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FREE

Pritzker, Bailey Offer Different Visions For Illinois Education

Candidates respond to questions on school funding, education policy, in State Fair appearances

Peter Hancock *Capitol News Illinois*

Gov. JB Pritzker said during Illinois State Fair festivities this month that he agrees public schools need more funding.

But he also boasted about the additional funding his administration has already provided, and he said that has led to improved performance in reading and math, even though by the state's own measure, most schools in Illinois remain underfunded.

"We lifted eighth grade reading and math scores to a new high," Pritzker told a cheering crowd at the Illinois Democratic County Chairs' Association brunch on Wednesday, Aug. 19. "We got a fifth-in-the-nation ranking for Illinois' K-12 education. We expanded preschool and we notched the highest high school graduation rate in Illinois history."

His Republican challenger Darren Bailey, meanwhile, said he believes the way to improve education in Illinois is through less government interference, not more funding.

"Let local communities, let parents decide how they want their children educated," he told reporters outside a Republican State Central Committee meeting Thursday. "Get the government out."

Those were just some of the comments the two candidates for governor made during political events surrounding the State Fair, an event that traditionally marks the unofficial start of the general election campaign.

The issue of school funding

The state fiscal year that began July 1 marks the 10th year of funding public schools under the Evidence-Based Funding model. Lawmakers enacted that system in 2017 to improve adequacy and equity in Illinois school finance, and it was signed into law by then-Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican.

That law established a goal of bringing all districts up to adequate levels of funding by this fiscal year. And in the years since it passed, annual state funding for K-12 education has increased more than \$3 billion, with the bulk of that money being directed to the most underfunded districts in the state.

Still, the most recent figures from the Illinois State Board of Education show that more than

two-thirds of the state's elementary, high school and unit school districts will be underfunded this year. And the overall "adequacy gap" — the difference between the funding districts and their adequacy target under the law — now stands at \$6.8 billion and growing.

In addition, Capitol News Illinois reported in July that while the state has made progress in narrowing the wealth-based disparities in the distribution of school funding, significant disparities still exist in the property tax rates people pay to fund the local share of education costs. Research showed homeowners in the poorest districts paid tax rates that were twice as high as those in the wealthiest districts.

Pritzker responds

Asked about those trends while speaking with reporters at the fairgrounds, Pritzker said he agreed the state needs to continue increasing education funding, saying "adequacy is always a challenge."

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Bailey Implores Republicans to Improve Turnout As He Plans to Shift Focus To Chicago

Republican nominee for governor says late August downstate tour is last of the campaign

Ben Szalinski *Capitol News Illinois*

Darren Bailey told supporters on a downstate campaign tour this week that they won't be seeing him again soon. Instead, he'll be focusing his energy from now through November in Chicago and its suburbs.

It's the Republican gubernatorial candidate's answer to a frequently faced question, following his 12-point loss to Gov. JB Pritzker in 2022: Why will this time be any different?

Bailey told supporters in small towns throughout the southern half of the state that he thought 2022 was going to be a close race but was instead the victim of voter apathy. This year, he insists his new focus on Chicago will put him over the edge, but only if Republicans improve their turnout downstate.

"This race is ours to lose, but I need your help," Bailey told a group of about 20 supporters outside a grocery store in Nokomis, a town of about 2,100 people in Montgomery County. "I need you to have the conversations with everybody that you see."

The Bailey campaign faces major monetary and historic headwinds.

Midterm elections are often referendums on the party in power in Washington, D.C., which this year is his Republican Party. His opponent, Gov. JB Pritzker, has dumped \$90.5 million into the race and is now launching TV ads attacking Bailey.

There is not yet any independent polling available to show a snapshot of the race, but Bailey told supporters he's receiving a different reception in Chicago than he did four years ago when he called the city a "hellhole." People are now asking him to pose for pictures instead of heckling him, he said.

After cruising to victory in the primary, Bailey pledged to focus his campaign on Chicago and the suburbs. He says he'll fulfill that promise now after stops in Marion, Anna, Beardstown, Paris, Bloomington and others this week.

"Cindy and I have spent just three weeks in our home since March," Bailey, of Clay County, told about a dozen supporters at a cafe in Virden in Macoupin County. "The rest of the time we've been in Chicago. We wanted to make one more sashay through the heartland, through the southern edge of the state."

Bailey received 66% of the vote in Macoupin County in 2022 and 69% in Montgomery County. But combined, the two counties provided about 20,000 of Bailey's votes in an election that saw about 4 million people cast a ballot, though only about half of registered voters participated.

