in each state if the budget bill under negotiation were signed into law.

A few minutes later, Capitol Police arrested all of them, ending what had been a 250-person protest.

Before that, the protesters chanted: "You will not kill us. And our people. Without a fight." They took turns crowding into patches of shade and passing out water and mandarin oranges in the nearly 90-degree heat.

Most were religious leaders in full vestments, representing Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Jews, Muslims and the United Church of Christ. Other protesters included small children, people in wheelchairs and people with signs explaining why they need Medicaid.

"I just hope that we can be heard, that Americans know that we are standing here together and many, many of us are risking arrest to protect the majority of people in this country," said Rabbi David Shneyer of Rockville, Maryland.

Bishop William J. Barber II walks in front of a group of protesting religious leaders who blocked traffic outside the U.S. Capitol on June 30.
SARAH D. WIRE/USA TODAY

It was part of the Moral Monday protests that Bishop William J. Barber II began in 2013 in North Carolina. The protests spread as an effort by religious leaders to push back on legislative efforts to cut the social safety net.

Nationwide, between 12 million and 20 million people could lose Medicaid under deep cuts proposed by Senate Republicans, according to two estimates. Medicaid provides health insurance to more than 71 million low-income Americans, including 40% of children and 60% of nursing home residents. The bill also includes new requirements for SNAP, often called food stamps, which serves around 42 million Americans, and shifts more of the cost to states.

Republicans have said the cuts are necessary because the programs have become too large, are used by people who don't need them and are full of waste, fraud and abuse.

The Rev. Cindy Kohlmann of the Presbyterian USA Church, 51, said she thinks Congress' spending bill is immoral. One in 5 people in her Wilmington, Delaware, community relies on Medicaid, she said.

"This is exactly the wrong way to be the country that leads the world. We need to lift from the bottom so everybody rises and this bill is meant to kill our neighbors," Kohlmann said. "It's not an exaggeration."

Cars honked as people took turns speaking next to a stack of caskets about what the proposed cuts to Medicaid and food stamp benefits would mean for them.

The group next meets in Washington for a protest outside the Supreme Court on Aug. 4 and Sept. 8.

Barber said they are prepared for the long haul if the bill passes.

"The very people they make mad today are going to be the voting power of tomorrow," he said.

Senate

Continued from Page 1A

Trump's efforts also almost fell victim to decisions from the Senate parliamentarian, who ruled key provisions had to be removed or overhauled because they violated the rules that were used to pass the bill with a simple majority vote and avoid a filibuster.

Shortly before the vote, Trump said Republicans needed to get on board.

"I think it would be very wise for them to get on board. It's a great bill," Trump told reporters. "If they don't do it, look, they'll suffer the consequences."

Trump had already threatened to back a primary challenge to Tillis, prompting the senator's decision to retire. On the other side, former Trump adviser Elon Musk warned June 30 that he would support primary challenges against Republican lawmakers who vote for the legislation.

The passage followed a day of debate that broke the Senate's own record. Throughout June 30 and into the morning of July 1, lawmakers considered and voted on 45 amendments – a record number in what is known in Washington as a vote-a-rama. The previous record for this marathon-style series of votes was set in 2008 at 44 amendments. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office before the Senate bill passed, the plan cuts roughly $1 trillion from Medicaid and would dump about 11.8 million recipients over the next decade from the health insurance program. It also has a $300 billion cut to food stamps.

Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin said the Senate proposal is a gut punch for the poor that his party will emphasize in the 2026 midterm elections.

"This bill is theft in plain sight," Martin told reporters on June 30. "Republicans are trying to push this through because, let's be honest, they don't give a (expletive) about the people who elected them."

Senate staffers rest on the U.S. Capitol steps at sunrise on July 1 as Republican lawmakers worked to pass the sweeping spending and tax bill.
NATHAN HOWARD/REUTERS

Now the House has the task of reconciling changes to its original version. Some conservative members are already signaling trepidation about the Senate alterations.

The Senate package is a bit skinnier than the 1,000-page version that narrowly passed the House in May. While some provisions were stripped from the House version of the bill, including an artificial intelligence regulation ban and deregulation of gun silencers, other language weathered the Senate revamp setting up additional Medicaid work requirements and a tax break for tips.

The president has imposed a July 4 deadline to pass the bill.

Contributing: Reuters

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Si desea recibir esta notificación en español, llámenos o visite nuestra página web.

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How Can I Get a Payment? The only way to get a payment is to submit a Claim Form. If you submit a Claim Form, you will give up the right to sue Google or any Released Parties in a separate lawsuit about the claims made in this case and released by the Settlement. You must submit a Claim Form by **October 16, 2025**. You must submit your Claim online at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com or file a paper Claim Form postmarked by **October 16, 2025**. Paper Claim Forms are available at the Settlement Website or by calling 1-844-768-1451. Claim Forms must be completed by an adult of 18 years or older. ***If you are a minor, the Claim Form must be completed by your parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian completes the Claim Form the payment will be made to them, and in such an event, such payment must be used solely for the minor's benefit.***

Your Other Options. If you do nothing, your rights will be affected, and you won't get a payment. If you file a Claim Form, object to the Settlement or do nothing, you are choosing to stay in the Settlement Class. You will be legally bound by all orders of the Court and you will not be able to start, continue or be part of any other lawsuit against Google about the allegations of the case or other Released Claims. If you don't want to be legally bound by the Settlement or receive any benefits from it, you must exclude yourself by **September 1, 2025**. If you do not exclude yourself, you may object to the Settlement by **September 1, 2025**. The Long Form Notice available on the Settlement Website explains how to exclude yourself or object.

The Final Approval Hearing: The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on **October 14, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.** to consider whether to approve the Settlement and award Service Payments of up to $5,000 to the Class Representatives, attorneys' fees of up to 40% of the Settlement Fund, and, reimbursement of expenses, as well as consider any objections. Motions for these fees and expenses will be posted on the Settlement Website when they are filed with the Court. You may appear at the hearing, either yourself or through an attorney hired by you, but you don't have to. The hearing may be held remotely using the Court's Zoom videoconference link (us06web.zoom.us/j/3098362777) at the Court's discretion. For more information and updates, call or visit the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

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www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com 1-844-768-1451

‘We think about the state in the same way’

Mitchell ready to back up Pritzker

BY BEN SZALINSKI
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At 38 years old, Christian Mitchell has been inside most corners of state government as a top advisor on political campaigns, state legislator, deputy governor and civic engagement leader at a major university.

All those experiences make him ready to be Gov. JB Pritzker’s running mate next year in the governor’s campaign for a third term, Mitchell said.

“Bringing somebody who will continue to do the work, who with the governor, will go everywhere in the state of Illinois, advocating for the state of Illinois — that’s the thing I think I bring to the ticket. And I think we think about the state the same way,” Mitchell said in an interview with Capitol News Illinois.

Mitchell, a Black Bronzeville resident who currently works as vice president of civic engagement for the University of Chicago, was raised by his single mom and his grandfather and attended the now-shuttered St. Joseph High School in Westchester. He got an undergraduate degree in public policy from the University of Chicago, and while serving in the General Assembly, earned his law degree at Loyola University.

Mitchell represented a South Side of Chicago district in the Illinois House from 2013 until 2019 when Pritzker selected him to be one of four deputy governors, which serve a chief of staff-like role in Pritzker’s administration overseeing specific state agencies and policy areas.

He also joined the Illinois Air National Guard in 2023 shortly after leaving the governor’s office.

“It’s certainly not great for my free time, but your time is the most precious thing you have and the ability to give my time in service of my state and my country is very important to me,” Mitchell said.

WHY PRITZKER PICKED MITCHELL

Pritzker told reporters in the days after he launched his campaign he was looking for a running mate who shared the same affinity for Illinois and was qualified to step in as governor if required. He said he picked Mitchell more than a week before announcing his reelection in late June, but he declined to say how many people he considered.

“He is somebody that I have grown to trust,” Pritzker said at an event in Peoria. “I’ve seen him usher enormous legislation through the legislature. … He’s a guy who knows how to get big things done and I’ve worked with him to get it done and I’m excited for the people of Illinois to get to know him.”

