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Humanitarian President Jimmy Carter Remembered

By David Larson

President Jimmy Carter, an American politician and humanitarian, served as the 39th president of the United States from 1977 to 1981. He served as the 76th governor of Georgia from 1971 to 1975, and the Georgia State Senate from 1963 to 1967. He was the longest-lived president in U.S. history, reaching the age of 100. He married Rosalynn Smith, and they worked closely together throughout their lives. Opposing racial segregation, the Carters supported the growing civil rights movement and became activists within the Democratic Party.

Born and raised in Plains, Georgia, Carter graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in 1946. He graduated 60th out of 821 midshipmen and was commissioned as an ensign. In 1948, he began officer training for submarine duty. Carter was promoted to lieutenant junior grade in 1949, and his service included a simulated war patrol in the western Pacific and along the Chinese coast from January to March of that year.

In 1951, Carter was qualified for command, and served in several positions, including executive officer. In 1952, Carter began an association with the Navy's fledgling nuclear submarine program, led by Hyman G. Rickover. Rickover had high standards and demands for his men and machines, and Carter later said that, next to his parents, Rickover had the greatest influence on his life.

On December 12, 1952, an accident with the experimental NRX reactor at Atomic Energy of Canada's Chalk River Laboratories caused a partial meltdown, resulting in millions of liters of radioactive water flooding the reactor building's basement. This left the reactor's core ruined. Carter was sent to Chalk River to lead a U.S. maintenance crew that joined other American and Canadian service personnel to assist in the shutdown of the reactor. Carter's military awards include the American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, China Service Medal, and National Defense Service Medal. As a submarine officer, he also earned the "dolphin" badge.

In March 1953, Carter began a six-month course in nuclear power plant operation at Union College in Schenectady, New York. His intent was to eventually work aboard USS Seawolf, which was intended to be the second U.S. nuclear submarine. Carter's plans changed when his father died of pancreatic cancer in July, two months before construction of Seawolf began. Carter obtained a release from active duty so he could take over the family peanut business. Although their peanut business barely broke even in the first year, the Carters grew the business and became quite successful.

In his 1963 run for the Georgia Senate, early counting of the ballots in the primary election showed Carter trailing his opponent, Homer Moore, which was later proven to be the result of

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James Earl Carter Jr. (October 1, 1924 – December 29, 2024)

State Could Adopt 'Kin-First' Approach To Foster Care

*Measure passed Senate unanimously,
awaits House action*

By Amalia Huot-Marchand
Medill Illinois News Bureau
For Capitol News Illinois

Illinois lawmakers could soon make it easier for children in foster care to live with their relatives or other people close to them.

Child welfare experts have long touted the benefits of foster children staying with kin. Advocates say those arrangements offer children more stability, decrease the trauma they experience, improve their mental health and reduce the number of times the child is moved from home to home.

But both state and federal law often made those placements impractical. To get paid to support the children, relatives had to follow the same stringent rules that apply to other foster parents. They go through a rigid home inspection with bedroom size requirements, as well as restrictions on the number of people and gender of individuals who can sleep in the same bedroom. Prospective parents also go through lengthy classroom training.

In 2023, though, the federal government decided to allow states to use separate standards for relatives of children in foster care than for other foster parents, in an effort to pair more children with relatives.

Now, Illinois lawmakers are moving forward with a plan to do just that, along with making

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Madigan to Take Witness Stand in His Corruption Trial

*Unexpected move could lengthen
longtime House speaker's case by weeks*

By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois

Former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan will take the witness stand in his corruption trial – an unexpected revelation that will likely stretch the already lengthy trial into late January.

The longtime House speaker's decision to testify is a risk, but it's also a surprise, given the quiet demeanor that was emblematic of his five decades in Springfield, including 36 years as the longest-serving legislative leader in the country.

Madigan faces 23 counts in a case that frames his power in government, politics and as a partner in his law firm as a "criminal enterprise" meant to maintain and increase his power and enrich his allies. His co-defendant, longtime Springfield lobbyist Mike McClain, is accused on six related counts. Before the holiday break, McClain waived his own right to testify.

Prosecutors rested their case the week before Christmas after calling 50 witnesses and playing for the jury more than 150 wiretapped phone calls and videos secretly recorded by FBI cooperators. Attorneys had just finished questioning the eighth defense witness on Tuesday morning before the parties discussed a matter during a sidebar.

When U.S. District Judge John Blakey returned to the courtroom after a post-sidebar recess to his chambers, he asked Madigan if he could approach

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Master Gardener Training in Boone County

Press Release

The mission of the Illinois Master Gardener program is "Helping Others Learn to Grow." If gardening is your passion, and you would like to be a part of a team that educates youth and adults alike on the joys of gardening, then consider taking the next step by joining the Master Gardeners in 2025.

University of Illinois Extension in Boone County will be offering the Master Gardener training this spring. The training will consist of eight sessions held on select Thursday nights beginning March 13 through June 12 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. and held at the Boone County Extension Meeting Room, 205 Cadillac Ct., Suite 5, Belvidere. A couple of field trips may be planned with dates and locations still to be determined.

This course is aimed at exposing participants to in-depth horticulture content with topics such as botany, soils and fertilizers, entomology, lawns, fruits, vegetables and more. To allow participants more flexibility during this training, we will be using a flipped classroom style. Each week, participants will be given a reading assignment and videos to watch related to the topic to complete before each session. There will also be quizzes on the topics learned.



