

This issue marks  
the beginning of  
the Journal's 27th Year

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**BOONE COUNTY**  
LOCAL NEWS, OPINION & HISTORY  
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**FREE**



## Saturday at the Apollo

By David Larson

Robert "Nick" Nichols was the manager of the Apollo Theater in 1952. Only 8 years earlier, Nick was making his way through France, having landed at Normandy Beach on D-Day. On August 9, 1952, he executed the most masterful promotion at the theater since Frank Rhinehart's 1926 grand opening.

The Greatest Show on Earth released in 1952 is an American film produced and directed by Cecil B. DeMille. The highest grossing film of 1952, it was set in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Betty Hutton and Cornel Wilde starred as trapeze artists competing for the center ring. Charlton Heston was the circus manager, running the show. James Stewart starred as a mysterious clown who never removes his make-up, even between shows. Dorothy Lamour and Gloria Grahame also played supporting roles. The film won Academy Awards, for Best Picture and Best Story, and was nominated for Best Costume Design, Best Director, and Best Film Editing. It also won Golden Globe Awards for Best Cinematography, Best Director, and Best Motion Picture – Drama.

Brad Braden (Charlton Heston) was the no-nonsense general manager of the world's largest

*Continued on Page 2*

## Kentucky Derby 148

By Charles Herbst

It's officially spring. The 148th running of the Kentucky Derby takes place this Saturday, May 7. Twenty horses are scheduled to compete in what's called the fastest two minutes in sports.

Post time is 5:57PM, Belvidere time. Of

### Post Horse

1. Mo Donegal
2. Happy Jack
3. Epicenter
4. Summer Is Tomorrow
5. Smile Happy
6. Messier
7. Crown Pride
8. Charge It
9. Tiz the Bomb
10. Zandon
11. Pioneer of Medina
12. Taiba
13. Simplification
14. Barber Road
15. White Abarrio
16. Cyberknife
17. Classic Causeway
18. Tawny Port
19. Zozos
20. Ethereal Road

### Jockey

- Todd Pletcher,  
Doug O'Neill,  
Steve Asmussen,  
Bhupat Seemar,  
Kenny McPeek,  
Tim Yakteen,  
Koichi Shintani,  
Todd Pletcher,  
Kenny McPeek,  
Chad Brown,  
Todd Pletcher,  
Tim Yakteen,  
Antonio Sano,  
John Ortiz,  
Saffie Joseph Jr.,  
Brad Cox,  
Brian Lynch,  
Brad Cox,  
Brad Cox,  
D. Wayne Lukas,

course, you'll want to turn on the television about 30-45 minutes beforehand to watch the usual traditional accompaniments like *Call to the Post*, and *My Old Kentucky Home*.

It is impossible to accurately handicap this race, but have fun trying! A friendly wager among partygoers or family members is part of the tradition.

Here's the morning line.

### Trainer

- Irad Ortiz Jr.,  
Rafael Bejarano,  
Joel Rosario,  
Mickael Barzalona,  
Corey Lanerie,  
John Velazquez,  
Christophe Lemaire,  
Luis Saez,  
Brian Hernandez Jr.,  
Flavien Prat,  
Joe Bravo,  
Mike Smith,  
Jose Ortiz,  
Reylu Gutierrez,  
Tyler Gaffalione,  
Florent Geroux,  
Julien Leparoux,  
Ricardo Santana Jr.,  
Manny Franco,  
Luis Contreras,

### Odds

- 10-1  
30-1  
7-2  
30-1  
20-1  
8-1  
20-1  
30-1  
3-1  
30-1  
12-1  
20-1  
30-1  
10-1  
20-1  
30-1  
30-1  
20-1  
30-1



**Apollo**

from page 1

railroad circus. The show's board of directors planned to run a short 10-week season rather than risk losing \$25,000 a day in a shaky postwar economy. Brad bargained to keep the circus on the road as long as it made a profit, thus keeping the 1,400 performers and roustabouts employed.

Days before this week's picture was taken, the Boone County Fair opened, featuring "Babe" the elephant. Babe was often seen around the carnival area lumbering through as attendees marveled at the 10-foot giant. Beside looking beautiful, the only work Babe did was to help with some of the heavy work putting up tents before the fair started.

The story goes (as told by Dave Grimm, who had a memory of it) Nick made a deal with Babe's trainer, Jim O'Dell, who we see behind the Nichols family in the photograph. The deal was that if

O'Dell walked Babe up Lincoln Avenue from the Fairgrounds, now Spenser Park, to the theater, Nick would pay him \$5.

Nick put an advertisement in the local newspaper announcing the event on Friday, the day before. When the journey began, children along West Lincoln Avenue in their excitement and not wishing to miss a moment, began to fall in behind Babe as it made the curve on West Lincoln, heading to North State Street. Every block pulled more and more children until as the picture shows - there were a lot of kids.

The Apollo in the 1950s and 1960s was as central to Belvidere's identity as anything. The pleasure of going to the movies and meeting friends or finding them there was important to growing up and becoming a part of the community. Today, we watch streaming video - privately.

Every movie was preceded by a cartoon or two. The Saturday afternoon matinee was a solid two to three

hours that every parent could count on to drop off the kids for a few hours. Parents knew their children would be safe and secure. In the early 1960s, 50 cents would get you in the door, plus popcorn and a soft drink. Candy was extra. Either Bob Bowley or Gordon Clark would collect the ticket that Charlotte Nichols, Nick's wife, sold you at the ticket window when you handed over your quarter.

Nick, who always seemed to be smoking an unlit cigar, would be on patrol throughout the afternoon with his flash light to signal a realignment of behavior if he deemed it needed.

That meant for the older kids in junior high, who sat in the back with their girlfriends, on their so-called date, a command by Nick to "come up for air" if he caught them necking. It was cause for group amusement.

The Apollo must have shown every Tarzan movie ever made. In those days, every movie theater got the latest releases from Hollywood. Talking pictures were just being released when Rhinehart built the Apollo.

In 1952, and for many years annually at Christmas, a food drive by the Salvation Army was held at the Apollo on a Saturday in December. The ticket price to see multiple cartoons and a movie was the donation of canned food for the food pantry. It was the social event of the season for Belvidere kids.

An interesting fact not generally known is that the Apollo also had a radio station. It was run from the projection booth under the call letters WOAG. Broadcasts were made on Friday nights from the stage of the Apollo. The license later passed to Larry Kleber under the call letters WLRB.