Lieutenant governors in Illinois have virtually no constitutional authority, other than to replace a governor who is impeached, resigns or dies in office. Pritzker’s running mate selection has received more attention as the governor is believed to be considering running for president in 2028 and would resign as governor if victorious.

Mitchell said he’s running to be Pritzker’s right-hand man for four years, but said Pritzker would make a good candidate for president.

“Illinois is the state most representative of the nation and it’s really exciting to see a governor who is considered for president and not for prison,” Mitchell said, referring to the fact that two of Illinois’ last five governors and four of the last 11 have served time in prison.

“I think he would be excellent. Having said that, that’s why I’m so excited he’s running for reelection to continue the progress of the last seven years,” Mitchell added.

Though Mitchell hails from Chicago, Pritzker said he believes Mitchell can appropriately address the needs of all areas of the state.

Capitol News Illinois photo by Andrew Adams

Christian Mitchell, Gov. JB Pritzker’s running mate, listens during a conversation at Peach’s Restaurant in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood on July 2.

Capitol News Illinois photo by Andrew Adams

Christian Mitchell speaks to Gov. JB Pritzker while meeting with supporters at Peach’s Restaurant in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood on July 2.

“When you’re a state representative, you don’t just represent the people of your district; you are also voting on things that are good for people all across the state,” Pritzker told reporters last week after greeting Chicagoans at a Bronzeville coffee shop with Mitchell.

POLICY GOALS

As deputy governor, Mitchell led some of Pritzker’s hallmark initiatives through the General Assembly during his first term: a $45 billion infrastructure plan, legalization of cannabis for recreational use by adults, and a climate initiative setting clean energy goals for the state.

Mitchell has a reputation as a hard-nosed negotiator, even among fellow Democrats. Though he has sometimes angered political allies, Mitchell said he’s open to listening to anyone’s ideas.

“For me, it’s build the biggest tent that you possibly can, ask people for their ideas and be willing to listen to them and change your mind when something is different than you thought it was,” Mitchell said. “That’s how Gov. Pritzker has always led, that’s how he has always directed me when I was deputy governor, that’s what we’ll do as partners in state government going forward.”

Economic affordability is a top concern for Pritzker, who has preached in national media interviews that Democrats must champion policies addressing cost-of-living concerns for Americans. Mitchell said he shares those goals.

“People want to know that you understand what’s going on in their lives, that you’re working on your behalf every single day and when you do things that they can see on their paycheck, in their pocketbook, that is how you inspire confidence and that is something I think we can do as statewide elected officials,” Mitchell said.

He acknowledged price concerns are a macroeconomic issue outside the state’s total control, but Mitchell said state lawmakers can promote policies that lower costs within the state’s control. Reducing the education system’s reliance on property taxes could be a priority in a third Pritzker administration.

“The governor has put … hundreds of millions of new dollars into education every single year to help drive down that burden,” Mitchell said. “We do now need to work with our local governments to make sure those savings are being passed along. That’s another way in which you touch people’s pocketbooks directly.”

Mitchell said he sees some of the same themes surrounding affordability concerns for voters playing out in the 2026 election that helped Democrats win big victories in Illinois in 2018 when he was executive director of the Democratic Party of Illinois. Democrats swept races for statewide offices that year and gained supermajorities in the legislature that have remained strong since then.

MADIGAN TIES AND ETHICS REFORM

Mike Madigan was chair of the state party while Mitchell worked as executive director. Madigan, the longtime speaker of the Illinois House until early 2021, was sentenced last month to 7 ½ years in federal prison for bribery and corruption.

Prosecutors accused Madigan of using his positions as House speaker, party chair and as partner in his real estate law firm as a “criminal enterprise” meant to maintain and increase his power while enriching his allies. He was not convicted of the overarching racketeering charge regarding the alleged “enterprise,” but was convicted on lesser bribery counts.

Mitchell took over the administrative reins of the party from Tim Mapes, Madigan’s trusted chief of staff who was accused in early 2018 of sexual harassment and bullying, who is now in prison for perjury.

Like many other Democrats, Mitchell said Illinois has moved beyond Madigan’s era and brand of politics.

“I think it’s important to take the message that not just voters but now a jury has sent, which is let’s make Illinois the most ethical state in the nation,” Mitchell said.

Mitchell argued that work started with the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act — the 2021 clean energy policy he led for the governor’s office. In addition to setting decarbonization goals, it also ended the formula rate system that was at the center of bribery allegations against Madigan and the electric utility Commonwealth Edison.

State lawmakers passed other ethics legislation in 2021 months after Madigan left Springfield and nearly a year before he would ever be charged with a crime. But the legislature has largely not dealt with the issue since then, even after Madigan was convicted early this year.

Mitchell said he and Pritzker would be open to any ethics proposals in the future.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

Freed-Hardeman University announces president’s, dean’s lists for Spring 2025

HENDERSON, TN — Freed-Hardeman University has released the names of students who made the president’s and dean’s lists for the Spring 2025 semester. To be on the president’s list, a student must be full-time and have a 4.0 grade point average. Students on the dean’s list have earned a minimum 3.4 grade point average for the semester. This year there were more than 600 students who received this academic honor.

The following local student is among the honorees:

Kameryn Harris, a senior from Thompsonville is on the dean’s list. Harris is studying Nursing.

The mission of Freed-Hardeman University is to help students develop their God-given talents for His glory by empowering them with an education that integrates Christian faith, scholarship and service. With locations in Henderson and Memphis, FHU offers associate, bachelor’s, master’s, specialist’s and doctoral degrees. More information is available at fhu.edu.

University of Arkansas dean’s list includes Southern Illinois students

FAYETTEVILLE, AR — The University of Arkansas announced students who earned a spot on the dean’s list for the Spring 2025 semester.

To qualify for the dean’s list, undergraduates must achieve a grade-point average of 3.75 (or higher) during the semester while completing at least 12 credit hours.

Local students included on the Spring 2025 University of Arkansas Dean’s List include:

- Brooke Williard of Makanda, accounting
- Isabela Orellana of Marion, psychology
- Callie Prost of Mount Vernon, accounting

“We are incredibly proud of the students who have earned a place on the Dean’s List this semester,” Provost Terry Martin said. “Achieving this level of academic success is no small feat and is evidence of their dedication and perseverance in their academic pursuits. It is also a testament to the families, friends and mentors whose encouragement and support have been vital to their academic journey.”

The full Spring 2025 Dean’s List is available online.

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Firefighters from Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, load a body into a raft Monday along the Guadalupe River in Ingram, Texas, days after a flash flood swept through the area. **ELI HARTMAN/AP**

Downpours like in Texas more frequent but difficult to predict

By Tammy Webber
Associated Press

It's not just Texas and North Carolina. Intense rain is falling more frequently in many areas of the U.S. — though where it occurs and whether it causes catastrophic flooding is largely a matter of chance, according to experts.

More than 100 people died in the Texas Hill Country over the weekend after 12 inches of rain fell in just hours. The deluge was driven by warm, moist air left over from Tropical Storm Barry and Hurricane Flossie that created conditions for repeated thunderstorms in the same location, said Texas Climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon.

Last year, Hurricane Helene dumped more than 30 inches of rain on western North Carolina, triggering catastrophic flooding that washed away roads and homes, killing more than 100 people in that state alone. This week, flooding from the remnants of Tropical Storm Chantal prompted dozens of water rescues in North Carolina. And this spring, record rainfall in Kentucky caused deadly flooding.

Although it can be difficult to attribute a single weather event to climate change — and hilly or mountainous terrain worsen flooding — experts say a warming atmosphere and oceans due to the burning of fossil fuels make catastrophic storms more likely.

That's because the atmosphere can hold 7% more water for every 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit, creating a giant sponge of sorts that sucks up moisture from bodies of water and vegetation. The moisture later falls back to earth in increasingly intense, unpredictable and destructive downpours.

"It's just loading the dice toward heavy rainfall when the situation is right," said Kenneth Kunkel, a climate scientist at North Carolina State University.

Going back through U.S. weather station records to 1955, Kunkel found that rain over the past 20 years has become more intense in the eastern two-thirds of the country, including the southern Great Plains, where Texas is located. Intensities have remained the same or declined in the West and southwest.

At the 700 stations that began collecting data in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the highest proportion of two-day rainfall records have been set in just the past 10 years, Kunkel said, though that doesn't fully reflect most Western stations, which were established later.

