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75 years Ago Passenger Train Service in Belvidere Ended

By David Larson

Passenger rail has never been enough to support a railroad stop in Belvidere since the 1930s. The last passenger train left Belvidere with an average daily ridership of 2.5 riders, and that was before Interstate 90 was built. Pictured is an identical train at the Belvidere Station in the 1950s when service ended.

When Interstate 90 opened in 1958 everything changed. When the modern O'Hare Airport was built shortly thereafter, everything changed again, and that is where we are today.

Even by the 1920s it was clear that the brief moment of passenger rail was becoming a novelty. In the United States, the freedom of the automobile was the direction of the future. Rail became useful for long-distance freight and as high-density intra-urban people movers like subway trains and commuter rail.

Continued on page 4

Senate OKs Police Hiring Reform, Sangamon County Recall in Response to Sonya Massey's Death

*Springfield senator files bills after
deadly 2024 police shooting that drew
scrutiny of sheriff's hiring*

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

The Sangamon County Sheriff's Office came under intense scrutiny after an unarmed Black woman was shot and killed by a deputy in her Springfield home in July 2024.

The deputy charged with her murder, Sean Grayson, had a troubled employment record at other Central Illinois police agencies. Despite a former supervisor once asking Grayson "how are you still employed?" he was hired by Sangamon County in May 2023 only to have his career end 14 months later when he shot and killed 36-year-old Sonya Massey in her home.

The Illinois Senate advanced a pair of bills this week designed to address the community's concerns about the tragedy and how it was handled.

"After that murder occurred, a lot of things came out with regard to the way that the deputy was hired, and also a lot of questionable activities that were in his background that Sangamon County was not aware of and did not have privy to before an offer of employment," Sen. Doris Turner, D-Springfield, said.

Grayson, who is white, shot and killed Massey inside her house early on the morning of July 6. Body camera video shows Grayson and another deputy responding to a report of a prowler at her

Continued on page 4



75 years ago, April 14, 1950, after nearly a century, rail passenger service to Belvidere ended when C&NW 5000A pulling train #706 departed the depot for Chicago the very last time. The photograph, taken by my father Roy, is not of that last run, but it is the identical consist.

Photo provided by Cedric Peterson

Legislature Kills Bill That Would Have Expanded Resentencing for Youth Offenders

*Illinois expanded release options for
certain youth offenders in 2023*

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

The Illinois House shot down legislation Thursday that would have allowed some people incarcerated for crimes they committed when they were under 21 to become eligible for release.

In a rare rebuke of a Democrat-sponsored bill, a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers voted against House Bill 3332, causing the bill to fail on a 49-51 vote. Bills require 60 votes to pass the House, and numerous Democrats voted against the bill or skipped the vote. The bill was declared "lost," meaning it cannot be recalled later.

The bill would have allowed people sentenced for crimes they committed when they were under 21 to be eligible for a parole hearing after serving 10 years in prison. Those sentenced for murder would be eligible for parole after serving 20 years, while those sentenced for murdering a victim who was under 18 years would be eligible for parole after serving 30 years.

"This bill would create a pathway for people sentenced as children and young adults to show that they have been rehabilitated and potentially return home and give back to their communities," bill sponsor Rep. Theresa Mah, D-Chicago, told the House.

Mah declined to comment Friday on the bill's failure.

Gov. JB Pritzker signed a law in 2023 that makes anyone sentenced to life in prison while they were under 21 eligible for release after serving 40 years behind bars — but only for people sentenced after June 1, 2019. Mah's bill aimed to make that

Continued on page 4

Prisoner Review Board Reform Bill Clears Senate

*Updated from last year's bill, it aims
to increase transparency of prisoner
releases*

By Jade Aubrey Capitol News Illinois

A bill that would reform the Prisoner Review Board passed the Illinois Senate on Thursday, aiming to protect victims and increase transparency about prisoner releases following years of controversy surrounding the board's decisions.

Championed by Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, Senate Bill 19 would give victims the ability to file victim impact statements ahead of hearings, provide them with additional notice when their offender is granted early release, and allow them to seek an order of protection against an offender who is incarcerated.

The bill passed on a 33-22 vote, with some Democrat senators opposing the legislation.

It would also create the Office of the Director of Victim and Witness Services, which would ensure the board complies with victims' rights, and mandates victims are provided with contact information for the State Victim Assistance Hotline

The reforms come after Crosetti Brand allegedly murdered an 11-year-old Chicago boy in 2024. That February, the board voted to release Brand, finding there was not enough evidence he had violated his conditions of release. His ex-girlfriend, Lateria Smith, was denied an emergency order of protection by a Cook County judge while Brand was imprisoned at Stateville in Crest Hill.

A day after he was released, Brand attacked Smith and murdered her 11-year-old son, Jayden Perkins, who attempted to protect his mother. The murder caused two PRB members, including the board chair, to resign.

Continued on page 5

Homeschool Bill Stalls In Illinois House, But Sponsor Says it's Still Alive

The bill's future is uncertain as it draws fierce opposition from homeschool families, a threat against its sponsor prompting a police investigation and shaky support from Democrats.