University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Series

After receiving training, volunteers participate in providing educational programs in the community. Volunteer opportunities may include speaking at garden clubs, libraries, or schools; answering calls or emails at the horticulture help desk; working with youth and adults in community gardens and establishing demonstration gardens that serve as educational tools.

The cost of the training is \$200 and includes the Master Gardener manual with helpful resources and other materials. Preregistration is required and limited to 20 people. The deadline to register is February 20.

If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener and would like to register to attend the training or learn more about it, please contact Judy Hodge, Program Coordinator, at 815-544-3710, hodg@illinois.edu, or online at go.illinois.edu/2025MGTrainingBOONE

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, contact Judy Hodge. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting participant needs.

verdict in La Schiazza's case, which ended a few weeks before Madigan's trial began five floors down in Chicago's Dirksen Federal Courthouse.

La Schiazza is accused of bribing Madigan with a nine-month, \$22,500 contract in 2017 for his ally, former state Rep. Eddie Acevedo. In exchange, the feds allege, Madigan paved the way for AT&T's biggest legislative priority: relief from a 1930s-era regulation that obligated the company to maintain its expensive and aging copper landline network.

During La Schiazza's four-day trial, the jury heard from more than a dozen witnesses, including two former AT&T Illinois lobbyists who testified that Acevedo wasn't a desirable hire. Newly retired from

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OBITUARIES

- Paul Blair, 81, Belvidere, Jan. 6
- James Burns Sr., 72, Belvidere, Dec. 27
- Norman Daschner, 87, Marengo, Dec. 28
- Leroy Gresser, 88, Belvidere, Jan. 4
- Carl Mitchell, 84, Belvidere, Dec. 23
- Shirley Nordman, 87, Belvidere, Jan. 3
- Howard Pearson, 83, Belvidere, Jan. 2
- Anthony Stumpf, 54, Belvidere, Dec. 31
- Dennis Wilkins, 80, Belvidere, Dec. 31
- Tony Ziegelbauer, 66, Belvidere, Dec. 17



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Each week, the Journal seeks to present a variety of voices.

Letters. Every attempt will be made to print all letters received with the exception of those that are libelous or obscene. Letters should be signed and include an ID or phone number, so that we can contact the author prior to publication to verify authenticity.

Guest columns. Community leaders are encouraged to submit guest columns consistent with our editorial guidelines for possible inclusion in the Journal.

Opinions. The opinions expressed in the Journal are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Boone County Journal management or ownership.

Judge Won't Acquit Former AT&T Illinois Boss in Madigan Bribery Case After Hung Jury

Paul La Schiazza ruling filed as Madigan trial winds down around same episode

By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois

A federal judge on Thursday declined to acquit former AT&T Illinois president Paul La Schiazza after his September trial on charges that he bribed ex-Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan ended in a hung jury.

U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman was forced to declare a mistrial after jurors failed to reach a

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR


Belvidere Voters

The last four years of leadership under Mayor Clint Morris speaks for itself. The City of Belvidere has seen more industrial growth and development cooperation than in the years past. Our city streets are being repaired and look great.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From the Mouths of Babes

By Paula Coulahan

Here we are again. Right up the road in Madison, Wisconsin a community is lighting candles and attempting to heal in the aftermath of yet another school shooting in America.

The second part of the definition of insanity in Webster's online is "extreme foolishness or irrationality." I would argue that this is what America is suffering from when it comes to addressing gun violence. Guns always win out over people.

There were 83 school shootings in the U.S. in 2024. Gun violence is the leading cause of death in children in the "richest" country on earth. We must have our guns, so some people's children, and some adults, are taken away never to return home. As a country, we are in a cycle of outrage followed by rapid forgetting.

When common sense gun law advocates speak out, they are taunted by those who are afraid of losing their Second Amendment rights. So I will say it again, as I have many times in the last two decades. We're not coming for your handguns. Most common sense gun law advocates want, first and foremost, to see the Assault Weapons Ban of 1994 reinstated. Again, statistics show that mass shootings declined significantly when this ban was in place. If you want to know the truth about the toll of gun violence in America, spend some time looking at the Gun Violence Archive (www.gunviolencearchive.org). I have followed it for years and, believe me, it will provide you with some sobering minutes in your life.

The gun used in the Madison shooting was a handgun. According to a statement by the Madison Police Department, no information can currently be released regarding how the weapon was obtained because it could jeopardize the investigation.

While we don't know the true origin of that weapon at the time of this writing, it is still paramount that families lock handguns up, pay attention to the mental health of family members, and check in on the social media interactions of children. In this case, the 15 year old shooter was apparently in contact with a man in California who was allegedly planning his own attack. There was an arrest in San Diego and "questions about that are being directed to the FBI." (www.cityofmadison.com).

As an educator, I have the distinct privilege of hearing the words that come from children's hearts and minds, especially when I am teaching about literature or writing. It is a gift, and sometimes it is an eye opener.

Recently, one of my fifth grade students was writing a piece about the importance of reading and libraries. He wanted to tell why reading history is important. I questioned him for a while and finally, he produced the answer that both he, and I knew was the right answer. He said that it is important to study history so that "we don't repeat the same things over again." Yes. That was a high-five.

Last fall, I was listening to my fifth grade reading group discuss a novel, set in Manhattan. The passage they discussed talked about a bell that rang on the door of a business as people entered the store. They seemed unfamiliar with this old-school concept so I asked why a business would have such a bell on the door. Without hesitation, one of my students said, "So they would know if a shooter was coming in."

This is the world children live in. When will America put people before guns?