In Cook County, Bailey received just 23% of the vote four years ago. Bailey's running mate, Aaron Del Mar, is the Cook County Republican Party chair. He told Capitol News Illinois they are hoping to receive upwards of 33% of the vote in the Chicago area this year. Despite the obvious need to campaign more in that region of the state, he said downstate voters are still important.

"If southern Illinois doesn't come out, it doesn't matter," Del Mar said.

Bailey said in an interview with Capitol News Illinois on Monday he will especially focus on the suburbs, where voters exhibit more tendencies to support Republican candidates than in Chicago, though Democrats have increasingly won more races there, too. He said he wants to boost turnout to 2024 levels, which saw 70% of registered voters cast a ballot and President Donald Trump reduce 17-point losses in Illinois in 2016 and 2020 down to 11 points.

Bailey's supporters

A few dozen people attended Bailey's Monday morning events, which Del Mar attributed to people being at work. The campaign held a

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But then he quickly pivoted to certain performance measurements showing Illinois students improving on several metrics.

"We have a higher graduation rate than we've ever had in the history of record keeping in the state of Illinois," he said. "We have a higher graduation rate overall. We also have a higher graduation rate for Latino students in high school. We have a higher graduation rate for Black students in high school, and the fact that we have a better student-teacher ratio now is another reason why we're getting better results."

That's a message Pritzker has been pushing both from the governor's office and on the campaign trail. On Aug. 17, his office issued a news release touting the state's rankings according to various surveys of educational quality.

That same day, his campaign issued a statement highlighting his administration's record in education while announcing he had received the endorsement of the Illinois Education Association,



Araceli Alvarez, 44, Harvard, August 20

David Bargren, 83, Cherry Valley, August 28

Scott "Buck" Creviston, 63, Capron, August 18

Gerald "Jerry" Heshelman, 80, Belvidere, Aug. 23

Roger Lehmann, 85, Formerly of Harvard, Aug. 22

Anita "Nickie" Pollock, 78, Belvidere, August 21

Mary Steiger, 77, Marengo, August 23



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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.

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the state's largest teacher's union.

Bailey responds

Bailey, meanwhile, has been delivering an entirely different message about education, pointing — sometimes inaccurately — to the number of students who score below proficiency on standardized state assessments.

"When 70% of our children across the state cannot read and write and do math at grade level, that's a problem and everyone knows it," Bailey told reporters. "And Chicago Public Schools system, my heart breaks for them, 90% of the children up there. —Go to Illinois State Board of Education's website. Read it. That's not my numbers. That's the state's numbers."

In fact, according to the state's 2025 Report Card, only 47.6% of Illinois students scored below proficiency in English Language Arts while 61.6% scored below proficiency in math.

At Chicago Public Schools, the 2025 Report Card showed 58% of students scored below proficiency in English language arts while 73% did so in math.

Those, however, were the first tests administered under a new scoring system in which the cut scores for determining proficiency were lowered. ISBE officials said that was done to reflect student performance more accurately.

Bailey also brushed aside the suggestion that low scores could be the result of inadequate funding and that most of the students in Illinois attend schools that are underfunded.

"Funding is not the issue," he said. "Why is money always the answer to every problem that we have? Money is not the answer to every problem that we have."

When asked to explain how he proposes to improve education in the state, Bailey said: "Get the government out of it. Less government, and let the people, let the school districts control themselves."

"Government doesn't need to mandate and regulate it," Bailey said. "Let local communities, let parents decide what how they want their children educated."

Aaron Del Mar, Bailey's running mate, echoed Bailey's call for less direct state involvement in school funding and suggested instead that Illinois should opt in to a new federal program backed by the Trump administration that provides tax credits for contribution to private school scholarship funds.

That is similar to Illinois' former tax credit program called Invest in Kids, which lawmakers allowed to expire in 2023.

"Why don't you ask JB Pritzker why he doesn't opt into the federal program that would bring federal dollars and resources to Illinois," Del Mar said. "Thirty-two states have already opted in ... but JB Pritzker wants to put his political ambitions for the 2028 Democratic (presidential) primary in front of educating Illinois students. When JB Pritzker opts into the federal program, we can start talking more about education."

Evolution controversy

Also during the fair, the Pritzker campaign tried to revive criticism of Bailey's involvement

in founding a private religious school in southern Illinois in 2016, Full Armor Christian Academy, that teaches a biblically based curriculum that includes the teaching of creationism in science classes.