By Molly Parker and Beth Hundsdorfer
Capitol News Illinois

A bill that would tighten homeschooling regulations in Illinois missed a key deadline on Friday. But its sponsor, Rep. Terra Costa Howard, said it's still alive — and she's working on changes recommended by fellow lawmakers to get it passed.

"We recognize that there's some more changes that need to be made and so we want to be respectful of the process," Costa Howard, D-Glen Ellyn, told Capitol News Illinois. "I want to pass a bill that we can be proud of. And even though I'm proud of the bill now, I want to be able to take into consideration some of the other suggestions that have been made."

The proposal, amended twice in recent weeks, would require parents to file a declaration of

intent with their regional office of education. If a truancy investigation arises, officials could ask for schoolwork or lesson plans.

Costa Howard introduced the bill after a Capitol News Illinois and ProPublica investigation last summer revealed Illinois' lack of oversight in cases where children weren't receiving an education. Illinois has some of the loosest homeschooling laws in the country, and multiple truancy officers told reporters that when they investigated a truancy case and parents claimed they were homeschooling, the investigation came to a grinding halt, even if concerns remained.

In the worst cases, children disappeared from school and endured abuse or neglect at home for years before authorities became aware.

The bill has become one of the most divisive issues at the Capitol this session, drawing thousands of opponents led by two Christian homeschooling organizations: Illinois Christian Home Educators and the Home School Legal Defense Association.

On Thursday, Will Estrada, in an upbeat message on the Home School Legal Defense Association's Facebook page, shared news that the bill's sponsors "did not have the votes currently on the floor to move the bill." The organization's chief legal counsel called it "hard to overstate how significant this news is." Estrada congratulated homeschooling families for their efforts, adding, "The good news is your phone calls, your efforts, your talking to your friends, your continuing to get the word out to the legislators in Springfield, your voices are being heard."

However, Estrada cautioned that the stall "doesn't mean the battle is over."

On Saturday, Estrada joined Illinois Christian Home Educators Executive Director Kirk Smith in a Facebook video message from a homeschooling conference in Peoria. They urged their followers to tone down their efforts during the legislative break that coincides with Passover and Easter.

"We have kind of a change of strategy," Estrada said.

"We want to limit the activity politically this week," Smith added. "We encourage those who may have friends who are representatives to reach out to them lovingly during this time. But let's give the legislature a little time to catch their breath."

Though both organizations have stressed their members to communicate their opposition politely with lawmakers, Costa Howard says these organizations have stoked fear, amplifying fringe voices.

Since introducing the bill, Costa Howard said she's been inundated with hostile calls and emails, even including a letter she perceived as a death threat. The anonymous letter, addressed to Costa Howard at her legislative office in Lombard, referenced HB2827 — the Homeschool Act -- contained five lines:

It's all over the country. We all know.

It starts here and must end here.

If we have to break the 6th Commandment, so be it.

God said "Do Not Kill," but also said "Smite thine enemy."

We're watching

Costa Howard turned the letter over to police, who she says are investigating it in her home district.

The bill has also drawn opposition from minority communities. Pastor Chris Butler testified against the bill last week when the amended version came before the House Education Policy Committee.

"I am here today as somebody who grew up in Chicago public schools," Butler said. "I am here today sitting next to somebody who taught in Chicago's public schools. And we too have grown up, and we too have something to say about the education that we received, and it is why people in

our generation have stepped up and said, we must do something different."

He argued that any regulation would impede minority families from homeschooling to escape failing public schools and encouraged opponents to continue filing witness slips opposing the bill and speaking out against it.

Editorial boards at The Chicago Tribune and The Wall Street Journal have also opposed the bill. The Tribune said the bill "overreaches," while the Journal raised privacy concerns about the information homeschool families could be required to provide on the forms.

The anonymous letter to Costa Howard was postmarked from a mail distribution site in Kearny, New Jersey, on March 24 — three days after the editorial appeared in the Wall Street Journal. The return address was listed simply as The Rancher, East Coast.

Under Illinois law, threatening a public official is a Class 3 felony. The Lombard Police Department declined to comment, but did provide, under a Freedom of Information Act request, a copy of the report that contained the typewritten, unsigned letter.

Costa Howard also alerted the Illinois State Police regarding the letter. An ISP spokesman said the agency assesses potential threats and determines needed actions based on the findings of the assessment, which may include further consultation and, if necessary, makes recommendations to enhance security.

Despite the vitriolic communication, Costa Howard said she is pressing forward because of those who've also reached out to say they were victims of inadequate homeschooling and want more protections in the law.

The bill missed a procedural deadline on Friday for non-budget bills to clear their chamber of origin. But lawmakers can request an extension, which Costa Howard has done.

"The one thing I've learned about Springfield is don't ever count something out," she said.

Rep. Amy Elik, R-Alton, disagreed.

"This bill was doomed from the beginning," Elik said from the House floor Friday after Costa Howard made a brief speech about the bill.

Costa Howard says changes to the bill have already been made to address concerns, and that she's working on more. The amendment that passed a House committee on Wednesday, April 9, provided more specific details for the declaration form, ensured that an online version would be available, and clarified that a truancy investigation would be required to compel families to turn over homeschooling portfolios.