Paula Coulahan is a journalist and educator in Rockford, Illinois. She belongs to Moms Demand Action/Every Town for Gun Safety, United Against Hate, and Teachers for Social Justice.



Four years ago this week Americans witnessed live in color in the safety of their living rooms a mob breaking into the Capital. A failed attempt to halt a Constitutional procedure and hang the Vice President rioters led by President Trump believed the falsehood that the 2020 election was rigged. photo by Reuters

Task Force Recommends Tornado Shelters in Warehouse Following Deadly 2021 Storm

6 people were killed when tornado hit Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

A task force created in the wake of a deadly Metro East tornado has issued recommendations

for better protecting warehouse workers.

Six people were killed when an EF3 tornado with 150 mph winds struck an Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville on Dec. 10, 2021. The incident raised questions about the safety of warehouses in severe weather, including if warehouses are designed to withstand extreme winds and if warehouse operators are properly prepared for severe weather.

Illinois lawmakers established the Warehouse Safety Standards Task Force in January 2023 to study warehouse safety in response to the Edwardsville tornado, and it issued its final report last month.

Among its recommendations was that building codes be amended to require tornado shelters in warehouses. The International Building

Code became Illinois' statewide building code on Jan. 1 after being approved by the legislature in 2023. The task force recommended shelters be added to that code.

The IBC doesn't have specific requirements for severe weather because threats vary around the world, Tim Schmitz from the International Code Council told the task force. However, communities can adopt their own codes specifically to meet the needs of natural disasters in their area.

Providing the right shelter from tornadoes can save lives, Greg Bryant from the Masonry Structural Coalition told the task force. He pointed

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Carter**from page 1**

fraudulent voting. Carter challenged the election result. An investigation confirmed that the results were fraudulent. Another election was held; Carter won against Moore as the sole Democratic candidate, with a vote margin of 3,013 to 2,182.

The civil rights movement was well underway when Carter became a Georgia senator. He and his family had become staunch supporters of John F. Kennedy. Carter remained relatively quiet on the issue at first, even as it polarized much of the county, to avoid alienating his segregationist colleagues. Carter did speak up on a few divisive issues, giving speeches against literacy tests and against an amendment to the Georgia Constitution that he felt implied a compulsion to practice religion.

Carter was reelected to a second two-year term in the state Senate, where he chaired its Education Committee and sat on the Appropriations Committee toward the end of the term. He contributed to a bill expanding statewide education funding and getting Georgia Southwestern State University a four-year program. He leveraged his regional planning work, giving speeches around the district to make himself more visible to potential voters. On the last day of the term, Carter announced his candidacy for the US House of Representatives, but changed his mind, deciding to run for governor in 1966. Lester Maddox, the conservative segregationist, won. In 1970 Carter won the office of Georgia Governor.

In the 1970 gubernatorial election, liberal former governor Carl Sanders became Carter's main opponent in the Democratic primary. Throughout his campaign, Carter sought both the black vote and the votes of those who had supported prominent Alabama segregationist George Wallace. While he met with black figures such as Martin Luther King Sr. and Andrew Young and visited many black-owned businesses, he also praised George Wallace and promised to invite him to give a speech in Georgia. Carter's appeal to racism became more blatant over time, with his senior campaign aides handing out a photograph of Sanders celebrating with Black basketball players.

Despite his early support for civil rights, Carter's appeal to racism grew, and he criticized Sanders for supporting Martin Luther King Jr. Carter won the election. Once elected, Carter changed his tone and began to speak against Georgia's racist politics. Leroy Johnson, a black state senator, voiced his support for Carter: "I understand why he ran that kind of ultra-conservative campaign. I don't believe you can win this state without being a racist."

On his second day as President, of the United States of America in 1977, Carter pardoned all Vietnam War draft evaders in 1977. He created a national energy policy that included conservation, price control, and new technologies. Carter successfully pursued the Camp David Accord, the Panama Canal Treaty, and the second round of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. He also confronted stagflation. He signed into law bills that established the United States Department of Energy and the United States Department of Education. The last two years of Carter's presidency were marked by the Iran hostage crisis and an energy crisis due to the Iranian Revolution, the Three Mile Island accident, the establishment of diplomatic relations with China, the Nicaraguan Revolution, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In response to the invasion, he escalated the Cold War by ending détente, imposed a grain embargo against the Soviets, and leading the multinational boycott of the 1980 Summer

Olympics in Moscow. He enunciated the Carter Doctrine, which stated that the United States would use military force, if necessary, to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf. Carter was known and universally admired in his post-presidency. After leaving the presidency, Carter established the Carter Center to promote and expand human rights and received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. He traveled extensively to conduct peace negotiations, monitor elections, and further the eradication of infectious diseases. Carter was a key figure in the nonprofit housing organization Habitat for Humanity. He also wrote numerous books, ranging from political memoirs to poetry, while continuing to comment on global affairs. Two of his books are about the Israeli Palestinian conflict. President Biden declared January 9, 2025 as a national day of mourning.

Foster Care**from page 1**

other changes that will encourage the placement of children with relatives. The Illinois Senate unanimously approved the measure, known as the Kinship in Demand, or KIND Act, in the fall. But the House must sign off on the changes by the time it adjourns in early January, otherwise the bill must go through the entire legislative process again to reach the governor's desk.

"I think it's really important that we reckon with how unjust our systems have been in foster care," said state Sen. Mike Simmons, D-Chicago, one of the bill's 15 co-sponsors in the upper chamber. "It's an excellent step forward in terms of respecting the integrity of the families these kids come from, that includes their immediate family but also their extended kin that love them."