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OP-ED

You Can Complain But You Will Probably Have No Vote on the Matter

Well it is September -- hopefully you got the money in time and paid your taxes. I have some good news and bad news for you. As you know the biggest share of your taxes goes to District 100. Well soon that big new high school, Belvidere North, will be paid off. But don't count on a big decrease in your tax. The District is borrowing, borrowing for repairs and improvements and eventually for a new pre school building. You better get use to it because they plan to borrow \$100 million or more. You can complain, but you will probably have no vote on the matter.

Currently debt servicing paid with your property tax is approximately \$8 million a year. In Levy Year 2029, it would decrease to \$4 million. However, all that projected additional borrowing means debt servicing will continue to be \$8 million through Levy Year 2046. The funds will be obtained by back door referendums.

Some of the funds will be Life Safety borrowings. As the name, suggests they must be used for specific safety issues. The state and county superintendent determine the projects that qualify. No public referendum is required, but there must be a public hearing. Tentative hearing date is September 21, 2026 for a \$17.9 million Life Safety Bond.

There are several other bond issues which require a public referendum only if the public can provide a very sizeable number of petitioners' signatures. It appears that the district is contemplating such borrowing after the LIFE Safety borrowing is depleted. The number of signatures required to cause a referendum is on the order of 10 percent of voters and must be completed within a short 30-day window on a form specified by the District.

Back in 2010, District 100 attempted to pass a \$45 million back-door referendum. At that time, 4201 signatures were required to force a voter referendum. There was a very large public campaign, and the Board of Education withdrew the bond request and the projects never happened.

Please show up at the public hearing on September 21 and request that board change their plans and have future bond issues be regular referendum bonds. If you cannot be at the meeting email board members.

District 100: TRUST THE PEOPLE
Bill Pysson

Labor Day Has Greatly Evolved from Uncertain Origins

Historians Debate True Founder

Tom Emery

This weekend, millions of Americans will hit the road, fire up the grill, and swarm to the beaches for the Labor Day weekend. The holiday has evolved dramatically from its origins, which are debated today.

What is clear, though, is the designation of Labor Day as a federal holiday in 1894 arose from a tenuous labor dispute in Illinois.

The Pullman strike, remembered today as a landmark in American labor history, caused such ill feelings between workers and the government that President Grover Cleveland, as a conciliatory measure, signed an order establishing Labor Day as a federal holiday on the first Monday of September.

However, Labor Day was nothing new in America. Some believe that its roots are actually Canadian, in an 1872 parade in Toronto to support a strike against a 58-hour work week. A decade later, a proposal was presented at a Central Labor Union meeting in New York in May 1882 for a "monster labor festival" in early September.

The result was the first Labor Day parade, held near City Hall and along Broadway in New York on Sept. 5, 1882. Police, concerned that confrontations may occur, surrounded city hall on horseback and on foot, many of them carrying clubs.

An hour later, only a handful of marchers had shown up, and there was no musical accompaniment. Just in time, two hundred members from the Jewelers Union of Newark arrived with a band, and the procession began.

Spectators joined the parade, and finally, some ten to twenty thousand marched through lower Manhattan. At the end, some workers went back to their jobs, but many spent the rest of the day

at a party which included speeches, cigars, and "lager beer kegs...mounted in every conceivable place."

Who suggested the first Labor Day is of considerable debate. Many accounts credit Peter McGuire, the general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor.

McGuire reportedly proposed an annual celebration at a CLU meeting on May 12, 1882 to remember those "who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold." He suggested a street parade to "publicly show the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations." McGuire is said to have witnessed the 1872 commemoration in Toronto, and wanted something similar in the United States.

McGuire's role, though, has been challenged in recent years by the emergence of the story of Matthew Maguire, a machinist and member of the Knights of Labor, whom some believe first proposed that the CLU organize a celebration of labor.

Adding credence was a recollection by the grand marshal of the 1882 New York parade, who corroborated Maguire's role. In a 2011 interview, former Department of Labor historian Linda Stinson expressed confidence in the Maguire story.

Peter McGuire's role may have also been embellished by Samuel Gompers, a close friend and American Federation of Labor powerhouse, who apparently disliked Matthew Maguire's radical political views that reflected poorly on the AF of L. Maguire ran for Vice President on the National Socialist Labor Party in 1896.

Some states began to observe Labor Day on their own, starting with Oregon in 1887. Colorado, New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey followed suit.