Nielsen-Gammon said the overall intensity of extreme rainfall in Texas has increased by 15% over the past 40 to 50 years.

The worst flooding and greatest loss of life in Texas occurred in Kerr County, in an area called "flash flood alley" because of its steep terrain that funnels water to the Guadalupe River, a popular recreational area.

Though the county did not get the most rain from the storms, the "distribution of rainfall was one of the worst possible patterns" because the most intense downpours were over the headwaters of the south fork of the Guadalupe River, causing water to rush into areas where hundreds of people, including children, were camping, Nielsen-Gammon said.

If the epicenter had been 10 miles north or south, the rain would have been divided among different river basins, he said.

Texas governor reports 161 unaccounted for after floods

By Jim Vertuno, Nadia Lathan and John Seewer
Associated Press

Belongings of campers sit outside one of the cabins at Camp Mystic, a century-old Christian summer camp, on Monday near the Guadalupe River in Hunt, Texas. **ELI HARTMAN/AP**

KERRVILLE, Texas — More than 160 people are believed to be missing in Texas four days after flash floods killed over 100 people during the July Fourth weekend, Gov. Greg Abbott said Tuesday.

Many of those who are not accounted for were staying in state's Hill Country but did not register at a camp or hotel.

The lowlands along the Guadalupe River in central Texas are filled with youth camps and campgrounds that are especially popular around summer holidays.

The big jump in the number of missing came after authorities set up a hotline for families to call.

"We will not stop until every missing person is accounted for," Abbott said during a news conference in Hunt, Texas, after taking a helicopter tour of the area.

The 161 missing were believed to be in Kerr County, where most of the victims have been recovered, Abbott said.

Meanwhile, authorities leading the search for victims of the devastating flooding in Texas deflected intensifying questions Tuesday about who was responsible for monitoring the weather that killed more than 100 people and warning that flash floods were barreling toward camps and homes.

Local officials in Kerr County, where searchers have found 87 bodies, said their priority is finding victims, not reviewing what happened in the hours before the floods inundated the Hill Country.

During a sometimes tense news conference, officials faced questions about how quickly they responded and who was in charge.

"Right now, this team up here is focused on bringing people home," said Lt. Col. Ben Baker of the Texas Game Wardens.

Four days have passed since anyone was found alive in the aftermath of the floods in Kerr County, officials said Tuesday.

The search efforts benefited from improving weather. The storms that battered the Hill Country for the past four days began to lighten up, although isolated pockets of heavy rain were still possible.

Abbott planned to make another visit to Camp Mystic, the all-girls Christian summer camp where at least 27 campers and counselors died in the floods. President Donald Trump planned to visit Friday.

Officials said Tuesday that five campers and one counselor have still not been found.

A wall of water slammed into camps and homes along the edge of the Guadalupe River before daybreak Friday, pulling people out of their cabins, tents and trailers and dragging them for miles past floating tree trunks and cars.

Questions mounted about what, if any, actions officials took to warn campers and residents in the scenic area long known to locals as "flash flood alley."

Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha said that sending out warnings isn't "as easy as pushing a button." Answers about who did what and when will come later, public officials said.

Kerr County Judge Rob Kelly, the county's chief elected official, said in the hours after the devastation that the county does not have a warning system.

Generations of families in the Hill Country have known the dangers. A 1987 flood forced the evacuation of a youth camp in Comfort and swamped buses and vans. Ten teens were killed.

Local leaders have talked for years about the need for a warning system. Kerr County sought a nearly $1 million grant eight years ago for such a system, but the request was turned down by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Local resident balked at footing the bill, Kelly said.

Some camps were aware of the dangers Friday and monitored the weather. At least one moved several hundred campers to higher ground before the floods.

But many were caught by surprise.

The bodies of 30 children were among those recovered in Kerr County, home to Camp Mystic and several other summer camps near the river, Leitha said. Nineteen deaths were reported in Travis, Burnet, Kendall, Tom Green and Williamson counties, local officials said.

Trump administration's cuts hurt Kansas farmers

State sees Food for Peace program axed, crop sales stagnate

By Elizabeth Williamson
The New York Times

HEALY, Kan. — Wheat grows so prodigiously here on the Kansas high plains that in 1953 the surplus birthed one of the Cold War's big ideas: Food for Peace, a federal government program that delivered the excess bounty to a hungry postwar world.

Conceived by a Kansas farmer and created by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Food for Peace has sent burlap sacks of grain stamped "From the American People" to more than 4 billion people in 150 countries around the world.

Now it is effectively dead.

The program was administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, which Elon Musk fed "into the wood chipper" on a weekend in February. Kansas' Republican lawmakers tried to save it but failed to persuade President Donald Trump, who last month proposed cutting the entire 2026 budget for Food for Peace as well as another food aid program dear to Kansans, the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program.

The Trump administration said the programs were inefficient and wasteful, "with dubious results."

It was the latest blow to farmers, particularly in Kansas, where about 80% of those on the high plains voted for Trump and agriculture makes up almost half of the state's economy. The president's whipsawing tariffs and cuts to agriculture grants and global food aid have left the state with swollen silos, shrinking markets and volatile prices for crops.

Last year Kansas sold half its annual wheat crop abroad, but those buyers have mostly dried up. At least one big grain broker is now trying to sell Kansas grain that once fed people overseas for use in dog food.

Paul Penner, a Kansas wheat farmer and former president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, is frustrated that there have not been more objections to the administration from wheat growers and the state's largely Republican congressional delegation.

"We need people who are willing to speak up," he said. "I think privately they say things, but publicly, no. And I'm not sure what their pain threshold is."

The United States enjoyed a period of such abundance after World War II that agricultural surplus became a major problem. Crop prices plunged, storage costs soared and grain spoiled. But people in Europe, Asia and Africa, who were still recovering from the wartime devastation to agriculture and industry, struggled to feed themselves.

Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander in Europe during World War II and the grandson of a Kansas farmer, asked his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, and agriculture secretary, Ezra Taft Benson, to work with Congress on a solution. It came in the form of a law he signed in 1954 that enabled needy "friendly countries" to buy American farm products in their local currencies. The United States spent the proceeds inside those countries on development grants.

Eisenhower called it "Food for Peace," a name formally adopted a few years later.

The program distributed $76 million in agricultural products in its first six months to Bolivia, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Libya, Nepal, Pakistan, Yugoslavia and Vietnam, according to records in the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas. Half of the shipments were of wheat and wheat flour. The program was a hit at home: In 1963, the United States issued a Food for Peace postage stamp, emblazoned with the slogan "Freedom from Hunger."

"He meant it when he said 'Food for Peace'— it was a way of being a good soldier in the world," Mary Jean Eisenhower, one of the president's granddaughters, said in an interview. "I think it was a beautiful program, and I just found it very disturbing when it got caught into the political ..." She trailed off, reluctant to discuss politics.)

The administration's moves against Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole program pose a dilemma for the Republicans in Kansas' congressional delegation. How can they save them without crossing the president? Sen. Jerry Moran, Sen. Roger Marshall and Rep. Tracey Mann tried to save Food for Peace by moving it to the Agriculture Department, but the bills have never made it to a vote.

Mann did not respond to requests for comment. Moran's office sent a link to a Senate hearing last month in which Moran asked Secretary of State Marco Rubio about the two programs' survival and called them "critical tools in the fight against global hunger." Rubio expressed support for the programs but offered no solution for saving them.

Marshall told constituents in a town hall in March that Food for Peace was "near and dear to my heart," but claimed without evidence that only a "small fraction" of the aid reached hungry people.

His office later supplied several links related to USAID, including 2016 testimony by its inspector general titled "Fraud Investigations Expose Weaknesses in Syria Humanitarian Aid Programs."

A spokesperson for Marshall, Payton Fuller, said the senator wanted to work with the Trump administration to send Kansas grain around the world in potential new trade deals with China and India.

Nick Levendofsky, the executive director of the Kansas Farmers Union, has been lobbying to preserve the food programs, but when he speaks publicly, he often gets responses from people saying farmers' troubles are their own fault.

"Trump's tariffs badly injured Kansas farmers in his first term, and your members were stupid enough to vote for him again in 2020 and 2024," read one letter he received from a descendant of Kansas farmers living in Florida. "Every farm bankruptcy that comes — and come they will — will be a direct consequence of your members voting for the guy who already hurt them once."