Illinois' record

Close to 10,000 children – or more than half of the total number of kids in the care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services – live with family members.

But more than 60% of those families are not eligible for monthly foster care payments, annual clothing vouchers, or foster care support groups according to the ACLU of Illinois.

"Support for kin, for relatives who have not received the same kind of support that foster parents do, for example – I'm talking about monetary support – I think is a very important component of dealing with the amount of time a child spends in the custody of DCFS. We want to make sure they get back to a home environment as fast as they can, and this is a way to encourage that," said Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, a Democrat, in a news conference on Dec. 11.

Casey Family Programs, the nation's largest foundation focused on foster care, states that prioritizing relative caregivers decreases sibling separation, reduces the risk of abuse and gives a higher chance of achieving permanency.

Placing foster children with relatives could also help Illinois do a better job in finding permanent homes for children in its care. Illinois' foster care system ranked in the bottom third of states in 2019 for children placed in permanent homes, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Between 2017 and 2021, the number of children who were placed in a permanent home decreased by 7.8%, according to the 2021 Child Welfare Outcomes Report to Congress.

KIND Act's changes

The KIND Act would allow DCFS to pursue additional federal funding in order to apply a kin-first approach. DCFS would use the federal money to put more effort into finding families of foster children, notifying them and improving support services, as

well as doing background and identity checks.

"By promoting kinship care and addressing systemic issues with a long length of time to permanency and insufficient support of foster care, the KIND Act aims to improve safety, stability and the well-being of children in DCFS care," state Sen. Mattie Hunter, D-Chicago, a primary sponsor of the bill, said during a November Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.

Payments for relatives particularly impact Black children, who are overrepresented in the foster care system.

In Illinois, as of October, more than 18,000 children were in the DCFS system; more than 8,000 of them were Black. In terms of proportional representation, Black children have a 250% higher chance of being placed in DCFS care, according to the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

The poverty rate for Black Illinoisans is 27.7% compared to 8.5% for white Illinoisians. Preventing these families from accessing government subsidies for foster care adds on additional hardships and repeats the cycle of poverty they face, according to the University of Alabama Institute for Human Rights.

"We know that the vast majority of kids who are coming in are overrepresented, and the KIND Act is removing financial barriers for relatives being able to care for kids," said Nora Collins-Mandeville, director of systems reform policy at the ACLU of Illinois, in an interview.

"Relatives who are coming forward have considerably less resources than a foster parent would. And so the fact that we're not even, in our current system, paying those relatives the same amount that we pay a stranger to care for a child, it's pretty frustrating," she said.

Under the KIND Act, there would also be a different criminal background criteria for relatives and foster parents. The federal government allows DCFS to waive "non-safety-related licensing" for relative caregivers on a case-by-case basis. Relatives would be subject to a personal analysis assessing their criminal record and its potential impact on the child. The bill would allow DCFS to consider, for example, the overrepresentation of minorities in the prison system, especially for minor drug felonies.

The foster care legislation would also require courts to oversee DCFS' implementation of the kin-first approach. Courts would have a larger role in family-finding efforts like monitoring whether DCFS complies with notifying relatives that a child has been removed from its parents' custody within 30 days. Plus, courts would be able to expedite emergency placements of children with relatives who are waiting for a custody hearing.

Contentious history

The bill's sponsors called the measure historic because of the collaboration between DCFS and the ACLU, which have long fought each other over the state's care of foster children. In 1988, the ACLU sued DCFS in *B.H. v. Johnson*. Three years later, both parties entered a consent decree to reform DCFS to provide safer homes, reduce the caseload per employee, protect DCFS funding, allow more supervision and accountability, and improve

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Foster Care

from page 4

caseworker training.

These efforts ran into severe obstacles through the years.

A two-year budget stalemate between Democrats in the General Assembly and Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner that ended in 2017 had a major impact on DCFS funding. It forced the agency to close many group homes throughout Illinois. This led to children under DCFS care being housed in places not designed to accommodate children in the long-term, including psychiatric hospitals, juvenile detention centers and shelters and even DCFS offices.

Since then, DCFS struggled to recover from the loss of funds in 2017 and hasn't implemented changes spelled out in the consent decree.

In light of those shortcomings, in 2018, the court appointed a special master to DCFS in order to ensure significant action was taken and to mitigate tensions between the ACLU and DCFS,

Pritzker, who defeated Rauner in the 2018 election, campaigned on the promise to reform the system. Since 2019, the DCFS budget nearly doubled from \$1.22 billion to \$2.03 billion, mostly to hire more staff and caseworkers. Despite these improvements, a Cook County judge continuously held DCFS director Marc Smith in contempt of court in 2022 for failing to find adequate placements for foster care children, some of whom were still residing in psychiatric hospitals. An appellate court later vacated the contempt citations, and Smith stepped down at the end of 2023. He was the 13th DCFS director in 10 years.

"For a good period of time, there wasn't stability in the agency's leadership at all. We had turnover every year. It wasn't up until the Pritzker administration that we had a director there for multiple years. And so that can be really challenging. You have different priorities for every leader who comes in," Collins-Mandeville said.

Despite the turnover at the top and the agency's ongoing court battles, DCFS reduced the number of youths in care from 50,000 in 1995 to 16,000 in 2023. The number, however, has risen in the past year to 18,000.

"Today marks a day that we had long hoped to see: the ACLU and DCFS are in alignment on a piece of landmark legislation that offers an essential opportunity to reform Illinois' foster care system," Collins-Mandeville said in her testimony to the Senate committee.