Another change addresses concerns from private schools, which had opposed having to provide a list of students to the Illinois State Board of Education. Under the change, private schools would only need to verify a student's attendance record if asked in a truancy investigation.


Costa Howard said she remains open to negotiations on the bill's finer details but believes passing new safeguards is critical to protect children from parents who claim they are homeschooling, but don't follow through.

"I do not back down from bullies," Costa Howard said. "And there are victims that have reached out to me constantly thanking me because it has also allowed them to raise their voices and feel that they could speak out about the experiences they've had as well."

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- Charlene "Mamie" Binder, 90, Harvard, March 9
- Andrea Brown, 77, Belvidere, April 9
- Susanne Buchek, 63, Marengo, April 8
- Kathryn Curtis, 71, Garden Prairie, April 12
- Anthony DeMay, 64, Harvard, Jan. 6
- Pauline Haberland, 56, Belvidere, April 9
- Deane Heuer, 91, Cherry Valley, April 10
- William Jones, 77, Harvard, April 7
- Ronald Lawson, 66, Belvidere, April 9
- James Maloney, 79, Formerly of Belvidere, April 6
- Beverly Sphar, 92, Harvard, April 13
- Christina Venters, 76, Cherry Valley, April 5



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David Grimm April 1938 - Dec. 2000
Richelle Kingsbury Aug. 1955 - June 2013

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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.
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Fighting For Taxpayers

During the city council meeting on 4/7/25 the 2nd reading of the budget was completed. During discussion Rory Peterson suggested eliminating \$20,000.00 normally budgeted for Growth Dimensions. The mayor was ecstatic and continued to rant about it, citing he and his staff did not need the services provided. This savings would be 0.07692% of a near \$26,000,000.00 budget.

Let's refer to the mayor as Rory Morris.

During the Boone County Board

Committee of the Whole Meeting - Finance on 4/10/25 it was announced that

Mayor Rory Morris wants to charge building permitting fees of over \$200,000.00 for the redo of the Boone County Courthouse. Which will be paid for by us the citizenry. We have zero tourist attractions in our city. The newly remodeled courthouse may bring in a few tourists.

From saving taxpayers 20k to charging us 200k+ represents a 900% tax increase.

Taxing tax payers for taxing seems petty.

Not a great move to be "Fighting for Taxpayers".

The only winner so far is Walmart Distribution aka Project Yukon. This project had substantial reductions in building permit fees and a 10 year tax abatement with the first 5 years 85% savings and an additional 5 years at 50% savings.

If Walmart had paid the proper permitting fees, we could have been ahead and saved our citizenry building permitting fees. Which for us citizens is a tax.

Seems Mayor Rory Morris is fighting only for Walmart.

Mike Carlyle

County Board Member Speaks Out

Dear taxpayers of Boone County. As many of you know, Boone County administration and board have worked extremely hard to update our very outdated infrastructure and doing so without raising taxes to accommodate. They have done so using ARPA funds, general fund reserves, and bond sales. Yesterday the mayor of Belvidere, Mayor Morris, decided to charge the county \$210,890.00 for building permits based off the cost of construction renovations on the courthouse. Staff found copies of building permits from 2009 projects and no fees were charged to the county. That's because intergovernmental charging is simply a way to cost taxpayers double the money. Think about it, the mayor knows that this is taxpayers money used for this project and is still abusing power to cost the project more. Becky Tobin, our county administrator, has an email from the City of Belvidere Building Inspector from July 2024 stating that the past practice is that permit fees are not charged to other taxing entities, but that he would ask the Mayor. All plan reviews and inspections are done "in-house" so the entire fee would be revenue to the City of Belvidere. This fee would cover the salary of their building department staff for almost 2 years all at the expense of YOU THE TAXPAYERS, AGAIN.

In the past the county has worked well with the city until Mayor Morris. Because of that relationship Boone County has not (or has not intended to) charge the city for use of a county facility by the Belvidere Fire Department for a month. The county did not charge any rental fee or even for utility usage. The

county is going to be doing extensive renovations to the basement of the PSB including public spaces and a massive renovation to the restrooms, which are the main restrooms used by the city police employees. Total cost of renovations is estimated to be around \$650,000.00. The county was not going to charge the city for any construction costs. The county/city have multiple intergovernmental agreements that benefit both entities financially including PSB, IT, and GIS. Animal services also provides services that are above and beyond what is required by State Law at no additional cost to the city. The county does this to avoid adding tax burden to the taxpayers.

What about other construction projects and permits coming down the pipe soon? Admin/Health Dept project and the Transit building?

At this rate the building permit for the Admin/Health Dept will be about \$80,000 and the new transit building, \$50,000 that Mayor Morris will again force on the backs of the taxpayers. Is he going to charge the county (and the taxpayers) an additional \$130,000 in building permit fees? And what about the permit for the PSB basement where city staff work?