In early May, Levendofsky brought a delegation of Kansas Farmers Union members to Washington in a push to preserve the programs. The trip was disappointing. Their request for a meeting with Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins was denied. Rollins' social media feed showed that on the day the Kansans visited her department she was meeting with Danica Patrick, the former NASCAR driver. Later that day, they learned that Trump had recommended cutting all funding for Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole program.

In the hallway of the Russell Senate Office Building, Tom Giessel, a retired farmer, sighed in disappointment. "These people really don't know the story of Food for Peace and the roots of it," he said. "Farmers shipping grain to where people were hungry — that we did these kinds of things is really what made America great."

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How Can I Get a Payment? The only way to get a payment is to submit a Claim Form. If you submit a Claim Form, you will give up the right to sue Google or any Released Parties in a separate lawsuit about the claims made in this case and released by the Settlement. You must submit a Claim Form by **October 16, 2025**. You must submit your Claim online at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com or file a paper Claim Form postmarked by **October 16, 2025**. Paper Claim Forms are available at the Settlement Website or by calling 1-844-768-1451. Claim Forms must be completed by an adult of 18 years or older. ***If you are a minor, the Claim Form must be completed by your parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian completes the Claim Form the payment will be made to them, and in such an event, such payment must be used solely for the minor's benefit***.

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www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com 1-844-768-1451

Hallwas program focus of quarterly Hancock County Historical Society meeting

STAFF REPORT

CARTHAGE, Ill. — The next quarterly meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will focus on local poets reflecting the issues and struggles of 19th century county residents.

The program, "Reflections on Early Life and Culture in Hancock County by Some Local Poets," will take place at 7 p.m. Saturday, July 19 at the Carthage Community Center, 301 E. Main.

The Illinois Arts Council and Two Rivers Arts Council sponsor the program by well-known Illinois historian John Hallwas.

Hallwas will emphasize poems by three authors with local ties — Thomas Gregg, the early newspaperman and historian who lived in Carthage, Warsaw, Plymouth and Hamilton; Eliza Snow, a noted Mormon woman who lived at Nauvoo during the turbulent years of local conflict and then participated in the exodus to Utah; and John Hay, a secretary of state and Lincoln biographer who was raised in Warsaw and whose ballads about rural folks became nationally famous.

Retired from Western Illinois University, Hallwas lives in Macomb and has interacted with a variety of western Illinois historians over the past 50 years, including several from Hancock County. He has written 30 books, several plays and hundreds of articles about Illinois history and literature including a biography of Gregg and articles about Snow and Hay.

Hallwas

Workshop series helps landowners build confidence, skills

STAFF REPORT

QUINCY — The University of Illinois Extension workshop series Your Land Your Legacy helps landowners build confidence and skills to care for their land.

The next workshop in the series, Get to Know Your Woods, will be offered 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 16 at the Adams County Extension office, 330 S. 36th.

Led by forestry and land management experts, the workshop blends practical advice with hands-on learning.

The session will help landowners set meaningful land management goals, use maps and site data to understand the property, learn what site characteristics are – and why they matter, gain an understanding of forest measurement techniques and explore practical land care strategies including timber stand improvement, invasive species control and pruning.

Participants also will be invited to a follow-up forestry walk this fall, offering an opportunity to continue learning in the field.

Registration is required with dinner and program, with a meal served at 5 p.m., or program only options available. Registration and more information are available online at go.illinois.edu/Your-Woods.

Pearls of Production webinars kick off July 22

STAFF REPORT

COLUMBIA, Mo. — University of Missouri Extension's Pearls of Production program supports and empowers women in the livestock industry with a virtual webinar series and an in-person hands-on conference.

The "Pixels of Production" series offers evening webinars, each beginning at 6:40 p.m. with "Chick-Chat," a 20-minute networking opportunity, and the main session at 7 p.m.

Programs kick off Tuesday, July 22 with Feeding and Managing Pregnant Beef Cows and Heifers for Calf Success. Dr. Allison Meyer will discuss how late gestation nutrition affects cow performance and calf health.

Additional webinars take place Sept. 23 and Oct. 28 with the conference set Friday, Nov. 8 in Columbia. Conference breakout sessions will cover topics including how vaccines are made, tips for a successful calving season, using genetics to build a better cow and emergency response on the farm.

Webinar and conference registration is available online at extension.missouri.edu/programs/pearls-of-production. More information is available by contacting Extension livestock field specialist Brenda Schreck at 573-767-5273 or schreckb@missouri.edu.

Get ready to pass through US airport security checkpoints with shoes on

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN
The Associated Press

For the first time in almost 20 years, travelers may no longer be required to take off their shoes during security screenings at U.S. airports.

The Transportation Security Administration is looking to abandon the additional security step that has for years bedeviled anyone passing through U.S airports, according to media reports.

If implemented, it would put an end to a security screening mandate put in place almost 20 years ago, several years after "shoe bomber" Richard Reid's failed attempt to take down a flight from Paris to Miami in late 2001.

The travel newsletter Gate Access was first to report that the security screening change is coming. ABC News reported on an internal memo sent to TSA officers last week that states the new policy allows travelers to keep their shoes on during standard screenings at many U.S. airports, beginning Sunday. That would expand to all airports shortly.

The plan is for the change to occur at all U.S. airports soon, the memo said.

Auditions set July 21 for 'Treasure Island'

STAFF REPORT

CARTHAGE, Ill. — Auditions will be held Monday, July 21 for the Missoula Children's Theatre production of "Treasure Island" at the Legacy Theater in Carthage.

Those auditioning should arrive at 9:45 a.m., with auditions taking place 10 a.m. to noon. No advance preparation is necessary for the group audition.

Some 50 local students in kindergarten through 12th-grade will be cast to appear in the show, with up to four students named assistant directors.

Some cast members asked to stay for a first rehearsal immediately following the audition. Rehearsals will continue 10 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Tuesday, July 22 through Friday, July 25 at the theater ahead of the performances set for 2 and 6 p.m. Saturday, July 26.

Tickets, $10 for children and $20 for adults, are available online at thelegacytheater.com, through the box office between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Mondays and Fridays or by calling 217-357-9479.

The Missoula Children's Theatre is a nonprofit organization based in Missoula, Mont.

The performance is sponsored by Ramsey Financial Services and made possible in part by the Tracy Family Foundation, Illinois Arts Council and United Way of the Greater River Region.

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Slumber party blues

I have a friend who invited himself over. He snuck into my bedroom one day when I was busy, and now he won't leave. I don't want to be rude, but he's not a great guest. He sure is making me miserable.

My friend waits on my bed all day long, probably just lounging around and deciding on topics of discussion for later. I imagine he makes notes with a scratchy, stubby, little pencil; it gnaws at his paper like a nesting mouse.

I trudge around my daytime life, dreading our next encounter. But the hours pass, and when bedtime comes, I know he's there on top of my blankets. His arm is propped behind his head like a casual pajama party guest and he's ready to hiss his gossip.

He scooches over to give me room to slide between my sheets. Sometimes he even pretends to be asleep. And I fall for it, every time. I snuggle onto my side and close my eyes around the dark silence.

Then he pounces.

"Did you lock the front door?" He whispers in the ear that isn't on my pillow. "You know you didn't check it." My eyes pop open. I try to remember my actions before bed. After a few minutes, I decide that I locked the door. I let my eyes drift closed.

"Boy, you sure didn't get much done today. The laundry is piled sky-high. And why didn't you write a letter to Joyce? It's your turn. She probably thinks you're dead."

I flop over to my other side and hope Insomnia will fly off from the bounce. He has Velcro claws that stick to my brain. All my flop does is give him wider berth.

My muscles tense-I'm TRYING to go to sleep and I know it's not gonna happen for a long time.

Insomnia is comfy in my bed. He's been not sleeping with me for months and months. I'm draggy in the morning and almost comatose in the afternoon. But I know not to take a nap. If I do, I'll have to listen to him longer at bedtime.

My nighttime friend is wearing me out.

ROBIN GARRISON LEACH
Special to The Herald-Whig
robinwrites@yahoo.com

Why is he visiting me? Is it a symptom of my aging body? Will I have to arrange my life to the senior schedule—supper at 4PM, bedtime at 8PM, up at 4AM? And if I do, will I elude him, or will he just chuckle and start whispering to me earlier?