Continued labor strife, though, forced the federal government's hand at designating a national holiday. The Pullman Palace Car strike of May 1894, ignited by layoffs and wage cuts amid unchanging rents in the company town of Pullman, Ill. induced the American Railway Union, under the direction of Eugene Debs, to call for national boycotts of Pullman trains.

Rioting, burning of cars, and other violence spread nationwide, and rail traffic was brought to a standstill in many areas.

Throughout the

strike, President Grover Cleveland, worried about the political backlash in what was a midterm election year. Democrats, fearing a loss of Congress, and the president proposed a solution – to create a national holiday to honor the American worker, which was already being celebrated in thirty states.

Sen. James Henderson Kyle, a Populist from South Dakota, introduced legislation to designate the first Monday in September as a national holiday. The bill was rushed through Congress, and Cleveland quickly signed the proposal into law on June 28, 1894.

The September date was chosen so there would be no conflict with the International Workers Day celebration of May 1, which harkened back to the Haymarket Riot in Chicago in May 1886 and was viewed by many Americans as socialistic or anarchistic.

Six days after signing the bill, Cleveland, ostensibly concerned about interruption of U.S. Mail service, sent in 12,000 federal troops as strikebreakers.

Reports vary, but at least two men were killed by deputy marshals in Kensington, a Chicago suburb. On August 3, the strike was declared over, and Debs was later sentenced to prison as the Pullman employees agreed not to unionize again. The Democrats lost both houses of Congress in 1894, and Cleveland was dropped from the ticket in the 1896 election.

Over the decades, Labor Day evolved into a three-day weekend and a shopping and recreational holiday that marks the end of the summer season. Few celebrate Labor Day as a remembrance of working Americans.

Today, union presence in the United States continues to diminish. According to *Forbes*, less than 12 percent of the American workforce belongs to a union, down from a high of 33.2 percent in 1955.

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Bailey Seeks to Classify Any Organization Receiving \$10k in State Grants as a ‘Public Body’

Move would subject those orgs to open meetings, FOIA laws; Pritzker campaign calls it a stunt that would hurt small nonprofits

Brenden Moore *Capitol News Illinois*

Republican Darren Bailey’s gubernatorial campaign is calling for greater transparency over nongovernmental organizations that receive at least \$10,000 in state grants by making them subject to public records and open meetings requests.

In an interview with Capitol News Illinois on Monday, Bailey’s running mate Aaron Del Mar said the campaign is getting behind stalled Statehouse legislation that would make NGOs that receive at least \$10,000 or 20% of their total funding from the state subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act.

“Every other level of government here in Illinois is subject to FOIA,” Del Mar said. “But we can’t see once that money leaves state coffers and goes to one of these NGOs or these vendors how they’re spending it. What is the actual outcome?”

The proposal comes as Bailey wages an uphill battle against incumbent Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker, a self-funding billionaire who is seeking a third term.

Bailey comfortably won the Republican primary in March but is being vastly outspent by Pritzker and running in a blue state while facing a tough electoral climate nationally for his party. The downstate farmer has also been trying to make amends for statements made during his 2022 campaign, such as referring to Chicago as a “hellhole.”

With President Donald Trump’s deep unpopularity in Illinois, particularly in Chicago and the suburbs, Bailey and Del Mar have tried to keep the focus on Pritzker and promoting so-called “80-20” issues relating to affordability, public safety and education.

Del Mar said the NGO proposal is in line with those goals, noting that the state’s \$56 billion spending plan relies on hundreds of millions of dollars in new taxes, which wouldn’t be necessary if there were savings to be found within grant programs. He said his administration would also launch portals to more clearly track state grant spending.

“It’s a huge amount of revenue and we want to know where it’s going,” Del Mar said. “So we’ve created a new program that we’re going to be launching that is going to be about accountability with NGOs.”

Del Mar said there is an added importance in wake of the federal indictment of Rep. Carol Ammons, D-Urbana, who is accused of, among other charges, using her official position to direct

state grant money to three separate nonprofits that paid her daughter. Ammons has pleaded not guilty, though House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch said he’s directed staff to “review the budget to determine whether any funds need to be paused or reconsidered.”

What’s being proposed?

The proposal, sponsored by three members of the right-wing Illinois Freedom Caucus, was filed in February but hasn’t moved past the gatekeeping House Rules Committee.