The Apollo had closed for decades before its present owner, Maria Martinez purchased the building. It was not until recently, when Martinez remodeled the building that the cafe space next to the Kishwaukee River reopened as the Rio an upscale bar that primarily serves the theater hall. That space had been closed since the late 1950s. Originally it was a restaurant with a balcony that allowed outside dining on a deck that reached out over the river. In 1952, it was operated by Roy Long and Helen Maxwell, and featured ice cream, fish, roast chicken, and ham dinners.

Today if it were still in-operation one could most likely order food, have it delivered by Uber and stream news that reinforced one's frame of mind - all very "privately." But, of course, - who has privacy anymore in a digital world?

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Editor:

Overall, I would agree with those who say Ukrainian people and its leaders have valor, with the tone set by Zelenskyy. Is he just reflecting the courage of the people?

Trump worked diligently to disassemble NATO and that is a matter of record that he wanted the US out of NATO. It was necessary for Biden to rebuild that structure and restore the NATO members' confidence in the US that Trump had eroded, and that tattered condition along with Trump's refusal to ship arms to the Ukraine is what encouraged Putin to invade the Ukraine. Real actual history will see it that way, as more and more conclude that Trump was a tool for Putin.

In Afghanistan Trump negotiated the withdrawal with the Taliban and left the government of Afghanistan out of it and that government was told they had to release thousands of prisoners by the agreement they were not a party to. Then Trump set the withdrawal time and took no action to set in motion the necessary operations to accomplish that in an orderly fashion. It was up to Biden's administration to get an extension to allow a more extensive withdrawal of men and material, and the completion of more training for Afghans. Also, I thought it very strange that church affiliated NGOs were sending in young girls to work at their facilities just ahead of the Trump arranged withdrawal deadline. That isn't just peculiar, it is very strange. Now I wouldn't know about this except for complaining parents asking why. I suppose if the US was tied up in Afghanistan rescuing them, we wouldn't be flexible enough to be helping the Ukrainians.

Just remember that Trump's first impeachment was because he was extorting the Ukraine.

Trump's impeachment came after a formal House inquiry alleged that he had solicited foreign interference in the 2020 U.S. presidential election to help his re-election bid, and then obstructed the inquiry itself by telling his administration officials to ignore subpoenas for documents and testimony. The inquiry reported that Trump withheld military aid[a] and an invitation to the White House to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy in order to influence Ukraine to announce an investigation into Trump's political opponent Joe

Continued on Page 3

**OBITUARIES**

- Adamson, Wanda, 97, Belvidere, April 29
- Behling, Ruth, 76,, Belvidere, April 28
- Billings, Donald, 75, Belvidere, April 17
- Burchard, mKristine, 72, Belvidere, April 23
- Johnson, Jeanneraye, 79, Belvidere, April 21
- McFadden, Mary, 71, Belvidere, May 1
- Patton, LeeAnn, 60, Poplar Grove, April 17
- Paul, Leland, 70, Belvidere, April 16
- Tillman, Mick, 51, Belvidere, April 19
- Trimble, Linda, 74, Poplar Grove, April 29
- Walter, Jean, 73, Belvidere, April 21
- Wickre, Gary, 78, Belvidere, April 26

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Publisher/Editor: David C. Larson  
 Senior Writer/Editorial: Charles Herbst  
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David Grimm April 1938 - Dec. 2000  
 Richelle Kingsbury Aug. 1955 - June 2013

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**Letter** *from page 2*

Biden and to promote a discredited conspiracy theory that Ukraine, not Russia, was behind interference in the 2016 presidential election. A phone call between Trump and Zelenskyy on July 25, 2019 was particularly important—whistleblower Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman was a participant in the call, and later informed Congress.[4]

One thing is certain about Trump and that is that from the beginning of his presence on the public stage, he has been at the center of scandal after scandal and he is not going to change his spots but will drag an ever increasing number of individuals down that are tools for his bidding.

Biden may not be the best looking, youngest, and dynamic President we have ever had, but I think he will come through history with a much better record than some are giving him credit for, and we will benefit from the associations he has chosen with the greatness of Ukraine.

Bruce Jacobsen

## Once Punishable by Imprisonment, Abortion Now Widely Available

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

A leaked draft of an upcoming U.S. Supreme Court decision that could overturn the landmark 1973 case Roe v. Wade reignited a political debate over whether access to abortion is a constitutional right or something that can be regulated by the states.

The draft opinion was first reported Monday night by the news organization Politico. On Tuesday, the court issued a statement confirming it as authentic but denying that it represents a final decision.

An appendix to the 98-page document reveals a brief sliver of the history of abortion laws in the United States, including Illinois, which first banned the procedure outright in 1827. Of the states admitted to the union by 1868, the year the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment extending civil rights protections to state laws was ratified, Illinois was second only to Missouri in having acted to criminalize abortion, according to the appendix.

That law made it illegal to administer any drug or substance with the intent to cause a person's death,

*Continued on Page 4*



A Rivian all-electric R1T truck, manufactured in Normal, is pictured outside of the Governor's Mansion Wednesday in Springfield. The truck won the title of the "Coolest Thing Made in Illinois" at a contest held by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. (Capitol News Illinois photo by Jerry Nowicki)

## Rivian's All-Electric R1T Truck is 2022's "Coolest Thing Made in Illinois."

Manufacturers' Association contest put all-electric truck against Fruit by the Foot, more

By Grace Kinnicutt Capitol News

That was the result of the third annual Makers Madness bracket-style tournament hosted by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association which allows Illinoisans to vote for the "coolest" product made in the state.

This year's winner was announced at the Governor's Mansion Wednesday. The contest is sponsored by Comcast Business.

Manufactured in Normal, the R1T is the first electric truck in production that features four motors, eight driving modes and up to 400 miles of range on a single charge, combining off-road capabilities with the driving style of a sports car.

It can accelerate from zero to 60 in three seconds and has a towing capacity of up to 11,000 pounds.

James Chen, public policy vice president and chief regulatory counsel for Rivian, said the company's mission is keeping the world

"adventurous in technology," innovation and collaboration while providing jobs that support the Bloomington-Normal community.

"We are proud to call Illinois home and honored to accept this year's award. So much credit goes to the plant team members who make the R1T every day and who made this accomplishment possible today," Chen said.

Normal is home to the company's first manufacturing campus where they build R1 products as well as commercial vans. They began production of the R1T in September 2021.

Over 400 products

were submitted to this year's Makers Madness competition with over 200,000 votes cast.