We chat about all kinds of things when I'm trying to sleep each night. The previous day. The next day. What I should have done/said/thought about each interaction of the last 18 hours.

Insomnia knows all my secrets. And he delights in rehashing all the most troubling ones.

Sometimes I try to drown out his voice with invented mantras. I recite a poem over and over in my head. I list a boy's and girl's name for every letter of the alphabet. I even try to remember every boy I've ever kissed...in chronological order. C'mon.

I'm old. It's a worthy list.

But those tricks rarely fool my bedmate. He is a pro at interrupting.

"Remember that girl named Renee that you graduated with? How much would an underground tornado shelter cost to put in? Aren't you almost out of paper towels?

Wow…your toenails need trimming.

You need to go to the bathroom. That's probably why you can't sleep."

He chuckles, cracks his knuckles proudly, and moves over to let me out. By the time I get back from the bathroom, he's ready with more topics.

I'm so tired of these slumber parties. Anybody want to invite him over?

Mizzou Student Send Off, BBQ set July 19 in Palmyra

STAFF REPORT

PALMYRA, Mo. — University of Missouri Athletic Director Laird Veatch will be the featured speaker Saturday, July 19 for the annual Mizzou Student Send Off and BBQ sponsored by the Great River Tigers Chapter of the Missouri Alumni Association.

Social hour begins at 5 p.m. at Jackson Golf Course in Palmyra. Laird will speak at 6 p.m. followed by a pork loin meal at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets for the pork dinner are $10 and available at the event.

The Great River Tigers serve alumni in Northeast Missouri and West-Central Illinois. The chapter raises scholarship funds for current and future Mizzou students, summer event chairman Al Kennett said.

Alumni will announce 16 winners of $1,000 scholarships, and a drawing for 20 $500 scholarships will be held for Mizzou students who are present at the event along with a raffle for a pair of tickets to an upcoming Mizzou football game.

More information is available by contacting Kennett at 573-248-6947 or kennetta@missouri.edu.

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Immigrant advocates face FBI scrutiny

Say they were targeted because of their role in Los Angeles protests

Victoria Elena Valenzuela
USA TODAY

Verita Topete said she was walking her dog alone one afternoon in late June at Los Angeles' Ernest E. Debs Park. As she was putting her dog in her car to leave, she said multiple FBI agents approached her.

They presented her with a search warrant for her phone and yanked it from her hand with such force she said she was left with bruises. Then she was arrested and temporarily detained. She is not facing charges.

But Topete said she believes she was targeted because of her role helping organizations protest against immigration raids in Los Angeles.

A leader of the immigration committee at Centro CSO, which has been advocating for Chicano and immigrant rights for decades, Topete has been mobilizing residents in Los Angeles against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids that started June 6.

She has been involved in fighting for immigrant justice since 2020, when her father was arrested and detained in Southern California's Adelanto ICE Processing Center.

Topete and other advocates at Centro CSO said she was targeted for her activism and role in the protests against President Donald Trump's mass deportation agenda.

"This is how we treat Americans who are exercising their First Amendment rights simply for standing up for those who cannot," Topete said at a news conference the day after she was detained.

She is not the only one advocates say is facing increased scrutiny following the Los Angeles protests in June.

Alejandro Orellana, also a member of Centro CSO, faces two federal charges of conspiracy to commit civil disorder and abetting civil disorder. Each charge carries up to five years in prison.

Orellana landed on the FBI's radar following video that circulated showing him driving a Ford F-150 pickup truck while an unidentified woman distributed face shields from the truck, according to court records.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass condemned federal agents and National Guard troops for swarming a city park on July 7. MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES FILE

On June 12, the FBI raided their house, where agents found face masks, spray paint, a slingshot and a notebook with anti-police slogans in the Ford pickup. They were also detained but released the following day after the East LA and Boyle Heights community rallied for their release.

The FBI argues those face shields aren't typically used by protesters and would help protect "agitators" from weapons described by police as less lethal, the criminal complaint says.

On July 3, Orellana pleaded not guilty to the charges. Advocates with Centro CSO are calling on U.S. Attorney Bilal Essayli in the Central District of California to drop the charges against Orellana. The U.S. Attorney's Office declined to comment.

An FBI spokesperson said the agency "investigates federal crimes and threats to the national security. We will never open an investigation based solely on First Amendment protected activity."

Centro CSO member Alejandro Orellana, seen at a Los Angeles news conference in late June, faces two federal charges. VICTORIA VALENZUELA/USA TODAY FILE

But that's not how Topete sees it.

"We are criminalized simply for not being willing to tolerate hate and injustice around us," Topete said at the news conference. "This is a clear attack of them trying to silence us, but we will not be silenced."

On June 27, after Topete was detained, advocates with Centro CSO and community members rallied at Ruben Salazar Park in East Los Angeles chanting "Protesting is not a crime" and "Stop the FBI witch hunt."

The movement to drop the charges and investigation of Orellana and Topete has drawn support from Black Lives Matter in LA. Baba Akili, a national field coordinator, said members are in solidarity with the immigrant population because "if we don't stop this now, if we don't stand up now in solidarity, then we are next."

"We have to stand in solidarity with Centro CSO, because they have stood with us," Akili said.

Sol Marquez, a member of the immigration committee at Centro CSO, said the organization is not going to back down and will "keep fighting back for our people, no matter what happens."

"Just like our ancestors, we are resilient, and these intimidation tactics will only fuel us to advocate harder and stronger for immigrant rights and to fight for our immigrant community," Topete said.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass is condemning federal agents and National Guard troops for descending on a city park on July 7.

Armored vehicles, mounted officers and armed troops briefly swarmed the city's MacArthur Park in the morning before leaving. Bass said 20 children were playing at the park before the troops surged through, and she shared footage of federal officers running through the park.

"Frankly, it is outrageous and un-American that we have federal armed vehicles in our parks when nothing is going on in our parks," Bass said at a July 7 news conference.

The mayor said on X that she visited the park the second she heard about what was happening and ordered the person in charge to leave immediately. Calling the scene "absolutely outrageous," she described what occurred as a "military-style operation designed to strike fear in the heart of our city."

"We will not be afraid and we will not be divided. We will stand TOGETHER," she wrote.

According to an X post from the Department of Defense, troops were present at the park to "ensure the safety of federal agents."

Los Angeles City Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez, whose district encompasses MacArthur Park, said on X that armed troops were "terrorizing street vendors, elders, and even children at summer camp."

USA TODAY has reached out to the National Guard for comment.

Contributing: Anthony Robledo, USA TODAY

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OUR COMMUNITIES

AREA POLICE

Urbana man arrested following shooting, car crash

By LUKE TAYLOR
ltaylor@news-gazette.com

URBANA — An Urbana man was arrested after he allegedly fired a gun while driving and fled before getting involved in a crash.

Champaign police were dispatched to the area of Bloomington Road and North Prospect Avenue in Champaign at 2:59 p.m. today for a report of a road-rage incident involving a firearm.

Officers learned that a driver had pointed and fired a weapon at a victim in traffic.

No one was struck by the gunfire, and officers worked quickly to identify the route of the vehicle. It was located at Green and First streets, but fled from a traffic stop.

At 3:07 p.m., the vehicle crashed at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Green Street in Urbana.

Two individuals were transported to a hospital from the scene of the crash, including the driver of the fleeing vehicle.

After evaluation at the hospital, 65-year-old James White was arrested on charges including aggravated discharge of a firearm, aggravated unlawful use of a weapon, aggravated driving under the influence and aggravated fleeing and eluding.

Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

The vehicle driven by a road-rage suspect allegedly fleeing a traffic stop Tuesday at Green and First streets in Champaign was involved in a crash minutes later at Green and Lincoln in Urbana.

UNIT 4

Continued from A-1

education is important for our students and our community,'" Dan Cates wrote in a 90-page report.

That work took a step forward Tuesday night, when the $375-an-hour Bloomington, Ind.-based former school psychologist and administrator presented a summary of his findings and recommendations at a special meeting of the Champaign school board.