Amalia Huot-Marchand is a graduate student in journalism with Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, and a Fellow in its Medill Illinois News Bureau working in partnership with Capitol News Illinois.

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.

AT&T

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the Illinois House after a 20-year career, Acevedo had a reputation for being inflammatory and allegedly drinking to excess in Springfield.

But in February 2017, veteran Statehouse lobbyist Mike McClain, who was known around the Capitol to be an "agent" of Madigan, asked an AT&T executive if there was "even a small contract for Eddie Acevedo?"

Hours prior to that email, AT&T's leadership team had gotten good news: Madigan had agreed to sit down with La Schiazza and members of organized labor to talk about their legislation. And two days later, La Schiazza got even more good news on a call from McClain, who told him the speaker had assigned AT&T's legislation as a "special project."

In his 35-page opinion, Gettleman acknowledged that prosecutors "offered no direct evidence that Madigan was aware of McClain's ask." But, he wrote, "a reasonable juror could easily rely on the circumstantial evidence presented at trial to conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that Madigan was aware of and directed the request."

Gettleman said the timing of Acevedo's contract, which was finally inked in late April 2017, was key to AT&T's passage of legislation getting the company out from under the decades-old "Carrier of Last Resort," or COLR, regulations.

"Looking at a wider timeframe, the evidence shows that COLR relief legislation had failed for over seven years, and finally passed after defendant responded to McClain's request to hire Acevedo," Gettleman wrote.

Zooming in on the sequence of events during the spring of 2017, Gettleman wrote, is further proof of a "quid pro quo" understanding – something that would be necessary to prove intent of bribery. The judge focused on an email La Schiazza sent to his colleagues in late March asking about the contract for Acevedo after indicating he'd gotten a call from McClain.

"Somehow I thought we had this in progress??" La Schiazza wrote.

Gettleman referred to prosecutors' presentation of cell phone records, which showed a 23-minute call between La Schiazza and McClain before the timestamp on the email.

"Defendant's immediate attention to the Acevedo contract after receiving a call from McClain in late March bolsters the inference that defendant understood himself to be engaging in a quid pro quo," Gettleman wrote.

La Schiazza's attorneys argued he and his fellow AT&T executives were just trying to build goodwill with the speaker and "not rock the boat" by complying with the request for the "small contract" for Acevedo.

And while former AT&T lobbyist Steve Selcke said multiple times during his time on the witness stand that he didn't believe Acevedo's contract was meant as a bribe, Gettleman wrote that Selcke's testimony actually helped both the defense and the prosecution.

Gettleman happened to file his ruling as prosecutors in the trial against Madigan and

McClain are presenting evidence about the alleged AT&T bribery before resting their case early next week. La Schiazza's attorneys attended Madigan's trial Tuesday and Wednesday this week before a long weekend break.

Defense attorneys this week unsuccessfully argued that prosecutors should've been barred from presenting emails involving Selcke after they decided not to call him in this trial. Selcke could be called in the defense's case after Madigan's legal team subpoenaed him this week. His attorneys also attended trial this week.

La Schiazza now lives on the East Coast but court records show his presence at Thursday's hearing has not been waived. If he is forced to fly into Chicago, he'll have already missed testimony from former AT&T contract lobbyist Tom Cullen, who said in court he agreed to be an intermediary for Acevedo's payments in 2017.

La Schiazza is also unlikely to cross paths with Acevedo after he was ordered to testify over objections from his lawyer and defense attorneys about his dementia diagnosis. He's scheduled to testify on Monday.

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Former Madigan Aide Testifies Speaker Had Conflict of Interest Protocols

Ex-speaker's longtime law partner to testify Tuesday

By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois

After more than two weeks off from the federal corruption trial of former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, the jury returned to the courtroom Monday for what's expected to be the final few days of defense witnesses before closing arguments.

Attorneys for Madigan and his co-defendant, longtime Springfield lobbyist Mike McClain, have called several witnesses that had already been called by the government in a series of related trials in the leadup to Madigan's. On Monday, that included Craig Willert, a former top staffer in the speaker's office. Earlier in trial, his voice was projected into the courtroom on the other end of a wiretapped call with McClain, who explained that his lobbying success was due to considering Madigan his client.

The feds then called Willert's mentor, longtime Madigan aide Will Cousineau, to the stand for hours of questioning, including about the lead-up to a late 2016 vote on the Future Energy Jobs Act. FEJA is one of the key bills the feds allege passed through Springfield as a result of electric utility Commonwealth Edison's alleged bribes in the form of jobs and contracts to the speaker's allies.

In late October, Cousineau testified that he'd informed Madigan that the bill, which top House Democratic lawyers had been negotiating for months, did not have enough support to pass. In response, Cousineau said Madigan instructed him to "work the bill."

But Willert's recollection of the weeks leading

Continued on Page 6

The Journal

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BOONE COUNTY JOURNAL
1996

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT FOR BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS - CHANCERY DIVISION
CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC, Plaintiff,
 vs. **Case No.: 2024FC49**
BRIAN MIELKE; LOUIS MIELKE; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; FOUNDATION FINANCE COMPANY LLC; ASMC SERVICING LTD.; FIRST NORTHERN CREDIT UNION; MV REALTY OF ILLINOIS, LLC; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants.