If there needs to be a fee, wouldn't it make more sense to simply charge for staff time for plan review and inspections? We decided to call surrounding counties to see what their practices were. ALL DO NOT CHARGE ONE ANOTHER FOR THESE PERMITS DUE TO IT BEING TAXPAYER MONEY AND BY NOT CHARGING IT REDUCES THE BURDEN ON TAXPAYERS. Winnebago County has a project currently costing tens of millions of dollars so we asked Rockford City what they charged for building permits. They responded that it was silly to charge intergovernmental entities because it only added burden to the taxpayer.

Much of the growth in Belvidere and Boone County is thanks to Growth Dimensions. They are responsible for a majority of the job growth in our County and most of those new companies are tying into city water and sewer forcing them to annex from county to city. Mayor Morris has now proposed the city cut their funding as well. If we were to outsource this work it would cost the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is why elections are important. What it seems to be is Mayor Morris throwing a tantrum over the county getting rid of impact fees in hopes that we could stimulate growth and expand our tax base and lower taxes. Morris screamed at the board for getting rid of them. Is this retaliation at the expense of the taxpayer? What happens if the county starts charging the city and billing for services they utilize? This all does nothing but hurt taxpayers. The county has worked very hard to lessen that burden and we can all thank a bully mayor for failing to protect taxpayer money so that he can selfishly load his accounts. The next City Council meeting is Monday April 11th at 6pm. I urge all taxpayers in Boone County to attend and question the mayor on his tactics that are abusing power at our expense.

Ryan Curry District 2 Boone County Board

Lawmakers Approve Bills Easing Driving Tests on Seniors, Limits on Student Fines

Plan approved by House allows women's pro sports to receive state funding

*By Ben Szalinski & Peter Hancock
Capitol News Illinois*

Road tests to renew driver's licenses could be a thing of the past for many seniors in Illinois under a bill unanimously approved Wednesday by the Illinois House.

The House voted 114-0 to approve House Bill 1226, which would raise the age that seniors must take a driving exam to renew their licenses from 79 to 87. People age 79 and older would still have to go in person to a secretary of state facility to renew their license but wouldn't have to take a driving test with a state employee until they turn 87.

The bill is an initiative of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias.

"Study after study indicates that senior drivers are the most safe amongst us and there's really no need for this onerous test to be administered when you are a senior," said bill sponsor Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea.

The bill includes a number of safeguards, including that immediate family members can submit reports to the secretary of state if they are concerned a relative has a condition that makes it unsafe for them to drive.

The bill was conceived by a constituent of Rep. Jeff Keicher, R-Sycamore, last year.

"We have had a persistent issue with discriminating against older folks in this state," Keicher said. "This bill goes part of the way towards resolving that."

Women's sports stadiums

Legislation approved on a 111-0 vote by the House on Wednesday adds women's professional sports to the types of sports facilities the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority can oversee. Current law only allows the ISFA to oversee sports facilities for baseball, football and auto racing.

"What I wanted to accomplish with this bill is to make sure that women's professional sports

Continued on page 7

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Last Train

from page 1

In 1932 the Chicago & North Western Railway agreed to meet with Belvidere business leaders. The railroad had announced that it was considering ending passenger service in Belvidere. This news did not sit well with Belvidere's business leaders. The business leaders had become accustomed to having a passenger train at their disposal. In 1932, a passenger train left Belvidere in the morning and traveled to Chicago. In the evening, it returned from Chicago to Belvidere.

A group of community leaders from Belvidere committee spent over two hours in C&NW President Fred W. Sargent's Chicago office discussing the problem. The Belvidere contingent consisted of Raymond List, President of the National Sewing Machine Company, Hugh Funderburg of the Keene-Belvidere Canning Company and President of the Farmers State Bank, James Gough, President of the Belvidere Park Board, and Clare Johnson from the Chamber of Commerce. In the course of the meeting, List suggested that the railroad supply a bus with a route between Belvidere and Harvard to meet the 8:10AM Harvard train to Chicago, and a return bus to Belvidere from the 6:20PM Harvard train from Chicago. Sargent said he would take it under consideration. Nothing came of the proposal. It remains a viable option.

A newspaper article of the time pointed out that "Low fares are in effect from Harvard to Chicago. For a 10-ride ticket, the cost is only \$1.26 each way and for a 30-ride ticket, less than a dollar. The train service is fast and no doubt the trip from Belvidere via bus to Harvard and then by train to Chicago would not require any longer time than the present schedule between Belvidere and Chicago."

The railroad reversed the Chicago route by leaving for Chicago in the evening and returning in the morning to gain revenue from postal freight in an attempt to maintain Belvidere passenger service. The railroad finally ended Belvidere service on April 14, 1950.

Today, 74 years later, passenger rail service in Belvidere is on the drawing board. The State of Illinois has plans to start service in 2027 at a construction cost of \$275 million. Two daily trips to and from Chicago are proposed. Is there an alternative that is less expensive and would provide better service? The *Journal* on several occasions has proposed an hourly bus linking Rockford with a Chicago suburban hub and connecting to O'Hare, which would stop at the Belvidere Oasis.

Senate

from page 1

home. They didn't find signs of anyone outside.

The situation went south after Massey asked the deputies if she could remove a pot of boiling water from the stove. Massey, who had a history of mental health episodes, told the deputies, "I rebuke you in the name of Jesus," and Grayson threatened to shoot Massey in the face. He then fired striking Massey and told other deputies responding to the shooting he feared Massey was going to throw the water at him.