The all-electric truck bested a diverse group of challengers, including General Mills' Fruit by the Foot snack, which is made in Belvidere.

Another product in the final four was the Orion Spacecraft Capsule's Aft Bulkhead and Barrel and Tunnel which was made for deep-space travel missions planned by NASA. It is manufactured by Ingersoll Machine Tools Inc. in Rockford.

The other product in the finals, custom blazed diffraction gratings, allow for the creation of ultra-high line density and high precision patterning of surfaces, and are used in virtual reality headsets, semiconductor manufacturing and X-ray technology. Its manufacturer is Inprentus Precision Optics of Champaign.

Gov. JB Pritzker presented the award and said the company has established itself as a national leader in the EV industry and that he "couldn't think of a more fitting winner" in the wake of a new state law that aims to put 1 million EVs on state roads.

Pritzker said the R1T is a "game-changer" in the auto industry and that through investments made in the Reimagining Electric Vehicles Act that incentivizes EV production in Illinois, the state can open more doors to "access 21st century manufacturing careers."

In 2021, Pritzker signed the Reimagining Electric Vehicles Act into law, providing tax credits for manufacturers of EVs and their parts.

The tax credits range from 75 percent to 100 percent of income tax withheld for creating new jobs or 25 percent to 50 percent for retained employees and will depend on factors such as location and the number of employees hired. A 10 percent credit for training expenses would also be available.

In the Fiscal Year 2023 budget, REV credit eligibility was expanded to battery recyclers, hydrogen and solar powered vehicles, and makers of the products' component parts.

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, or CEJA, set the goal of putting 1 million EVs on state roads by 2030.

In a news release posted in early April, Rivian said the company has produced 2,553 vehicles and delivered 1,227 vehicles in the first quarter of 2022 at the Normal manufacturing facility.

"The mission of sustainability through investment in zero-emissions transportation technology and economic growth is evident throughout our operations in Illinois," Chen said.

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## Abortion

from page 3

“or to procure the miscarriage of any woman, then being with child.” The crime was punishable by up to three years in prison and a \$1,000 fine. In 1867, Illinois lawmakers expanded the prohibition on abortion “by means of any instrument” and raised the maximum prison sentence to 10 years.

In modern times, however, Illinois has taken a different view on the issue. Changes signed by governors from each party since 2017 have made the procedure widely available and, in some cases, allowed for public funding of abortion.

### Trigger repealed, public funding

Abortion prohibitions were common throughout the U.S. until Jan. 22, 1973, when the court, in a 7-2 ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, declared that access to abortion during the first two trimesters of pregnancy was protected as part of a fundamental right to privacy and that states had only limited authority to regulate the procedure.

For a time after that, Illinois was among a handful of states to enact so-called “trigger laws” that would reinstate the ban on abortion if *Roe v. Wade* was overturned.

A 1975 “trigger law” remained on the books in Illinois until 2017 when then-Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican, signed House Bill 40 to repeal the trigger law and allow abortions to be covered under the state’s medical assistance program and the state employee’s health insurance system.

Prior to that law, Illinois had only covered abortion services in cases of rape or incest, or when there was a threat to the life or health of the mother. The new law, however, extended that to anyone who was covered by the state’s Medicaid program.

But because federal Medicaid rules do not allow public funding of abortion, the services in Illinois are paid for entirely with state funds.

The bill passed the General Assembly on May 10, 2017, but Sen. Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, who is now the Senate president, placed a legislative hold on the bill for about four months.

The delay in sending the bill to Rauner’s desk allowed pressure to build on the governor from both sides of the abortion debate. In the end, though, Rauner, a longtime abortion rights supporter, said he believed abortion was a matter of personal choice and he signed it into law on Sept. 28, 2017.

“I personally believe that a woman should have, must have, the right to decide what goes on in her own body, that a woman should have the right to decide her health care,” he said at a news conference a day after signing the bill.

### Reproductive Health Act

A year after signing the bill, Rauner was defeated for reelection by Democrat JB Pritzker and Democrats came into the next legislative session with supermajorities in both chambers.

On the final day of the 2019 legislative session, the supermajority approved a vast expansion of abortion rights through a bill known as the Reproductive Health Act, Senate Bill 25.

Among other things, that bill declared that access to reproductive health care, including abortion services, is a “fundamental right” under state law.

At the time of that law’s adoption, many other

states were passing more restrictive abortion laws, some of them as part of a concerted effort to get them before the U.S. Supreme Court in hopes of overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

But state Rep. Kelly Cassidy, D-Chicago, the bill’s chief sponsor in the House, said at a news conference with Pritzker Tuesday that she believes overturning *Roe* is just the first step in challenging all rights based on a right to privacy.

“Every single right that we have that is based on the right of privacy, the foundation of the *Roe* decision, is at risk,” she said. “They’ve telegraphed that in the decision, naming decisions on birth control and interracial marriage and marriage equality. They’ve given us their roadmap.”

### Parental notification

The last major expansion of abortion rights in Illinois came during last year’s fall veto session when lawmakers passed House Bill 370, repealing the 1995 Parental Notice of Abortion Act. The 1995 law did not require parental consent, only that a doctor’s office notify a parent of the child’s planned abortion 48 hours prior to the procedure.

HB 370 had strong opposition from religious leaders and conservative groups, but supporters argued that parental notification requirements put young pregnant women at risk and amounted to undue government interference with access to abortion services.

“I signed the bill because this is about protecting, in particular, the most vulnerable young people. That’s what it’s about,” Pritzker said Tuesday in defending his decision. “It’s not about your child, or my child. It’s about the children who live in homes where they are not safe. It’s about children who are unprotected out there who need refuge and cannot rely upon a parent.”

### Overturing Roe

In the draft opinion that was leaked Monday, Justice Samuel Alito, writing for the majority, said the decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and other subsequent rulings merely returns the question of whether to ban or regulate abortions to the states.

“We now overrule those decisions and return that authority to the people and their elected representatives,” he wrote.

Pritzker, meanwhile, said that while Illinois has strong laws protecting access to abortions, those laws can be repealed by future legislatures.

“If people who are against women’s rights get elected office, if the legislature turns Republican or the governorship turns Republican, we will end up being an anti-choice state,” he said.

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## Supreme Court Denies Ex-Bear Richard Dent's Efforts to Identify Accusers

*1986 Super Bowl MVP alleged defamation by employees of former Exelon subsidiary; will appeal*

By Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

Richard Dent won’t be able to learn the names of the people who accused him of sexual harassment and drunken disorderly conduct in 2018, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled last week.