Property Address:
220 Beacon Dr, Belvidere, IL 61008
NOTICE BY PUBLICATION
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING,
BRIAN MIELKE
LOUIS MIELKE

defendants, that this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, asking for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to wit:

LOT EIGHT (8) IN BLOCK TWO (2) AS DESIGNATED UPON THE PLAT OF BIESTER'S THIRD SUBDIVISION, BEING A PART OF LOT 4 OF PROSPECT HILL SUBDIVISION, THE PLAT OF WHICH FIRST NAMED SUBDIVISION IS RECORDED IN BOOK 4 OF PLATS ON PAGE 30 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as: 220 Beacon Dr, Belvidere, IL 61008
 Names of the titleholders of record: BRIAN MIELKE; LOUIS MIELKE.

Date of the Mortgage: September 30, 2008.
 Name or names of the mortgagors: BRIAN MIELKE; LOUIS MIELKE.

Name of the mortgagee: GSF Mortgage Corp..
 Date and place of recording: October 1, 2008; Office of the Recorder of the Deeds of Boone County, Illinois.

Identification of recording: Document No. 2008R08245.
 NOW THEREFORE, unless you file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case, on or before January 25, 2025, A JUDGMENT OR DECREE BY DEFAULT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED IN THE COMPLAINT.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exceptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://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://illinoiscourts.gov/self-help> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org. For information about defending yourself in a court case (including filing an appearance or fee waiver), or to apply for free legal help, go to www.illinoislegalaid.org. You can also ask your local circuit clerk's office for a fee waiver application.

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Lender Legal PLLC
 1800 Pembroke Drive, Suite 250
 Orlando, Florida 32810
 Tel: (407) 730-4644
 Service Emails:
cwinters@lenderlegal.com
EService@LenderLegal.com
 LLS13560-IL - MIELKE
 s/ Colin Winters, Esq.
 Colin Winters, Esq.
 Counsel of Record for Plaintiff
 ARDC # 6297980
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Dec 26, Jan 2, 9, 2025

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, 601 NORTH MAIN STREET, BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS
ESTATE OF Shannon Beard, DECEASED. 24 PR 53

Notice is given to creditors of the death of the above named decedent. Letters of office were issued to Ashley Varchetto, 50 Yorktown Shopping Center, Apt. 378, Lombard, Illinois 60148, as Independent Executor, whose attorney of record is Peter M. Brady, Peck Ritchey, LLC, 321 South Plymouth Court, 6th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60604.

The estate will be administered without court supervision, unless under section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (Ill. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, par. 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed with the clerk or with the representative, or both, on or before July 2, 2025, or, if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

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 <http://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>.

Peter M. Brady
 Peck Ritchey, LLC
 321 South Plymouth Court, 6th Floor
 Chicago, Illinois 60604
 (312)201-0900
 13258138
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 2, 9, 16, 2025

Early Voting Hours

Early Voting for the February 25, 2025, Consolidated Primary Election will begin on Thursday, January 16, 2025, and end Monday, February 24, 2025. Early Voting for Boone County residents will be conducted at the Boone County Clerk's Office, 1212 Logan Ave, Suite 103, Belvidere, IL 61008. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30AM to 5:00PM. The office will also be open on Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 9:00AM to 12:00PM. Please note: The office will be closed on Monday, February 17, 2025, in observance of President's Day.

For more information about Early Voting, please contact the Boone County Clerk's Office at 815-544-3103.

Laura Bettis
 Chief Deputy Clerk
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 9 thru Feb 20th

Pursuant to the Illinois Self-Service Storage Facility Act, notice is hereby given that the storage facility listed below will sell at public auction the personal property in the below listed occupants' leased spaces to satisfy the owner's lien. The personal property stored therein by the following occupants may include but is not limited to general household, office and personal items, furniture, boxes, clothes, and appliances. The unit will be sold at public auction through online auction services of <https://www.storageauctions.com> with bids opening at 10:00 AM on 01/09/2025 and closing at 10:00 AM on 01/23/2025. Strovo Management LLC d/b/a Belvidere Storage, 810 W. Locust Street, Belvidere, IL. 61008 Phone (815) 337-7398

Unit # 63 Christopher Morgan
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 9 and 16th.

Mechanic's Lien Chapter 770 50/1-50/6
 Notice is hereby given that on March 16, 2025 at 8:30 am a sale will be held at:

EJR Technologies
 740 W. Locust Street
 Belvidere IL 61008

to sell the following article(s) for enforce a lien existing under the laws of the State of Illinois against such articles for labor, services, skill or material expanded upon or storage furnished for such article(s) at the request of the following designated person(s), unless such article(s) is/ are redeemed within thirty (30) days of the publication of this notice:

Name of the person(s) has until March 15, 2025 to pay the bill in full to avoid auction.

Name of Person(s):
 Will Ford
 20 Marigold Lane
 Algonquin, IL 60102

DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLE:
 2004 Yamaha Vin# YAMA3564B404 Serial# A3564 Trailer
 Lic Plate : FL J73-KNC

The amount of the lien is \$500.00 as of December 31, 2024.
 For further information contact:

EJR Technologies
 740 W. Locust Street
 Belvidere IL 61008
 815-323-5170

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 9 and 16th.

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
 STATE OF ILLINOIS
 BOONE COUNTY IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Ma Calderon Zarate, Plaintiff
 V. **Case No. 2024-DN-53**
Joel Huerta Parra, Defendant TO: JOEL HUERTA PARRA,

TAKE NOTICE that a Complaint has been filed in the above case in the Circuit Court of Boone County, Illinois. The relief sought is an Absolute Divorce by the Plaintiff, Ma Calderon Zarate.