Grayson was charged with first-degree murder and is awaiting trial as the Illinois Supreme Court weighs a request from his attorney to grant him pretrial release. A separate court ruling earlier this week moved the trial out of Sangamon County to Peoria County.

Read more: Trial of sheriff's deputy accused in shooting death of Sangamon County woman moved

The Senate advanced legislation Wednesday to reform hiring at police agencies. Senate Bill 1953 sponsored by Turner was unanimously approved in the Senate.

The bill would require law enforcement agencies to review all aspects of a person's background and employment before offering a position as an officer, including physical and psychological fitness-for-duty exams, work performance records, investigations involving the applicant and any prior arrests or criminal convictions.

"When it comes to hiring police officers, we want to ... ensure we have the most qualified people," Turner said in a statement Wednesday.

Grayson was hired by Sangamon County despite troubles at past police agencies and two drunken driving convictions, a Capitol News Illinois investigation found. In one instance while working for Logan County, Grayson was told he needed "extensive" training after not listening to a supervisor's orders to terminate a police chase. But when Grayson was hired by Sangamon County, the investigations in Logan County ended.

Grayson also served short stints at other central Illinois policy agencies, including Auburn, where the police chief complained Grayson was often too aggressive about drug busts and bragged about them on social media.

The bill also would require all counties with more than 75,000 people to create a sheriff's merit board. Current state law only requires Cook County to have an independent board overseeing disciplinary matters.

A Sangamon County commission created after Massey's death also recommended giving voters power to recall countywide elected officials.

Sangamon County Sheriff Jack Campbell faced intense calls to resign after Massey's shooting. After initially resisting them, he retired at the end of August 2024.

The Senate voted 35-19 Thursday to approve Senate Bill 1954. It would allow Sangamon County to present a referendum to voters in 2026 asking them to create a recall mechanism for certain countywide elected officials such as the sheriff. County treasurers, regional superintendents and district-elected officials such as county board members could not be recalled under the bill.

"I believe there is widespread support on the county board to put the question of recall before the voters of Sangamon County," Sangamon County Board Chair Andy Van Meter said in a statement.

Some Republican senators said the bill should expand beyond Sangamon County.

"I think every elected official in the state of Illinois should be liable to recall by their constituents if they're not doing their job properly," Sen. Jason Plummer, R-Edwardsville, said.

Only Cook County voters currently can recall officials.

The bills now await consideration in the House.

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Resentencing

from page 1

law retroactive and provide an opportunity for parole for all people incarcerated for crimes they committed before they were 21.

Illinois previously became one of the first states to abolish parole for crimes committed after 1978. Anyone sentenced for crimes committed between 1979 and early 2019 is not eligible for parole, but state law provides other mechanisms that allow people to have their sentence reduced, such as for good behavior in prison.

Mah's bill immediately drew heavy criticism from Republicans who objected to creating a path to freedom for people convicted of violent crimes. Rep. Patrick Windhorst, R-Metropolis, argued that people serving decades-long sentences for convictions before they turned 21 are likely in prison for murder or major sex crimes.

"With respect to victims, we need to give them finality in the criminal justice system," Windhorst said. "They should not be having to come back to court to relive the loss they suffered either being a victim of crime or the family of a victim of a murder. There needs to be finality, and we should not be reducing sentences for murderers and those guilty of criminal sexual account."

Rep. John Cabello, R-Machesney Park, who works for the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, recalled serious crimes he investigated in his law enforcement career.

"Murder is brutal. It is final for one person; it's a lifetime for their family," Cabello said. "We can't allow this yet."

Mah attempted to ease concerns of her Republican colleagues, stating that the bill would merely create an opportunity for someone to receive a parole hearing and would not guarantee anyone will be given a hearing or released from prison.

"It's not an automatic resentencing or a release," Mah said. "All these cases come up for review by a judge. The victim's families are also included in that process."

Progressive Democrats voiced support for the bill even as many others in their party voted against it or skipped the vote.

"These are people who have spent decades working to be better in the most unimaginable and heinous situations you could dream of, locked behind bars still committed to reforming themselves," said Rep. Will Guzzardi, D-Chicago.

Mah argued that studies show youth offenders have lower rates of recidivism, and the legislation would give people in prison a reason to rehabilitate themselves.

"This is essentially a way to create fairness in our system that provides incentive for rehabilitation," Mah said.

Similar legislation has also failed to gain traction in Springfield. A bipartisan bill in the Senate in 2023 stalled after passing committee.

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Reform

from page 1

Brand's history of domestic violence against women prompted both advocates and lawmakers to call for stricter review of prisoners' backgrounds before their release.

During last year's legislative session, Rep. Kelly Cassidy, D-Chicago, championed a PRB reform bill that had bipartisan support, but was never called for a vote in the House on the final day of session.

That bill would have made changes that included requiring the board to notify victims within 24 hours if an offender, whom they had an order of protection against, was released early.

In a news conference held the day after the session ended, Gov. JB Pritzker expressed his concerns with parts of the bill regarding the live stream of certain PRB meetings and the lack of funding for other requirements.