The former Chicago Bear, Pro Football Hall-of-Famer and 1986 Super Bowl MVP had sought the identities of three employees of energy supplier Constellation NewEnergy Inc. in pretrial discovery in an effort to sue the individuals for defamation.

But in a 4-2 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the accusers in this case have a “qualified privilege” to anonymity, which Dent failed to overcome, because their claims were made during a workplace investigation of sexual harassment. It overturned a ruling from the First District Court of Appeals.

Dent’s team blasted the decision as “without precedent” Friday and said it was planning to file a petition asking the court to revisit the decision, alleging it misunderstood or overlooked facts.

The basics of the case are that Dent’s energy supply, products and services company, RLD Resources, had several contracts with Constellation that were severed in 2018 after Constellation investigated a claim from a female employee who accused Dent of telling her she had a “butt like a sister” in 2016 in Philadelphia and groping her at an event in Chicago in 2018. The only named witness said they had seen Dent acting “drunk and disorderly” at a separate Chicago location prior to the alleged groping.

The contracts were at-will, so Constellation had a legal right to sever them without cause. Dent was not suing Constellation for defamation, but for the names of the accusers who he believes defamed him.

The case was brought under the narrow Supreme Court Rule 224, through which the justices were asked to weigh the rights of a person to know the identity of their accuser against the right of a harassment victim to anonymously report an incident to their employer.

In terms of Illinois defamation law, “qualified privilege” is based on a policy of “protecting honest communications of misinformation in certain favored circumstances in order to facilitate the availability of correct information,” the Supreme Court wrote in its opinion, authored by Republican Justice Michael Burke. Democrats Robert Carter and Mary Jane Theis joined Republican David Overstreet in the majority.

The opinion quoted a 1999 ruling in *Vickers v. Abbott Laboratories*, which stated, if “no privilege existed, then victims of harassment and companies with a goal of preventing harassment would be ‘handcuffed’ by a fear of defamation liability.”

While Dent didn’t know who the accusers were, Constellation did divulge the alleged misconduct. And in his petition to the court, the majority wrote, Dent failed to establish “any reckless act showing a disregard for Dent’s rights” – a necessity to overcome the privilege.

Republican Justice Rita Garman wrote the dissent on behalf of her and Democratic Justice P. Scott Neville, stating she was “troubled” that the majority believed a party seeking defamation claims would have to allege concrete facts against a person whose identity is not known to overcome the privilege.

“I am concerned that the majority opinion essentially treats the qualified privilege as an absolute privilege, which in turn endows a private

*Continued on Page 5*

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**Dent**

from page 4

company and its third-party investigators with quasi-judicial status and impermissibly deprives a class of individuals of the ability to restore their reputations following investigations that arguably lack procedural safeguards,” she wrote.

It’s the same argument Dent’s team had been making, while also arguing that Dent should have been allowed to amend his petition with more information.

“What the majority opinion does is say that because Constellation conducted a reasonable employer investigation, not only is Constellation protected by the privilege, but so are the unidentified defamers – even if they’re lying through their teeth,” Dent’s attorney, Paul Neilan, said in an email. “The majority’s opinion is absolutely without precedent.”

Neilan said the team would petition the court for a rehearing under Supreme Court Rule 367, and he also took issue with giving the witness of “drunken disorderly conduct” the same privilege, even though he didn’t testify to the alleged groping.

In a lengthy news release issued Friday, Dent’s team accused Constellation of concocting the allegations using racially charged language as a pretense for severing the contracts once Dent had connected Constellation to a lucrative energy supplier deal with the NFL Hall of Fame.

Constellation didn’t answer specific questions from Capitol News Illinois, but instead issued a statement.

“We are encouraged by the Illinois Supreme Court’s ruling, which protects the identities of employees who speak up when harassment, intolerance or inappropriate behavior occurs in the workplace,” the statement read. “Constellation is committed to ensuring a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for employees, and we will continue to address behavior that does not meet that standard.”

While the public might never have learned about the allegations had Dent not initiated the legal proceedings, he told Capitol News Illinois in a February phone call that he went forward because he believed he had been defamed as one of the only major Black players in the state’s multi-billion-dollar energy industry. Dent also asserted that he has never been drunk in his life.

Also, on the phone call with Dent and CNI in February was former Waukegan Mayor Sam Cunningham, who said he was with him for the entire timeframe in which the allegations would have occurred and they were both fabricated.

“They chose not to interview him,” Dent said of Constellation’s internal investigation. “We arrived at the event at the same time, and we were together the whole time. I gave them the mayor’s number to reach out to him, but they never reached out to him.”

Constellation separated from its parent company, Exelon Generation, in February after the court already heard the case. While under Exelon’s umbrella in 2020, the companies spent about \$2.7 billion on diversity-certified supplier expenditures.

Dent’s team also suggested there may be a level of intrigue based on Exelon’s well-documented pull within state government, which, they alleged, led to a reading of the petition in a more favorable light for the company.

At the time of the incident Constellation was a subsidiary of Exelon, which also owns Commonwealth Edison, a public utility that admitted in court documents that it participated in a “years-long bribery scheme” aimed at indicted former House speaker Michael Madigan in exchange for favorable legislation.

Chicago Alderman Ed Burke, who has also been indicted on charges of racketeering and bribery, is a partner in the law firm that saved ComEd millions of dollars via property tax appeals – the allegations against Burke, however, don’t relate to ComEd. He’s also the husband of Supreme Court Chief Justice Anne M. Burke, who took no part in the Dent decision.

Burke and Madigan both deny wrongdoing. Justice Michael Burke, who wrote the majority opinion, is not related to Anne or Ed Burke.

Despite the broad intrigue, it was the narrow ruling on Supreme Court Rule 224 which prevented Dent from learning the identity of his accusers.

*Jerry Nowicki is the bureau Chief of Capitol News Illinois, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government that is distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

## Educators Push Back Against Testing Requirements

State board looks to overhaul annual assessments

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Teachers and other education professionals are urging the Illinois State Board of Education to reduce the amount of time students spend on standardized tests each year and to adopt a new testing system that produces more useful information to help teachers improve their instruction.

“One thing that we’re saying and that our members are saying is that we have a testing regime that has gone too far, and is not helping children learn,” Illinois Federation of Teachers president Dan Montgomery said during a virtual news conference Friday.

Under state and federal law, all students in grades 3-8 are tested each year in English language arts and math. They are also tested in science in grades 5, 8 and 11. In Illinois, those tests are known as the Illinois Assessment of Readiness, or IAR, and are taken by students in the spring.