You are required to file a response to this Complaint no later than January 24th, 2025 which is 40 days from the date of the first publication of this notice. If you fail to respond by this date, the Plaintiff will request the Court to grant the relief sought in the Complaint.

This notice is given on the 13th day of December, 2024. Christian E Solares

Attorney for Plaintiff
 Midwest Law Works, LLC Christian Solares, ARDC #6325075 4855 E State St.,# 25
 Phone Number: 815-312-1703
 E-mail: Christian@midwestlawworks.com
 E-FILED
 Nov 27 2024
 02:24PM
 PAMELA CODUTO
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* 12/26, 2024, 1/2, 9, 16, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice to Bidders

The Board of Education of Belvidere Community Unit School District 100 is accepting sealed bids for:

Student Transportation for General Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood Transportation Services
 Sealed bids will be accepted until 2:00 PM CT, Friday, February 21, 2025, via SecureBids and will be publicly opened and read in person at 2:15 PM CT, at the District Administration Building located at 1201 5th Avenue, Belvidere, IL.

Instructions to Bidders
 Bids must be submitted via SecureBids, Belvidere CUSD 100's online bid portal.

A mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held at the District Administration Building located at 1201 5th Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008, on Monday, January 27, 2025, at 10:00 AM CT.

Bid specifications will be available on Thursday, January 9, 2025, after 10:00 AM CT. To obtain bid specifications, please visit <https://colbisecurebids.com/agency/bcusd100>.

A Bid Bond or certified check in the amount of 10% of the bid is to accompany the proposal.

The successful bidder must furnish a Performance Bond and Certificate of Insurance within ten (10) days of the award of the contract.

Questions regarding this Notice to Bidders should be directed to:

Belvidere Community Unit School District 100
 Kelsey Mark, Finance Manager
 1201 5th Avenue
 Belvidere, IL 61008
 (815) 544-8616
purchasing@district100.com

The Board of Education of Belvidere Community Unit School District 100 reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or waive any bid irregularities. Any such decision shall be considered final.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 9, 2025

Madigan Aide **from page 5**

up to the Dec. 1, 2016, vote on FEJA were far less cloak-and-dagger than the feds' version of events. Willert testified that he and the staffers he supervised had never surveyed the caucus about their intended votes. Instead, he said, they were told to instruct certain politically vulnerable House Democrats to vote against the bill.

Asked if Cousineau gave him a directive to encourage certain members to vote for FEJA in November 2016, Willert said he was "quite certain" he had not put together a roll call after searching his records pursuant to the defense attorneys' subpoena.

"It's the opposite," Madigan attorney Dan Collins said. "He gave you a directive to go out and tell people to vote no."

Willert agreed, having read aloud to the jury old text messages between himself and Cousineau about the members who should be kept off the bill. Willert also read text messages between himself and other staffers instructing them to call those members to confirm they'd be voting against FEJA.

On cross-examination, however, Assistant U.S. Attorney Julia Schwartz asked Willert if the speaker's office had other ways to determine how members intended to vote on a bill other than doing their own roll call survey. One of the ways, Willert acknowledged, was from speaking to lobbyists who kept their own roll call.

"Fair to say you don't have personal knowledge of every conversation Will Cousineau had with Mike Madigan about the FEJA vote?" Schwartz asked.

"Correct," Willert replied.

"You were not the only senior staff member having convos with members about the FEJA bill," Schwartz said.

"Correct," Willert answered.

'Smart Grid' law

Also on Monday, defense attorneys called another former Madigan staffer to the stand to testify about FEJA and other energy legislation. Justin Cox, who served as a lawyer in Madigan's office for more than a decade, followed his predecessor Dave Ellis, whose testimony began before the long holiday break but wrapped up on Monday.

Ellis, a judge in Illinois' 1st District Appellate Court, had previously testified that he and Cox made major demands of ComEd during 2011 negotiations over what became known as the "Smart Grid" law. The law changed the way state regulators determined electric utility rates – a change ComEd wanted – but the "formula rate" system would be voided if the utility failed to make the investments it had committed to or create the jobs it claimed it would.

Additionally, ComEd had to agree to an automatic expiration of the formula rate, concessions that both Ellis and Cox said were non-negotiable.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah Streicker on Tuesday asked Ellis if he was loyal to Madigan during his time in the speaker's office.

"Was I loyal?" Ellis scoffed, having earlier affirmed that his "one and only condition" of taking the job as chief counsel was that he didn't want to do the political work many Madigan staffers did during campaign season. "I did my job."

Like Ellis, Cox said the fact that negotiations over the 2011 Smart Grid law took place in the speaker's suite of offices in the Capitol was no indication that Madigan supported the bill.

"Um no, it was just a conference room," Cox said,
Continued on page 7



Madigan Aide

from page 6

also affirming the same was true of negotiations FEJA in 2016.

Streicker asked both Ellis and Cox if they were aware the Smart Grid law was worth “hundreds of millions of dollars” to ComEd but both denied knowing that at the time.

Cox also emphasized that negotiations on both laws included many more parties than just the speaker’s office and ComEd, saying that Senate Democrats were “heavily involved” in addition to environmental and business groups. Both laws received bipartisan votes.

Additionally, Cox said, then-Gov. Bruce Rauner’s involvement in the final weeks of FEJA were critical.

“Without the governor’s support I’m not sure it would’ve passed,” Cox said.

Former law partner to testify

Madigan attorney Todd Pugh also used Cox’s testimony to introduce the jury to a practice defense attorneys will focus on during Tuesday’s questioning of former Madigan law partner Vincent “Bud” Getzendanner.