TAKE TWO

Following up on our stories

The months-long audit — during which Cates led close to 30 group listening sessions, surveyed parents and staff and conducted one-on-one interviews with stakeholders of all kinds — came about as the result of a settlement agreement between the district and board member Amy Armstrong and husband Andy over the treatment of their nonverbal daughter with profound disabilities.

"Everyone who was involved was extremely committed to seeking improvement," Cates said. That includes district officials, who granted him and Northbrook-based attorney Neal Takiff "unfettered access."

The audit exposed shortcomings ("students received grades of D or F at a higher rate than their non-disabled classmates"), highlighted decisions that led to "destabilizing" outcomes (former Superintendent Shelia Boozer's overhaul of special education administrators in 2023) and offered recommendations (more than 100 were delivered to the board in March and covered in the report).

It's not a quick fix, Cates warned: "You're going to be finding your way for three years and then you'll know what needs to be tightened, what you got right, what you got wrong. By that time, there will be a foundation for knowing: this is working, this is not working."

Cates and Takiff touched on several of the recommended next steps during Tuesday's meeting. Among the "meaningful and needed" improvements:

Training, professional development and more training and professional development.

And not the kind that's been made available to date, frustrated paraprofessionals told Cates.

He said one common complaint was training offered at the 30,000-foot level instead of the 10-foot level: "Please bring us training that talks about interventions rather than talking about what is autism. We bring in these trainers and they tell us 'this is what autism is,' and they describe the clinical profile, the general global profile. … That's not the same as individualized interventions that can help — from actual people (with) autism expertise. That's what they're seeking."

Takiff went on to share the results of a survey of staff, 74 percent of whom said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "I received adequate opportunities for professional development related to the needs of students with disabilities."

Asked by Amy Armstrong about training, Cates said: "There are ongoing trainings that are occurring. It's my opinion that those can be better effectivized. They can be more efficient, they can be more meaningful to people."

Autism should be priority No. 1.

Generally speaking, Cates said, "incomplete programming is the primary, underlying source of a lot of complications" in Unit 4. The lack of it has "reached a critical point of destabilizing staff morale," he added.

His report cited the 2023 disbanding of the district's "autism team," and Cates called for the "immediate focus (being) improving and expanding quality programming for students with autism."

At Tuesday's meeting, he applauded Unit 4 Special Education Executive Director Suzanne Meislahn for quick action in creating transitional kindergarten classrooms for the start of the 2025-26 school year. The lack of the latter was one of the most frequent frustrations shared by parents of Unit 4's youngest children, as Cates noted in his report: "This consultant repeatedly heard from staff members that professionals at (Champaign Early Childhood Center) have attempted to communicate special notice regarding the growing number and severity of students with significantly challenging behaviors who will exit the CECC program and enter Unit 4 elementary schools each year.

"Despite these forecasts and communications," he went on to write, "the district has implemented few alterations or adjustments to its administrative processes to support the receiving kindergarten teachers and elementary schools serving these students in the next school year."

That, Cates said, means about 50 students "with significant needs" leave CECC yearly with "insufficient planning or communication."

Unit 4 has a special education leadership development problem that needs fixing.

In his report, Cates cited the district's "lack of any recognizable vision or initiative to develop leadership within its special education arena," adding: "Almost universally, across the hundred or so special educators and related services personnel with whom I met, people stated little to no interest in pursuing leadership roles in special education."

The district-issued individualized education programs, or IEPs, are lacking one critical element.

Nowhere in documents that can be as long as 40 pages is there a "meaningful summary," Cates noted, sharing a concern he heard from families.

Adding training for parents on IEPs, which Meislahn said is in its early stages, was also among the consultant's recommendations.

Special education should fall under the umbrella of teaching and learning, not on the island it's been on for two years.

After all, Cates said, it's like a district unto itself, given the size of the dedicated staff (525), the number of students (about 1,775, across 13 disability categories) and the fact that services are available in 19 district buildings (but perhaps ought not be given that all 19 don't have properly-trained, qualified personnel).

Cates dinged the 2023 decision to transform the district's special education administrative team of 12, which caused a "loss of supportive presence in the schools, services and professional knowledge."

Added Armstrong: "The dismantling of the department in the spring of 2023, along with separating one of the most critical curricular departments in the district from teaching and learning, was a crushing blow to our students, families and staff."

Don't forget about transportation, which Cates said too often gets the short shrift.

As the consultant put it: "Students with disabilities start and end their day on a school bus. The bus drivers, the bus aides, they are the ones who have the students first and have the students last. Those are such critical roles. They can be easily overlooked."

Cates' advice for school board members: "Stay out of the way."

"Just let them have a chance to get a running start at this," he said in response to a question about how the board could help, asked by President Tony Bruno. "They're the ones who are on the street level. They're the ones who are actually working with the students. They're teachers. They're paraprofessionals. Remarkable groups of people.

"They know your kids. Our work becomes to hand them the capacities to be able to do the things for their kids."

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Meningitis on the rise among youths in Gaza

Olivia Le Poidevin and Hatem Khaled
REUTERS

Palestinians ask for food from a charity kitchen July 7 amid a hunger crisis in Gaza City, Gaza Strip. EBRAHIM HAJJAJ/REUTERS

In a ward of Nasser hospital in southern Gaza a woman is comforting her crying, 16-month-old granddaughter, one of those affected by what aid workers say is a surge of meningitis cases among the Palestinian territory's children.

"Sham's temperature suddenly spiked and she became stiff," said the grandmother, Umm Yasmin. "We couldn't find a car to carry her. ... She was about to die."

The World Health Organization and medical charity Doctors Without Borders warns that conditions in Gaza after 21 months of war between Israel and Hamas have increased the risks of meningitis spreading, though they lack clear comparative data to measure the severity of recent outbreaks.

"There's been a rise in meningitis cases in children," said Dr. Rik Peeperkorn, WHO representative in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. "We are very concerned."

Typically, there is a seasonal increase in viral meningitis cases in Gaza between June and August, but the WHO is investigating the role of additional factors such as poor sanitation, limited access to health care, and disruption of routine vaccinations.

Those hospitals still operating are overwhelmed, with beds full and severe shortages of vital antibiotics.

"There is no space in the hospitals," Dr Mohammed Abu Mughaisib, deputy medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders in Gaza. "There is no space to isolate."

Airborne and life-threatening bacterial meningitis can spread in overcrowded tents, according to the WHO. Viral meningitis, though less serious, often spreads through the fecal-oral route, meaning it can easily spread in shelters with poor sanitation, the WHO says.

At the Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, Dr. Ahmad al-Farra, head of the Pediatrics and Maternity Department, reported nearly 40 cases of newly admitted viral and bacterial meningitis in the last week.

In Gaza City to the north, the Pediatrics Department at the Rantisi Children's Hospital has recorded hundreds of cases in recent weeks, according to a report published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Abu Mughaisib said a lack of lab tests and blood cultures that can help identify the bacteria causing infections was hampering diagnoses.

Nearly all Gaza's population of more than 2 million has been displaced by the war, which began in October 2023 when Hamas-led fighters stormed into Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's retaliatory military campaign has killed more than 57,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health authorities.

More than 80% of Gaza is now an Israeli-militarized zone or subject to displacement orders, according to the United Nations.

Umm Yasmin said her granddaughter had contracted meningitis for the second time since being displaced. "The tents that we live in ... animals cannot live in them," she said.

The WHO has called for more antibiotics to be allowed into the enclave to treat patients.

Bald eagle treated with fish skin flies free again

Karissa Waddick
USA TODAY

Veterinarian Kim Ammann applied a fish skin graft from Icelandic company Kerecis to the eagle's leg. PROVIDED BY WINGED FREEDOM RAPTOR HOSPITAL

A badly injured bald eagle saved by a pioneering fish skin treatment was back to flying in the wild in time for the Fourth of July weekend.

The bird, named Kere, was on the verge of death when volunteers brought her to the Winged Freedom Raptor Hospital in northern Wisconsin last August. Her leg was ripped open from knee to ankle, and maggots and bacteria had begun to fill the dried-out wound.

"It was horrendous," said Kim Ammann, a veterinarian. But the doctor saw a flicker of hope: The eagle was somehow standing on the bandaged leg, and its talons still worked.

"That's when I started to figure I was going to need something to close the wound," Ammann said.