Read more: Stalled bills: 'Dignity in Pay Act,' Prisoner Review Board changes fail to move

Harmon described this year's reform bill as a "similar to, but improved upon" version of Cassidy's bill that "expands the rights of victims to be heard and to be notified."

The bill would change qualifications for board members, requiring seven out of the 15 board members to have at least five years of experience as a law enforcement officer, parole officer, prosecutor, criminal defense attorney or judge.

It would also change the term limits of any new board members elected from six to eight years, something Harmon said would allow board members to be less concerned about their reappointment and more focused on making "good decisions."

Sen. Steve McClure, R-Springfield, voiced his disagreement on the Senate floor Thursday. He asked Harmon how he thought it was a "great idea" to lengthen terms for members, who he said are vetted by the governor.

"The Senate can't pass a law by itself. The bill before us, I believe, will be well-received and passed by the House and signed by the governor," Harmon said in response. "It is the best bill we are able to pass into law at the present time."

Republicans have spent years criticizing Pritzker's appointments to the board following several controversial nominations in recent years.

The bill now awaits action in the House.

Editor's note: This story has been corrected from an earlier version to reflect that Crosetti Brand has only been accused of murdering an 11-year-old Chicago boy in 2024. Capitol News Illinois regrets the error.

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Immanuel LUTHERAN CHURCH

HOLY WEEK

THURSDAY 12PM & 7PM
 FRIDAY 12PM & 7PM
 SATURDAY - 7PM
 EASTER SUNDAY 6:30, 8:00, 9:30, 11AM

1045 Belvidere Rd.
www.ImmanuelBelvidere.org

celebrate
Easter Sunday



Poplar Grove United Methodist Church
 105 E. Grove St., Poplar Grove 815-765-2001 www.pgumc.us

Maunder Thursday Seder Supper: April 17, 6pm
 Good Friday Service: April 18, 6pm
 Easter Celebration Service: April 20, 9am

We are Rooted in Christ—Growing in Faith—Reaching Out to All
 Join us Sundays at 9am
 Zoom option: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4265336188>

Garden Prairie United Church of Christ
 Easter Sunday Service at 7 am with Breakfast after Worship
 10990 US-20, Garden Prairie, IL 61038



Belvidere Evangelical Covenant Church

Palm Sunday, April 13th
 Breakfast 9:30 AM
 Worship Service 10:30 AM

Easter Sunday, April 20th
 Sunday School 9:30 AM
 Worship Service 10:30 AM

Tim Rathburn, Interim Pastor
 Services live streamed at facebook.com/belviderecovenant
www.becov.org
 220 E. Harrison, Belvidere
 815-547-6471

Join Us
 THIS EASTER



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
 504 E. Diggins St.
 Harvard, IL 60033
 815-943-7433

Holy Week
 Palm Sunday 9am
 Maundy Thursday 1:30pm & 7pm
 Good Friday 7pm
 Easter Sunday 9am

Sunday Worship at 9am
 Everyone Is Welcome!

Holy Trinity Church
 Holy Week Schedule



Services

Maundy Thursday
 Thursday, April 17th - 5:30
 Good Friday
 Friday, April 18th - 5:30
 Easter Vigil
 Saturday, April 19th - 5:30
 Every Sunday
 8:00 & 10:30 am

217 E. Hulbut Ave.
 Belvidere
 815-544-2635

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

BELVIDERE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that the City of Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the City Council Chamber, Belvidere City Hall, 401 Whitney Boulevard, Belvidere, Illinois 61008 upon the following:

Application of Orland Kids Academy, LLC, 1255 S. Michigan Avenue, #1709, Chicago, IL 60605 on behalf of the property owner, Almas Plus, LLC, 1255 S. Michigan Avenue #1709, Chicago, IL 60605 for a special use to permit a daycare center at 2170 Pearl Street, Belvidere, IL 61008 (Belvidere Zoning Ordinance Sections 150.105(C) (2)(B)(2) Daycare Center (3+ children) and 150.904 Special Use Review and Approval Procedures) in the PO, Planned Office District on approximately 2.0 acres. The subject property is legally described as:

PART OF THE NORTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 1, TOWNSHIP 43 NORTH, RANGE 3, EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE, STATE OF ILLINOIS, BOUNDED AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TO WIT: COMMENCING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER SAID QUARTER SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 00°00'00" EAST, ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID QUARTER SECTION, 1,218.72 FEET TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE PERMANENT EASEMENT CONVEYED BY HENRY AND MADELINE BARTHOLOMEW, HUSBAND AND WIFE, TO THE ILLINOIS STATE TOLL HIGHWAY COMMISSION DATED JULY 17, 1957 AND RECORDED IN BOOK 115 OF DEEDS ON PAGE 323 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, SAID POINT BEING THE POINT OF BEGINNING FOR THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PARCEL; THENCE SOUTH 89°48'46" EAST, ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID PERMANENT EASEMENT, 59.73 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID PERMANENT EASEMENT; THENCE SOUTH 90°00'00" EAST, ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF PREMISES CONVEYED BY LEROY F. FITZ AND RUTH M. FITZ TO THE BELVIDERE NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST CO., AS TRUSTEE UNDER TRUST NO. 306 BY WARRANTY DEED DATED MAY 14, 1970, AND RECORDED MAY 25, 1970, AS DOCUMENT NO. 16665 IN SAID RECORDER'S OFFICE, 334.57 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID PREMISES SO CONVEYED BY LEROY F. FITZ AND RUTH M. FITZ TO THE BELVIDERE NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST CO. AS AFORESAID; THENCE NORTH 00°00'00" WEST, PARALLEL WITH THE WEST LINE OF SAID QUARTER SECTION, 245.89 FEET; THENCE NORTH 90°00'00" WEST, PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF SAID PREMISES SO CONVEYED BY LEROY F. FITZ AND RUTH M. FITZ TO THE BELVIDERE NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST CO. AS AFORESAID, 394.30 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF SAID QUARTER SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 00°00'00" EAST ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID QUARTER SECTION, 245.69 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. PIN: 07-01-102-004

All persons interested in the petitions may attend and be heard at the stated time and place.

Paul Engelman, Chairman,
Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
BOONE COUNTY

DATE FOR REQUEST OF NAME CHANGE (ADULT):
LAUREEN RAE MATTSON Case No. 25MR12
There will be a court date on my Request to change my name from:
LAUREEN RAE MATTSON to the new name of LAURIE RAE
MATTSON. The court date will be held on 06/10/2025 at 9:00 a.m. at
the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008 in
Courtroom #3
Published in the Boone County Journal – 04/03,10,17 P.

ASSUMED NAMES

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

No. DBA4226 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a MEN'S RETAIL business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of THE ARMOURY CLUB that its location is or will be 10020 KARL CLOSE IN BELVIDERE, in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.

Phone Number: 815-980-8622
AMY CHRISTINE SALVI
10020 KARL CLOSE BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS 61008

I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: March 26, 2025

Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 04/03,10,17 P.

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

No. DBA4227 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a MOBILE VENDING MACHINES business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of NEXGTGEN VENDING that its location is or will be 345 CHANNING AVE.NUE IN BELVIDERE, in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.

Phone Number: 779-548-0544
DOMINIC CESARONE 345 CHANNING
AVENUE BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS 61008

I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: April 1, 2025
Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 04/10,17,24 P.

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

No. DBA4228 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a COTTAGE FOOD business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of GRAMMY'S HOMEMADE JAMS PICKLES SALSAS & MORE that its location is or will be 114 QUEENSBURY PLACE NE IN POPLAR GROVE, in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.

Phone Number: 815-262-6083
ROSE ANNE RUDNY 114 QUEENSBURY PLACE
NE POPLAR GROVE, ILLINOIS 61008

I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: April 08 2025
Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 4/17, 4/24, 5/1 - P

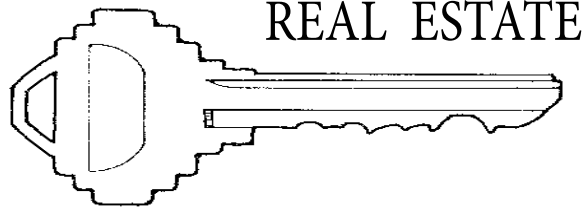
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

No. DBA4229 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a CONSUMER SERVICES business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of XANDER'S KONVENIENT KLEAN that its location is or will be 10737 US HIGHWAY 20 IN GARDEN PRAIRIE, in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown as below Phone Number:815-566-2140

ALEXANDER EDWARD MIGASI 10737 US HIGHWAY 20
GARDEN PRAIRIE, ILLINOIS 61038

I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office.

Dated: April 09, 2025 Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 04/17,24, 05/01 - P



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

Federal National Mortgage Association, Plaintiff,
-v-
2024FC56
Luis Lopez Rodriguez, et. al., Defendants.
121 BULLARD ST, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on 12/17/2024, an agent of Auction.com LLC will conduct the auction in person at 12:00 PM on May 15, 2025 located at 601 N Main Street, Courthouse Steps, Belvidere, IL 61008, and will sell at public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate. LOT FIVE (5) IN BULLARD'S ADDITION TO POPLAR GROVE, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER (1/4) OF SECTION 19, TOWNSHIP 45 NORTH, RANGE 4 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN BOOK 10 OF PLATS ON PAGES 50 AND 51 AS DOCUMENT NO. 72-3406 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. Commonly known as 121 BULLARD ST, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

Property Index No. 04-19-151-023
The real estate is improved with a Residential Property. The judgment amount was \$178,076.41 Sale Terms: 20% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to Auction.com LLC. No third party checks will be accepted. All registered bidders need to provide a photo ID in order to bid. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. (relief fee not required) The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court. Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a certificate of sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property, prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by the Condominium property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9 (g)(l) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by the Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701 (C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

For information, contact Plaintiff's attorney: CODILIS & ASSOCIATES PC (630) 794-5300 please refer to file number 14-24-04980.
Auction.com LLC 100 N LaSalle St., Suite 1400 Chicago, IL 60606 - 872-225-4985 You can also visit www.auction.com.