Cox testified that he’d meet with Getzendanner and the speaker “usually twice a year” to go over the firm’s client list “so I’d be aware if there was a potential conflict” that would necessitate a recusal.

In 2017 and 2018, Madigan tried to help Chicago alderman-turned-FBI mole Danny Solis in his efforts to get a parcel of land owned by the state transferred to the city of Chicago so it could be bought by developers. The developers were interested in turning part of a parking lot in Chicago’s Chinatown neighborhood into a mixed-use apartment complex and Madigan assigned McClain, who’d recently retired from lobbying, to help Solis on the project.

The feds allege Madigan helped Solis in order to get the property tax appeals work business from the developers. Madigan’s attorneys have pointed out Solis never directly offered to refer the business to Madigan until nine months after he first sought the speaker’s help on the land transfer.

The jury already heard extensive testimony last month on the ultimately failed effort, including a wiretapped call from late May 2018 in which McClain told Cox that the speaker should not vote on the bill because it involved “a developer of his.”

But Cox testified that whatever McClain meant by that – which he said was unclear – it was ultimately moot because the speaker never voted on land transfer bills even if they dealt with property far from Chicago.

“He would not vote on land transfer bills just to prevent any question of ‘was there a conflict here?’” Cox said. “And that wouldn’t just be for properties in Cook County area, that would be for properties all across the state.”

Getzendanner will be called on Tuesday and asked about those meetings after Collins argued they were essential for the jury to hear.

“This goes to the heart of why Mr. Madigan felt comfortable giving advice on the Chinatown Project,” Collins said. “Because he knew he was never going to take this business.”

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.

Witness Stand

from page 1

the bench. But he then changed his mind after attorneys said they needed to further research case law regarding whether the former speaker could testify in his own jury trial but not testify in a possible forfeiture bench trial if he is found guilty.

“So he’ll testify now?” Blakey asked Madigan attorney Dan Collins, who indicated that the former speaker would be the next witness.

Prior to the revelation, Madigan’s former law partner, Vincent “Bud” Getzendanner, was expected to testify on Tuesday. But Madigan’s time on the witness stand could take days or even weeks.

The former speaker has had at least one family present each day of trial

Madigan was indicted in March 2022 on nearly two dozen counts of racketeering, bribery, wire fraud and extortion. The feds allege Madigan helped electric utility Commonwealth Edison and telecom giant AT&T Illinois pass key pieces of legislation through Springfield in exchange for jobs and contracts for Madigan allies. Additionally, prosecutors say Madigan used his positions to recruit work for his property tax law firm.

McClain was charged alongside him, alleged to have acted as the conduit – and sometimes muscle – for multiple bribery schemes even beyond those pertaining to ComEd, which was his largest client as a contract lobbyist.

The former speaker’s trial began in October after two weeks of jury selection. Despite the high-profile nature of the case, most of the 12 jurors and six alternates ultimately chosen had never heard of Madigan.

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Shelter

from page 3

to a 2004 F4 tornado in Woodford County that destroyed a manufacturing plant, but all 140 people in the building made it out alive after taking refuge in a designated safe area of the building.

The six people killed in Edwardsville were not in a safe area of the warehouse, Edwardsville police said after the tornado.

More: Edwardsville chief on Amazon warehouse: ‘It was definitely one of our worst days’

The 2021 tornado hit around 8:30 p.m. as the facility was bustling ahead of the holidays. According to the National Weather Service, the tornado touched down near I-270 and Illinois Route 255 southwest of the warehouse and traveled through the south half of the building. The

tornado first impacted the west-facing wall, causing it to collapse. That caused other structural failures, including the roof to collapse. The tornado was on the ground for just five minutes, but debris from Amazon was found miles away from the warehouse after the tornado lifted.

An Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigation into Amazon did not find any violations, according to the task force report. OSHA recommended the company review its severe weather procedures, ensure employees are provided training and participate in drills, have site-specific information about severe weather plans, and ensure audible warning devices are accessible. The warehouse was rebuilt and reopened in September 2024.

The task force also recommended requiring site-specific emergency plans based on OSHA’s guidelines for employers to prepare for tornadoes. The plans would be shared with local first responders and would include floor plans and details about what is stored in the warehouse.

Illinois saw a record of 142 tornadoes in 2024, according to the National Weather Service. The state has averaged 60 tornadoes each year over the last 10 years. But the number of tornadoes in the state could be increasing as technology to detect them improves, according to data compiled by The New York Times. Most Illinois counties saw an increase in tornadoes in the 20 years from 2002 to 2022 compared to the previous 20 years.

Most tornadoes are not as powerful as the Edwardsville tornado, Marc Levitan from the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Project told the task force, but warehouses are more vulnerable because they’re tall and supported by heavy walls that rely on the roof for stability.

Levitan told the task force it is better to design buildings to withstand the more common modest tornadoes, and buildings should be constructed either with a shelter inside or with a more wind resistant exterior structure. The National Weather Service in Chicago reported all but one of northeast Illinois’ 63 tornadoes in 2024 had winds of 110 mph or less.

First responders also need more assistance responding to tornadoes, retired Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford told the task force.

The task force agreed with his recommendation that the General Assembly provide regular funding to the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System. MABAS is a series of intergovernmental agreements between Illinois fire departments to bring additional or specialized support to major incidents. MABAS calls range from dispatching additional units to a structure fire to long-term disaster response missions, including outside Illinois. The system received a \$200,000 grant from the Office of the State Fire Marshall in fiscal year 2024.

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