Nationwide testing

mandates are a product of the 2002 federal law known as the No Child Left Behind Act which uses them to hold teachers, schools and districts accountable for meeting state educational standards.

Recently, though, the State Board of Education has considered overhauling its testing system and at one point proposed replacing the single year-end test with three smaller tests that would be given in the fall, winter and spring. The plan also would have given districts the option of testing children in kindergarten through grade 2.

Amid pushback from teachers unions and others, however, ISBE backed away from that plan last year and instead commissioned a survey from the national Center for Assessment to get feedback from teachers, administrators, parents, students and others about ways to improve the state’s testing system.

“We don’t want to just decrease the amount of time of the end-of-the-year test, we want to decrease the amount of testing period,” said Monique Redeaux-Smith, IFT’s director of union professional issues.

The results of that survey were presented to the board April 20. Among the key findings was that many people found the current testing system doesn’t provide much instructionally useful information because the tests are administered in the spring and results aren’t released until the next fall after students have already advanced to another grade.


Many respondents also said too much time is devoted to preparing for and administering tests, taking away from actual classroom instruction.

Many people surveyed also suggested the state could provide more resources to help local districts give interim tests at different times of the year – tests that would be completely separate from the accountability tests given in the spring

Continued on Page 7

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# LEGAL NOTICES

**“THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE” IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

The Bank of New York Mellon (fka The Bank of New York) as Trustee for the holders of American Home Mortgage Investment Trust 2004-4; Plaintiff,

vs. 22 FC 3  
 Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Pamela R. Michaud; Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Gilbert J. Michaud; Prairie Green Homeowners Association; Gidget R. Briesch a/k/a Gidget Briesch a/k/a Gidget Uhlir, Individually and as Trustee of the Gidget R. Briesch Trust; Gilbert Michaud; Gina Moore; Roberta Van Etten; Gidget R. Briesch Trust; William Butcher, as Special Representative for Gilbert J. Michaud and Pamela R. Michaud; Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants; Defendants.

Judge Presiding  
 NOTICE BY PUBLICATION  
 The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you:

-Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Pamela R. Michaud;  
 -Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Gilbert J. Michaud  
 -Prairie Green Homeowners Association  
 -Gidget R. Briesch Trust  
 -Unknown Owners and Non Record Claimants;  
 that Plaintiff has commenced this case in the Circuit Court of Boone County against you and other defendants, for foreclosure of a certain Mortgage lien recorded against the premises described as follows:

LOT SEVENTY-FIVE (75) OF PLAT NO. 2 OF PRAIRIE GREEN OF POPLAR GROVE, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 11 AND PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 12, TOWNSHIP 44 NORTH, RANGE 3 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN AS RECORDED JANUARY 7, 2004 IN PLAT INDEX FILE ENVELOPE 288-A AS DOCUMENT NO. 2004R00200 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE, STATE OF ILLINOIS.

C/K/A: 232 Briarwood Drive, Poplar Grove, IL 61065  
 PIN: 05-12-152-011  
 said Mortgage was given by Pamela R. Michaud and Gilbert J. Michaud, Mortgagor(s), to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., acting solely as nominee for St. Francis Mortgage Corp., Mortgagee, and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Boone County, Illinois, as Document No. 04R12641.

E-Filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <https://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

UNLESS YOU file your appearance or otherwise file your answer in this case in the Office of the Circuit Clerk of Boone County, Boone County Courthouse, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere IL 61008 on or before May 23, 2022, A JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE OR DECREE BY DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED FOR IN THE PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT.

Russell C. Wirbicki (6186310)  
 Christopher J. Irk (6300084)  
 Cory J. Harris (6319221)  
 Tracey M. Coons (6311050)  
 The Wirbicki Law Group LLC  
 Attorney for Plaintiff  
 33 W. Monroe St., Suite 1540  
 Chicago, IL 60603  
 Phone: 312-360-9455  
 W20-0388  
 pleadings.il@wirbickilaw.com  
 I3192798

Published in *The Boone County Journal* April, 21, 28 and May 5, 2022.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
 COUNTY OF BOONE - IN PROBATE

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARION D. HAMPTON, Deceased

PROBATE No. 2022-PR-0004  
**NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION – CLAIM NOTICE**

Notice is given to creditors of the death of MARION D HAMPTON, of Poplar Grove, Illinois. Letters of office were issued on February 16, 2022, to RODNEY HAMPTON, 2194 N. 450TH Road, Sheridan, IL 60551, Independent Executor. Whose attorney for the estate is Attorney MICHAEL R. KONEWKO, KONEWKO & ASSOC., LTD, 29W204 Roosevelt Road, West Chicago, IL 60185.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of PAMELA CODUTO, the Boone County Circuit Clerk-Probate Division at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, IL 61008, or with the legal representatives, or both, on or before October 28, 2022, that date being at least six (6) months from the date of first publication or within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of notice to creditors, if mailing or delivery is required by 755 ILCS 5/18-3 of the Illinois Probate Act, 1975 as amended, whichever date is later. Any claim not filed by the requisite date as stated above shall be barred.

Copies of a claims filed with the Circuit Clerk's Office-Probate Division, must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representative and to his/her attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Michael R. Konewko Attorney for Rodney Hampton, Independent Executor ARDC 3121878

Konewko & Assoc., LTD  
 29W204 Roosevelt Road  
 West Chicago, IL 60185  
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Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 28, May 5, May 12

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

In The Interest of: Tobias McConaughay, minor No. 22-JA-11

JOHN NIELSEN/ To whom it may concern/All unknown natural Fathers ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that on APRIL 18, 2022, a petition was filed under the JUVENILE COURT ACT by Atty. Tricia Smith, State's Attorney, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, in the Circuit Court of Boone County entitled "In the Interest of Tobias McConaughay, minor; and that in the County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, at 2:00 P.M. central daylight time on 5/26/2022; or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, a termination of parental rights will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the Court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THE PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION, YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE

POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHT TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amend petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

Now, unless you appear at the hearing and show cause against the petition, the allegations of the petition may stand admitted as against you and each of you, and an order or judgment entered.