A few Google searches later, Ammann stumbled on the Icelandic company Kerecis, which transplants the skin of North Atlantic cod to help heal human wounds and support tissue regeneration. The treatment had never been used on a species of raptor before, but Ammann took a leap and sent them an email.

Within weeks, Ammann gave Kere, who is named in honor of the company, the first of two successful surgical skin grafts. The rest of her recovery included about 10 months of grueling wound care, bandage changes, and a mini vacation in the hospital's eagle flyway rehabilitation enclosure.

"There was something very special about the fact that she was an eagle and that she was allowing me to do this," Ammann said of the bird. "That tolerance was part of what made it possible."

By June 22, the wild bald eagle was ready to soar free again. The date was more about ensuring Kere had "the majority of the summer months" to reacclimate to being back in the wild. But the symbolism of releasing a bald eagle so close to the Fourth of July wasn't lost on Ammann.

A group of about a hundred viewers gathered to watch Kere take flight above the forests and fields. Amann described the day as "magical."

"She could decide whether she wanted to go east or west. She could decide what lake she wanted to go to," Ammann said. "I was so happy for her to have her independence back."

> **"There was something very special about the fact that she was an eagle and that she was allowing me to do this. That tolerance was part of what made it possible."**
>
> **Kim Ammann**
> A veterinarian

Bald eagles, an iconic symbol of the United States, are among the most protected species in the country.

But they haven't always been.

The bird's population began plummeting in the late 1800s as American industrialization began changing the landscape, destroying their habitats and introducing lead into the environment.

In 1940, the federal government enacted The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act prohibiting people from hunting, selling or possessing an eagle, in an effort to prevent further population decline.

But decades later, pesticides including dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane, or DDT, seeped into waterways and further endangered the species.

The United States banned DDT in 1972 and passed the Endangered Species Act in 1973, to protect quickly disappearing species like the bald eagle.

Today, there are an estimated 316,000 bald eagles in the lower 48 states.

Concerts

Continued from Page 1A

available for purchase on-site; however, picnics are also welcome.

Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets.

Tickets include access to the concert and full arboretum grounds. Admission is $16 for the public and $12 for Klehm members. Children 3 and under are admitted free.

Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden is located at 2715 S. Main St.

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CEO

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Langley said there was "purposefully misleading reporting that a Texas police officer with the Johnson County Sheriff's Office used LPR to 'target people seeking reproductive healthcare.'" Langley linked to a blog and said the blog is actively perpetuating narratives that have been proven false.

Instead, Langley wrote, that sheriff's office reported that a local family had called to ask for help after a relative had self-administered an abortion and then ran away. Langley said deputies performed a nationwide search in Flock, "the broadest search possible within the system, to try to locate her as quickly as they could. Luckily, she was found safe and healthy in Dallas a couple of days later."

The State Journal-Register left messages with the sheriff's office but messages were not returned.

Langley's statement specifically mentions Illinois and its legislation.

"Flock collaborated with Illinois legislators, law enforcement, and advocates to help elected officials in Illinois leverage LPRs in a way that reflects their values. Flock designed an in-app attestation workflow that required agencies outside the state of Illinois to attest to comply with this Illinois policy when accessing Illinois data either by direct sharing or via our lookup tools," he wrote, which he said was launched nationwide in January 2024.

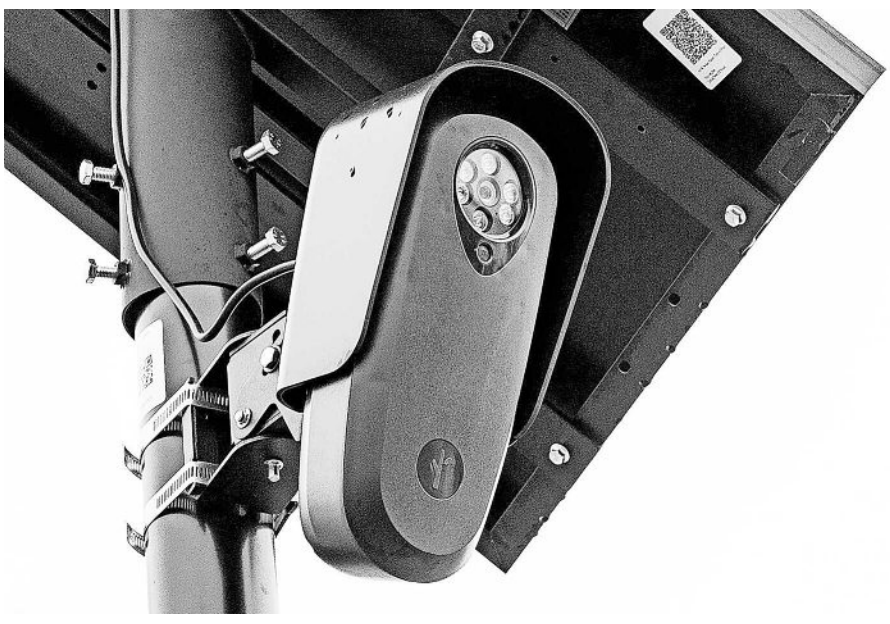
Langley added that a tool was launched first in Illinois in June 2025.

"After discovering that certain non-Illinois agencies were using impermissible search reasons to access Illinois data, we released a new feature to automatically flag and exclude any search of Illinois camera data with terms that indicate an impermissible purpose. This proactive measure significantly reduces the risk of misuse, whether intentional or inadvertent. We look forward to bringing this solution to more jurisdictions that want it in the coming year."

What was the complaint by Illinois?

Gov. JB Pritzker signed a bill into law in 2024, House Bill 5239, that added additional protections in the state's interstate shield law.

The law bolstered existing protections for patients and providers to travel to Illinois for reproductive services by prohibiting state and local jurisdictions from disclosing information or providing resources to assist any out-of-state agency conducting an investigation into someone receiving legal abortion services in the state.



Illinois authorities have instructed Flock to implement a preventable search tool into its system, which blocks access to data if the words "abortion" or "immigration" and other related words are entered. That search tool is now live on the Flock site. HARRISON JONES/THE EVENING SUN

Giannoulias' office said that Mount Prospect's ALPR settings "provided a gateway into Illinois' system operated by Flock for an unauthorized use, despite the Texas police stating that the reason for the search was related to abortion care."

Following Langley's statement, Communications Manager for Giannoulias, Max Walczyk told the SJ-R via e-mail that information they cited came from publicly available records.

"Publicly available records show the search as it appears on the police department's audit report. Upon discovery of this information, the office confirmed with Flock that the out-of-state law enforcement authorities were able to gain access to the Illinois data due to the settings that Mount Prospect had configured," he wrote.

In addition to the Texas authorities allegedly searching more than 80,000 cameras nationwide, according to Giannoulias' office; between Jan. 14 and April 30, there were 262 searches for immigration related matters in Mount Prospect, alone, according to a news release. Giannoulias and his office said any law enforcement agency operating the ALPR must adhere to law and deny such requests.

The Village of Mount Prospect too, shared a statement on June 12, though it referenced data accessed for immigration rather than abortion.

"Data from Mount Prospect, along with other Illinois law enforcement agencies, was accessed through the Flock Safety 'National Lookup' feature by other law enforcement agencies for purposes of immigration enforcement. The use of ALPR data collected by Mount Prospect Flock Safety cameras for this purpose does not align with the Mount Prospect Police Department's values and is a clear violation of Illinois state law."

How did it happen?

Flock Safety's License Plate Reader platform is made up of individual cameras that submit data about cars to a user interface, with that data owned by each individual customer, Langley wrote.

"This limited, defined network has a system administrator, who can share the data collected by their devices with other law enforcement agencies if they choose to do so," Langley wrote, adding that there are customizable options for data sharing amongst agencies:

- 1:1 Sharing – police departments can choose to share camera access with other PDs, in order to solve cross-jurisdictional crime, on a 1:1 basis (one PD to one PD), within a specific geographic radius (sharing with all agencies within 10 miles, for example), or within their state. Agencies can also elect not to share any data outside their own agency, or remove themselves from sharing at any time.
- National Lookup – police departments can choose to join Flock's National Lookup network, which enables a unique type of sharing. Specifically built for far-reaching crimes like human or narcotics trafficking and missing persons, National Lookup allows police to search for the full plate number of one specific, known license plate (only a complete license plate) across cameras that other police departments have also opted in to share with this network.