Attorney File No. 14-24-04980 Case Number: 2024FC56
NOTE: PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, YOU ARE ADVISED THAT PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

I3258582
Published in the Boone County Journal – 4/3, 4/10, 4/17/2025 PNN

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

TH MSR Holdings LLC, Plaintiff,
-v-
Defendants: 2024FC40

Jennifer S. Smith; et al.
1205 E LINCOLN AVE, BELVIDERE, IL 61008
NOTICE OF SALE PUB LIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on 12/17/2024, an agent of Auction.com LLC will conduct the auction in person at 12:00 PM on May 29, 2025 located at 601 N Main Street, Courthouse Steps, Belvidere, IL 61008, and will sell at public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate.

Property Index No. 05-25-202-003 05-25-176-022
The real estate is improved with a Residential Property. The judgment amount was \$144,787.39 Sale Terms: 20% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to Auction.com LLC. No third party checks will be accepted. All registered bidders need to provide a photo ID in order to bid. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. (relief fee not required) The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court. Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a certificate of sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property, prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by the Condominium property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9 (g)(l) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by the Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701 (C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

For information, contact Plaintiff's attorney: CODILIS & ASSOCIATES PC (630) 794-5300 please refer to file number 14-24-01547.
Auction.com LLC 100 N LaSalle St., Suite 1400 Chicago, IL 60606 - 872-225-4985 You can also visit www.auction.com.

Attorney File No. 14-24-01547 Case Number: 2024FC40
NOTE: PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, YOU ARE ADVISED THAT PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
I3258330
Published in the Boone County Journal – April/17, 24, May 1, 2025

Lawmakers from page 3

were being treated equally to men's professional sports," bill sponsor Rep. Eva-Dina Delgado, D-Chicago, said in an interview.

The bill's passage comes amid pushes by the Chicago Bears and Chicago White Sox for state funding to build new stadiums. But the Chicago Red Stars, a women's professional soccer team that plays in suburban Bridgeview, are also interested in a new stadium with help from state funding. Team owner Laura Ricketts met with General Assembly leadership last year, Crain's Chicago Business reported.

Delgado stressed the bill isn't designed to move any specific stadium proposal forward and said the Red Stars have not approached her with any specific plan.

"Most of my colleagues are hesitant to do public funding for any kind of stadium at this moment in time," Delgado said.

The bill would also require ISFA to notify the governor and General Assembly when a team formally requests funding from the state, and for the General Assembly to hold hearings on the proposal.

Municipal fines, fees as school-based discipline Public school students would no longer be subject to municipal fines, fees, tickets or citations as a form of school-based discipline for many kinds of code violations if they occur on school grounds under a bill that cleared the state Senate on Wednesday.

Senate Bill 1519, sponsored by Sen. Karina Villa, D-West Chicago, would prohibit that practice. It would also require school districts that employ school resource officers — a sworn law enforcement officer assigned to a school — to sign a formal memorandum of understanding with the officer's law enforcement agency to ensure the officers are properly trained and do not use fines or tickets as a form of discipline.

The bill would not apply to delinquent or criminal conduct or to violations of traffic, boating or fish and game laws.

"A student being ticketed for behavior at school can result in them being thrown into the system, hindering their future opportunities," Villa said in a statement. "School discipline that mirrors law enforcement practices is ineffective at addressing the root causes of student behavior."

A law passed in 2015 prohibits schools from issuing monetary fines for school behavior, but Villa said many schools get around the law by referring students to law enforcement. A 2022 ProPublica investigation found Black and Latino students received a disproportionate number of tickets.

The bill passed the Senate, 37-17, and will next be considered in the House.

AI in health insurance decisions

Health insurers companies could face new restrictions on how they use artificial intelligence under a measure approved on a 79-35 vote Wednesday.

House Bill 35 sponsored by Rep. Bob Morgan, D-Deerfield, would prohibit health insurance companies from only relying on AI to deny, reduce or terminate coverage for patients receiving care ranging from prescriptions to surgery. Instead, those AI-made decisions would have to be

Continued on Page 8

Lawmakers

from page 7

reviewed by a human employee who can override it.

Health insurance companies would also be required to disclose to the state when they are using AI.

“New disclosures to you, the consumer, you have the right to know if AI is being used to deny your health care,” Morgan said.

Commission would commemorate Underground Railroad

The Illinois Senate passed a bill Wednesday to

preserve and promote resources in the state linked to the Underground Railroad — the network of secret routes and hiding places that enslaved African Americans used to escape bondage before the Civil War.

Senate Bill 1607 by Sen. Dave Koehler, D-Peoria, would establish a Freedom Trails Commission to identify, preserve and promote historic sites in Illinois linked to the Underground Railroad. The commission would also work with the National Park Service’s Network to Freedom program to serve as a liaison between the Park Service and local entities involved in the history

of the Underground Railroad.

“Preserving our history is essential to building a better future,” Koehler said in a statement. “Through this commission, we can ensure the stories of bravery, perseverance, and freedom are told and remembered.”

The bill passed unanimously out of the Senate and moves to the House for consideration.

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.



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 Attorney at Law
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