Dated: April 22, 2022  
 Pamela Coduto, CIRCUIT CLERK  
 Published in *The Boone County Journal*; April 28, May 5, 12 - C

On 7/22/21, Illinois State Police seized numerous electronics to include 39 iPads, 7 iPhones, 1 Apple Watch, 1 ROG Strix laptop and 61 gift cards from a traffic stop on I-90 westbound at milepost 22.75 (Boone County). In accordance with 765 ILCS 1030/0.01, contact Illinois State Police Zone 2 at 815-987-7440 if you are the owner and can prove ownership of these items.  
 Published in the Boone County Journal April 28, May 5, May 12

ADOPTION NOTICE  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS  
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
 COUNTY OF BOONE

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE  
 In Re the Matter of the Petition for Adoption of ADRIAN RAMIREZ, a male child, 2022 AD 4

To Yvonne Ramirez and All Whom It May Concern:

TAKE NOTICE that a Petition was filed in the Circuit Court of Boone County, Illinois, for the adoption of a minor child named ADRIAN RAMIREZ.

NOW THEREFORE, unless you, and all whom it may concern, file your answer to the Petition in the action or otherwise file your appearance therein in said Circuit Court of Boone County, in the City of Belvidere, Illinois on or before the 13th day of June, 2022, a default may be entered against you any time after that day and a Judgment entered in accordance with the prayer of said Petition.

Dated: April 21, 2022  
 Clerk of the Circuit Court  
 ZIMMERMAN & WALSH, LLP  
 Attorney Meghan Bolte, #6302434  
 1707 East State Street  
 Rockford, IL 61104  
 Phone: 815-399-1400  
 Fax: 815-399-9440  
 mnb@zimwalsh.com  
 Published in *The Boone County Journal*; April 28, May 5, 12

STATE OF ILLINOIS CIRCUIT COURT BOONE COUNTY  
 PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE (MINOR CHILDREN)

Case No. 22-MR-3

REQUEST OF: MONICA PRIETO-ENRIQUEZ to change name of minor child: Current Name of Minor Child MAURICIO PRIETO-SANCHEZ; Proposed New Name of Minor Child MAURICIO PRIETO-ENRIQUEZ. Court Date information: on June 17, 2022 at 9:30 a.m., Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008 Courtroom #3.

Published in the Boone County Journal 05/05, 05/12, 05/19/2022 - P

# ASSUMED NAMES

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a photography business in said County and State under the name of LIZABETH 815 PHOTOGRAPHY at the following post office address: 115 Chatham Court, Poplar Grove, IL 61065 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Elizabeth Davis, 115 Chatham Court, Poplar Grove, IL 61065; phone # (815) 742-2559.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 26th day of April, A.D. 2022

Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk  
 Published in Boone County Journal 4/28, 5/5, 5/12/22

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a home / office cleaning business in said County and State under the name of HAPPY HOME CLEANING SERVICE at the following post office address: 719 East Lincoln Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Erin Stone, 719 East Lincoln Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone # (815) 978-6130.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 19th day of April, A.D. 2022

Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk  
 Published in Boone County Journal 4/21, 4/18, 5/5/22

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a salon business in said County and State under the name of HERE OR THERE BEAUTY CARE at the following post office address: 302 West Edson Street, Poplar Grove, IL 61065 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Debra Anderson, 302 West Edson Street, Poplar Grove, IL 61065; phone # (815) 209-5078.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 27th day of April, A.D. 2022

Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk  
 Published in Boone County Journal 5/5, 5/12, 5/19/2022

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact an interior design business in said County and State under the name of PARSONS DESIGN COMPANY at the following post office address: 3244 Be Ver Creek Lane, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Ana Parsons, 3244 Be Ver Creek Lane, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone # (815) 520-1955.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 29th day of April, A.D. 2022

Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk  
 Published in Boone County Journal 5/5, 5/12, 5/19/2022

# COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

**First United Methodist Church Grief Share Classes:**

the First United Methodist Church of Belvidere, 610 Bonus Ave., Belvidere. Day sessions starting at (10:00 A.M.- 12:00 P.M.) and evening sessions (6:30 P.M.- 8:30 P.M.). Contact the Church office to sign up at (815) 544-3479.

**Heritage Day's 5K Run:**

The Belvidere Chamber of Commerce is excited to host this beautiful race along the Kishwaukee River Path. The race will start and finish in Doty Park downtown Belvidere. Dogs and strollers are welcome. Please be courteous to runners and stay to the side of the path.

The purpose of this Run/Walk is to provide healthy family fun to the festival weekend. Proceeds from this race will help keep the festival going for years to come.

There will also be a free kids race at 9:00 AM. It will stay within the park and will be approximately 400-500 meters on the circle path in Doty Park. For registration and all other information go to <https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Belvidere/Heritage5K>.

**United Methodist Church Men's Breakfast:**

Saturday, April 30, 2022. 7:00 A.M.-10A.M. Located at the United Methodist Church (610 Bonus Ave., Belvidere).

**Family Freedom Festival:**

Saturday, April 30, 2022, 10 A.M.-4:00 P.M. Located at the VFW Post 1461 (1310 W. Lincoln Ave., Belvidere, IL). Axe throwing, Bouncy house, face painting and crafts.

**2nd Annual Kentucky Derby Cocktail Party:**

And they are off... Come join for hors d'oeuvres, mint juleps, and time with friends to celebrate the day and watch the race. The event will be held, Saturday, May 7, 2022, from 4:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M. Located at The Pavilion at Aldeen Park (1868 Reid Farm Road, Rockford, IL.) Awards will be for best hat, best dressed, and a raffle for a rose bouquet.

Tickets for this exclusive event are \$25 each. Register to attend by calling (815) 544-4357.

**Move More for Better Health:**

No matter your age, everyone can benefit from physical activity. Whether you are looking to prevent or manage a chronic illness or simply want to improve your ability to do everyday activities, this workshop is for you.

University of Illinois Extension Nutrition and Wellness Educator Diane Reinhold will be offering an educational workshop, "Move More for Better Health." This free event on Thursday, May 19, from 1:00 – 3:00 PM, at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau, 210 W Spring St, Freeport. If you cannot make the drive, join us virtually, on Wednesday, May 18, from 1:00 – 3:00 PM. Beat the registration deadline of May 17 and receive your Zoom link to join the presentation virtually or save your spot if attending in person. For more information on this program, or if you need reasonable accommodations to participate, please contact our office at (815) 235-4125, or visit us online at go.illinois/jsw.