Illinois authorities have instructed Flock to implement a preventable search tool into its system, which blocks access to data if the words "abortion" or "immigration" and other related words are entered. That search tool is now live on the Flock site.

So, what's next?

Giannoulias' office is continuing to have discussions and remains open to implementing additional safeguards and solutions, Walczyk said.

"Our goal is to work with law enforcement and inform and educate them on the law."

Illinois authorities identified 46 individual, out-of-state agencies violated Illinois law, which was shared at the news conference. Illinois authorities have instructed Flock to immediately shut off access to outside agencies that are violating law.

Additionally, Illinois authorities have instructed Flock to implement a preventable search tool into its system, which blocks access to data if the words "abortion" or "immigration" and other related words are entered. That search tool is now live on the Flock site.

The office also initiated an audit process that examines searches of local law enforcement to ensure compliance with the law. Lastly, the office is exploring customer training and communications outreach policies "that operators can use with customers to educate them about the law."

Tom Ackerman covers breaking news and trending news along with general news for the Springfield State Journal-Register. He can be reached at tackerman@gannett.com.

Closing

Continued from Page 1A

of future plans."

Wake said many more downtown businesses will close in the near future "without some major changes."

While she said she would patronize downtown businesses, Wake encouraged others "to put pressure on our local government and organizations that have sway to make the essential changes downtown requires."

Wake opened the brick-and-mortar after selling drink concoctions at the Old Capitol Farmers Market.

She said it would offer future pop-up events and fulfill any building rentals on the books. The Wakery's wholesale options still can be found at The Railyard, Fluid and the Cat's Pyjamas.

Contact Steven Spearie: 217-622-1788; sspearie@sj-r.com; X, twitter.com/@StevenSpearie.

Coroner ID's human remains found on city's south side

Steven Spearie
Springfield State Journal-Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Sangamon County Coroner has identified the remains found in a wooded area near South MacArthur Boulevard and Wabash Avenue on July 3.

Coroner Jim Allmon said 37-year-old Derek Wartenbe of Auburn was scientifically identified during a postmortem procedure on July 7.

Allmon said preliminary autopsy findings showed no evidence of traumatic injuries, but the official cause of death is pending toxicology and histology reports.

Allmon told The State Journal-Register that Wartenbe's body was found lying up against a concrete foundation about 15 to 20 yards inside the densely-wooded area. There was clothing hanging from trees and furniture near the body, but Allmon couldn't confirm those belonged to Wartenbe.

Springfield Police were notified about the body by another witness from the area earlier on July 3. City of Springfield spokeswoman Haley Wilson confirmed that Public Works crews were in the same woods on June 30.

Zone manager Michael Horn had been working with an unhoused man residing in that area for some time, Wilson said.

Once housing was secured for the man, "it was considered a vacant area, so (the city) cleaned up the stuff that was still there," Wilson said.

Wartenbe's case was unrelated to the other individual, Wilson added.

Contact Steven Spearie: 217-622-1788; sspearie@sj-r.com; X, twitter.com/@StevenSpearie.

An Illinois State Court Authorized This Notice.

All Illinois Residents Who, While They Were Enrolled in a School in the State of Illinois, at Any Time Between March 26, 2015 and May 15, 2025, Had a Google Workspace For Education or G Suite For Education Account May Be Entitled to Get a Payment from a Class Action Settlement.

Si desea recibir esta notificación en español, llámenos o visite nuestra página web.

An **$8.75 million settlement** has been reached in a class action lawsuit against Google LLC ("Google"), which claims that Google violated Illinois law by collecting and storing biometric data of class members in Illinois through its Google Workspace for Education (previously known as "G Suite for Education") platform without the proper notice and consent. Google denies that it collected or stored biometric data without proper notice and consent, or that it violated Illinois law or any other law. The Court has not decided who is right. For more information or to submit a claim for payment please visit the Settlement Website www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

Who is Included? You are a Class Member in this Settlement if at any time between March 26, 2015 and May 15, 2025, you had a voice model or face model created or had the Voice Match or Face Match feature enabled in your Google Workspace for Education or G Suite for Education (together, "GWFE") account while enrolled in a school in the State of Illinois.

What are the Settlement Terms? The Settlement provides monetary payments to Class Members who submit a valid Claim or Claim Form postmarked or submitted on www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com by **October 16, 2025**. Without admitting liability, Google has also agreed to take certain actions, to the extent it is not already doing so, that will benefit Illinois GWFE users. Google will establish an $8.75 million Settlement Fund. After deducting Court-approved attorneys' fees and expenses, service payments for the Plaintiffs, and the costs of settlement notice and administration from the Settlement Fund, the remaining funds will be made available, if the settlement is approved, to pay Class Members' valid claims. Class Members who file valid Claims will be eligible to receive an equal *pro rata* portion of the $8.75 million Settlement Fund after the deductions listed above. Class Counsel estimate, based on their experience in prior similar matters, that the amount of each valid claim will be between approximately $30.00 and $100.00; however, the actual cash amount an individual will receive could be less than or greater than that estimated amount, and will depend on the final amount of Court-approved deductions from the Settlement Fund and the total number of valid Claims submitted by Class Members before the Claims Deadline of **October 16, 2025**.

How Can I Get a Payment? The only way to get a payment is to submit a Claim Form. If you submit a Claim Form, you will give up the right to sue Google or any Released Parties in a separate lawsuit about the claims made in this case and released by the Settlement. You must submit a Claim Form by **October 16, 2025**. You must submit your Claim online at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com or file a paper Claim Form postmarked by **October 16, 2025**. Paper Claim Forms are available at the Settlement Website or by calling 1-844-768-1451. Claim Forms must be completed by an adult of 18 years or older. ***If you are a minor, the Claim Form must be completed by your parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian completes the Claim Form the payment will be made to them, and in such an event, such payment must be used solely for the minor's benefit***.

Your Other Options. If you do nothing, your rights will be affected, and you won't get a payment. If you file a Claim Form, object to the Settlement or do nothing, you are choosing to stay in the Settlement Class. You will be legally bound by all orders of the Court and you will not be able to start, continue or be part of any other lawsuit against Google about the allegations of the case or other Released Claims. If you don't want to be legally bound by the Settlement or receive any benefits from it, you must exclude yourself by **September 1, 2025**. If you do not exclude yourself, you may object to the Settlement by **September 1, 2025**. The Long Form Notice available on the Settlement Website explains how to exclude yourself or object.

The Final Approval Hearing: The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on **October 14, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.** to consider whether to approve the Settlement and award Service Payments of up to $5,000 to the Class Representatives, attorneys' fees of up to 40% of the Settlement Fund, and, reimbursement of expenses, as well as consider any objections. Motions for these fees and expenses will be posted on the Settlement Website when they are filed with the Court. You may appear at the hearing, either yourself or through an attorney hired by you, but you don't have to. The hearing may be held remotely using the Court's Zoom videoconference link (us06web.zoom.us/j/3098362777) at the Court's discretion. For more information and updates, call or visit the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

More Information: This notice is only a summary. Complete information about all of your rights and options, as well as a Claim Form, a more detailed Long Form Notice, the Settlement Agreement, and other relevant documents are available at www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com, by emailing info@GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com, or by calling toll-free 1-844-768-1451.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The dates and deadlines may be changed without further notice to the Settlement Class, so please check the Settlement Website, www.GoogleEducationBIPASettlement.com.

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE THE COURT OR THE COURT CLERK'S OFFICE TO INQUIRE ABOUT THIS SETTLEMENT OR THE CLAIM PROCESS.

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Exhibit C: Search Notice

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Google Education Account? - Workspace for Education Payout

Had a Google Workspace for Education account in Illinois? You may be eligible for payment. Class action settlement may pay those with past school Google accounts.

AI Overview

Google is facing multiple privacy-related lawsuits, including a significant settlement with the state of Texas for $1.4 billion. The Texas lawsuits accused Google of illegally tracking users' locations and collecting biometric data, including facial recognition information, without proper consent. Additionally, Google is facing a class action lawsuit regarding its Chrome browser's "Incognito" mode, where users believed their browsing activity was private but Google allegedly continued to track it.

Here's a breakdown:

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