**Boone County Master Gardeners are Ready to Answer Your Call:**

Boone County Master Gardeners offers a free service answering garden questions at their

*Continued on page 7*

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Horticulture Help Desk. The Help Desk is open 1-4 p.m., Monday thru Thursday throughout the growing season (April – Sept.) Master Gardeners are volunteers who have trained by University of Illinois Extension educators to provide research-based answers to your home horticulture questions. Topics include insects, trees, shrubs, plants, vegetables, fruits, gardens, lawns, and more. The Master Gardeners can be reached by calling 815-544-3710, emailing in your question to [uiemg-boone@illinois.edu](mailto:uiemg-boone@illinois.edu), or by stopping at the office at 205 Cadillac Court, Suite 3 in Belvidere during help desk hours.

**The Wall That Heals: Vietnam Veterans Memorial:**

The Wall that heals is arriving in Belvidere on Tuesday, May 10 at 2:30 P.M. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Replica Wall and Mobile Education Center spreads healing legacy of The Wall and educates about the impact of the Vietnam War.

The 53-foot trailer carrying the Wall That Heals exhibit, featuring a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. will be escorted through Belvidere to the Fairgrounds by up to one hundred motorcycles, Jeeps and first responders. The exhibit and its escorts will parade through downtown Belvidere at approximately 2:30pm on Tuesday, May 10 via Logan Ave to State St., north to Fairgrounds Rd (Rt 76) to McKinley Ave, arriving at the Fairgrounds about 2:45pm. Everyone is encouraged to come out and welcome this exhibit and its escorts. which will include many area veterans, as they parade through downtown to the Fairgrounds. The Wall will be constructed on Wednesday, May 11 starting at 8:30am with volunteer training at 6:00pm. The Wall will be open 24 hours a day starting at 12:01am Thursday, May 12 and remaining open until Sunday, May 15 at 2:00pm. The Welcome Ceremony will take place at 6:30pm, Thursday, May 12th where the six Vietnam soldiers from Boone County who made the ultimate sacrifice will be honored. An Honor Ceremony where ‘Quilts of Valor’ will be presented to area veterans will take place at 2:00pm, Saturday, May 14. Everyone is welcome to attend these ceremonies.

Group tours are also available Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Great for schools, church groups and area clubs. To reserve your group’s time call Emalee at 815-222-9943. Free admission and plenty of free parking. The exhibit and parking area will be lighted. Volunteers and security will be on hand 24 hours a day.

**Testing**

from page 5

– to help teachers tailor their instruction to meet their students’ immediate needs.

Finally, the report recommended that ISBE take its time and move deliberately before making any major changes to the testing system.

“There is high agreement about the need to improve state assessment, but less consensus about what improvement consists of,” the report stated. “ISBE can play a central role in providing leadership, building up trust, and developing plans that balance moving forward with maintaining needed quality.”

The push toward standardized testing as a way of holding schools accountable grew out of a movement that began decades earlier, known as outcomes-based education – the idea that schools should be graded on the basis of how much students learn rather than the resources that go into them.

That movement got a big boost during the Reagan administration with the publication of a 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, which painted a highly critical picture of the failures of American schools, calling the entire public education system “mediocre” and warning that it was quickly being surpassed by those of other nations.

But the emphasis on testing has long met

resistance from many people within education, particularly teachers unions who have complained that it is unfair – especially to minority and low-income students who are more likely to attend under-resourced schools – and that it detracts from classroom education.

“This is a racist relic of the past,” state Sen. Cristina Pacione-Zayas, D-Chicago, said during the news conference. “Assessments have served to keep groups out of institutions, and we know that the value, the validity in our education system of using these assessments are highly questionable.”

Paul Zavitkovsky, a former teacher and principal who now works at the Center for Urban Education Leadership, said there are testing systems available that would produce more useful information for teachers, but many of them don’t report the results in any meaningful way.

“It looks like what the job of teaching is, is teaching a larger number of discrete skills faster and more effectively,” he said. “And that actually ends up reinforcing exactly the kind of teaching and learning that creates a lot of the opportunity gaps that we actually see out there.”

*Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government and distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

There would be no contempt citations Thursday. But besides the judge, lawyers, administrators, DCFS caseworkers, the Illinois Attorney General and the Cook County Public Guardian’s Office, Capitol News Illinois requested and received permission to listen via Zoom call to the so-called “stuck kids” docket.

Juvenile hearings are closed to the public, but media can attend with special provisions regarding media coverage. A judge granted a reporter access due to the level of media attention and public scrutiny the proceedings have produced amid the contempt findings and fines against Smith.

Lawyers for the children in the docket, which include children locked in psychiatric units beyond their discharge dates and beyond medical necessity, detailed the challenges faced by children with low IQs, psychiatric disabilities, troubled homes, traumatic abuse, lack of resources, lack of placement options.

Cook County Circuit Judge Patrick T. Murphy began the hearing with a direction to the media not to identify the juveniles whose cases were before the court. Capitol News Illinois has used pseudonyms in this report for all juveniles whose cases were heard Thursday.

One of the placements involved 15-year-old Allie. She was taken into care five years ago when DCFS found she had been sexually abused and neglected.

Since then, the girl has been in 16 or 17 placements, including spending days in hospital emergency rooms, sleeping on a cot in the basement of one foster home and being abused at another. She was then sent to a residential care center, then back to foster care where she became disruptive until she was sent to a locked psychiatric facility.

Doctors determined that she was ready to be released on Dec. 6, 2021, but Allie remained behind locked doors in the psychiatric hospital waiting for DCFS to place her. On March 4,

Continued on page 8

**“Stuck Kids” Docket Details Challenges for DCFS Wards in Improper Placements**

By Beth Hundsdorfer Capitol News Illinois

The weekly docket for children who are wards of the state and waiting for placements recommended by the Department of Children and Family Services after an assessment of their needs took place as scheduled Thursday in Cook County.

It’s the docket that has spawned nine contempt of court citations and \$1,000 daily fines against DCFS director Marc Smith for failing to comply with court orders to move the children to appropriate settings, as recommended by DCFS’s own assessments.

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Allie's case was the basis for the sixth contempt citation against Smith.

Whether it was the contempt citation or circumstance, Allie was moved to a specialized foster home on April 11. For a time, it seemed she would settle in. On Easter Sunday, Allie went to visit a friend with the approval of her foster mother. During that visit, an elderly family member with dementia threw bleach on the children, Allie's lawyer Kellen Michuda, of the Cook County Public Guardian's Office, told the judge. Allie was briefly hospitalized.

A few days later, Allie ran away. Michuda told the judge she was concerned Allie was with an adult man.

"I am not in a position to determine how being for months in a place you don't need to be affects your stability. But I would like to note that she has never been a runner," Michuda told the judge.

DCFS lawyer David Fox countered that Allie was in an appropriate specialized foster home with a foster mother who was concerned about her well-being and had gotten Allie a place in a charter school in Chicago.

"We tried to ensure that we wrapped her in services and that everything was in place prior to putting her in this home," said DCFS senior public administrator Jacquelyn Dortch. "So, we made a concerted effort to make it the best appropriate placement for this minor. It seems like she may have had some plans prior to discharge to hook up with folks. I do believe we tried to do everything humanly possible to put her in the best setting."

But Allie had run away, Michuda said, so she was concerned the home wouldn't be the best setting to meet Allie's needs. Michuda asked for two weeks to see if Allie returned home before revisiting the case.

Assistant Attorney General Alex Moe, who represents Smith on the contempt citations, asked Murphy to purge the citation against Smith in Allie's case, stating that DCFS had complied with the previous order and placed Allie in an appropriate setting.

"The fact that she's on the run now is unfortunate but does not change the fact that your orders were satisfied," Moe said.

Murphy denied the request, noting the case and the fine were stayed pending review by the appellate court.

Just before the hearing ended, there was word about Allie. She returned to her foster home. Murphy asked about her. A DCFS worker responded, "She's fine." Allie's next court date is scheduled for May 12.

The court then heard the case of an 11-year-old girl held in a psychiatric hospital for more than a year after doctors cleared her for discharge. She has an IQ of 50. A judge ordered the girl to be removed from the hospital in February and put into residential placement, but she remains in the hospital.

Dortch told the judge that DCFS wanted to conduct another psychological assessment to determine why the child was not improving.

"The kid's got an IQ of 50 and you're locking her up in a psychiatric hospital because the state's closed all the facilities for developmentally delayed kids. And of course, she's flailing out there. You know, from her perspective, she doesn't know what's going on except the fact she's locked up," Murphy responded.

Murphy went on to reference previous testimony given in his courtroom from a DCFS supervisor who stated that once a child is hospitalized beyond medical necessity, Medicaid stops paying.

"So, according to her testimony, hospitalization is \$600 a day for the first month and \$1,000 a day thereafter. In this case, DCFS paid the hospital \$348,000 out of the Illinois taxpayer funds...not federal funds, to keep this kid locked up beyond the date of medical necessity," Murphy said. "You could have bought the Taj Mahal for the cost of this placement. This is bizarre!"

These were two of the cases where Smith faces

contempt citations. Of the other seven, two have been purged. Five are pending, with each of the \$1,000 daily fines stayed in the appellate court.

Public Guardian Charles Golbert has said it's unprecedented for a director of a child protection agency to be held in contempt. He's never seen it in his 30 years handling juvenile cases.

But the details of the children in these cases demonstrate that psychiatric conditions and developmental delays complicate the placement.

Smith and Gov. JB Pritzker have said that the elimination of specialized care during the previous administration has left the agency scrambling to rebuild services.

On Wednesday at an unrelated event in Springfield, Pritzker pointed to increased funding for DCFS and progress at the agency's tip hotline which has a 99 percent answer rate compared to 50 percent when he took office.

"Five hundred beds were let go under the prior governor," Pritzker said. "You can't snap your fingers and put those back. It takes years to build back residential beds for these kids. So when kids are having to lag longer than they should in psychiatric hospitals where they may have started out because they have severe mental health challenges... that's not something any of us likes. But it is something we've been working on steadily to improve."

Pritzker has said accepting Smith's resignation would not solve any problems.

DCFS has also faced scrutiny since December after at least five children died after contact with the state's child protection agency. They are Damari Perry, 6, of North Chicago; Sophia Faye Davis, 1, of Dawson; Zaraz Walker, 1, of Bloomington; and Tamsin Miracle Sauer, 3, of Nelson.

And DCFS investigator Deidre Silas was murdered earlier this year while checking on the welfare of children at a Sangamon County home.

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## Pritzker Signs Bills Aimed at Easing Teacher Shortage Amid Data Suggesting Progress

*Statewide vacancy rate was 1.5 percent in 2021, according to ISBE*

*By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois*

Gov. JB Pritzker signed a package of bills Wednesday aimed at easing the state's shortage of teachers and other education professionals, even as a new report shows Illinois just added a record number of new teachers to its ranks.

Speaking in the library of Springfield High School just blocks from the Capitol, Pritzker said that while the education workforce picture is improving, more work still needs to be done.

"In Illinois, schools still have more than 2,100 unfilled teaching positions statewide," he said. "That includes 15 unfilled teaching slots here in Springfield and 64 in Decatur, with similar need for paraprofessional positions. With new tools though, and new funding at their disposal, districts all across the state are working to find new ways to bring people into this profession and to encourage them to stay there."

Pritzker signed four bills Wednesday, including House Bill 4246, which lowers the cost of renewing a lapsed educator license to \$50 instead of \$500; House Bill 4798, allowing currently enrolled teaching

students with at least 90 credit hours to be licensed as substitute teachers; Senate Bill 3988, lowering the minimum age to become a paraprofessional in grades eight or below to 18 instead of 19; and Senate Bill 3907, allowing short-term substitute teachers to teach up to 15 consecutive days in a classroom instead of just five.

Those bills come on top of numerous other measures the state has taken in recent years to lure more people into the teaching profession.

Pritzker noted that the budget bill he signed into law April 19 increases funding for minority teacher scholarships to \$4.2 million. And starting next year, the minimum annual salary for first-year teachers will increase to \$40,000 due to a bill he signed in 2019.

"That law, combined with proper funding and all the work to remove barriers for qualified people to enter this profession, is increasing the ranks of teachers across our state even now," Pritzker said.

According to a new report from the Illinois State Board of Education, those efforts appear to be having an impact.

ISBE's most recent Unfilled Positions Survey, released April 21, shows Illinois schools hired a record 5,676 new teachers in the fall of 2021, the most ever recorded in a single year and more than in the past five years combined. That was enough to lower the statewide vacancy rate to just 1.5 percent.

But the survey also showed schools in Illinois still have more than 2,100 unfilled teaching positions, mostly concentrated in chronically struggling schools, underfunded schools and those serving low-income communities.

"Our low-income, bilingual and special education students have the least access to the teachers they need to grow and thrive," State Superintendent Carmen Ayala said at the news conference. "We also have a severe shortage of substitute teachers, as was noted, and need an additional 2,400 paraprofessionals to fully meet our students' needs in the classrooms."

A survey conducted in 2021 by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools found 88 percent of local school districts believed they had a teacher shortage problem while 96 percent reported problems finding enough substitute teachers.

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