It would make hundreds if not thousands of private entities “public bodies” under the law. This would subject them to the same rigorous scrutiny that government agencies are under to maintain and produce records. It would also likely result in meetings of these vendors being open to the public under the Open Meetings Act.

Under existing law, executed state contracts are available via public records requests made to state agencies. And certain records held by grantees that directly relate to the service they are performing on behalf of the state are presently subject to FOIA.

Del Mar said the campaign is also calling for a state website to highlight every NGO receiving money. There is currently no website for that specific purpose.

But under the Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act, all active grant programs are included in list form and via a searchable database. Under each program is information such as its purpose, eligibility requirements, procedures and grantees with active awards.

The Illinois comptroller’s office also has a searchable database of state contracts. And all agency spending and contracts executed are subject to review by the Illinois auditor general’s office and the executive inspector general.

Pritzker’s campaign dismissed the proposal as a stunt, noting that the requirements in the bill could be cost-prohibitive for small non-profits and effectively shut them out of state grant programs.

“Darren Bailey is a hypocrite,” said Pritzker spokesperson Alex Gough. “He wants to bring Donald Trump’s cronyism and chaos to our state, including by ‘DOGEing’ Illinois. There’s no person less qualified to demand transparency than a MAGA Republican who can’t bring himself to demand accountability from his own party.”

Similar vein to Illinois DOGE

Republicans for years have scrutinized the Pritzker’s spending plans, with a common critique being that the state’s general fund budget has increased from \$40 billion in Pritzker’s first year in office to \$56 billion in the current fiscal year.

Though nominally a 40% increase, it amounts to about 7% when adjusted for inflation. Much of the increased spending has been directed towards K-12 education, pensions and growing healthcare costs for state employees and Medicaid patients.

Echoing Republicans across the country, Bailey has focused on finding “waste, fraud and abuse” in government, namely in human service programs that award state grant funds to outside vendors. This became especially pronounced in the wake of a massive fraud scandal that rocked

Minnesota’s social safety net last year.

In a memo outlining their program, Del Mar said more than \$750 million was allocated in the current year’s budget to NGOs, including “hundreds of millions” in “woke” grants “likely rampant with Minnesota-style fraud.” But Del Mar did not provide evidence to back up the claim or specific cuts a Bailey administration would make the state budget.

In January, Bailey proposed an “Illinois DOGE,” a state version of Trump’s and Elon Musk’s now-shuttered Department of Government Efficiency, to be led by Del Mar.

They said at the time that it would not be a tool to lay off large numbers of state employees or make cuts based on partisan politics — a difference from Trump’s and Musk’s approach.

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.

Bailey

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variety of other events throughout downstate over the five-day tour, which concluded Tuesday, including some ticketed fundraisers and larger county Republican dinners.

Supporters at Bailey’s events are buying his message that he can do better in Chicago.

“I just really feel like it’s time that somebody downstate, that understands what’s going on down here and also understands what’s going on in Chicago, I think it’s time for somebody like that,” Kurt Aumann, who owns an auction business in Nokomis, told Capitol News Illinois. “I really don’t see where JB Pritzker has had a struggle his entire life. He doesn’t know what I go through.”

Aumann said high property taxes and heavy regulations are among his top concerns, adding he doesn’t have those concerns about other states where his business operates.

Jay Martin, Bailey’s Montgomery County coordinator who works for an agricultural company, shared that sentiment.

“We have eight years of pretty much failed policies and we feel that downstate considerably, especially now with some of the higher real estate taxes that have been hitting us,” Martin said.

Bailey and Del Mar discussed a variety of topics as they mingled with voters, including closing coal plants, state spending to help undocumented immigrants, public safety, and how Bailey would navigate a likely Democrat-controlled legislature.

His supporters said they see a sharp contrast between Bailey and Pritzker.

“Darren starts with humble surroundings,” James Meister, of Springfield, said in an interview. “He’s a farmer. He’s been working his entire life. As soon as he found out his school board wasn’t doing very well, he wanted to make changes. He didn’t sit back and let someone else do it. He made changes.”

Bailey has faced criticism over the years for
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Bailey

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supporting property tax hikes while on the North Clay Board of Education.

Martin said voters in Montgomery County feel they relate better to Bailey, believing the billionaire Pritzker struggles to understand issues facing rural residents.

“He’s not heartless,” Martin said of Bailey. “And I don’t want to suggest to you that I think JB is. It’s easy to just grow estranged to how everybody else has to deal with life when you don’t have to fight for much.”

On the issues

While Bailey faces his own uphill battles to win the election, he thinks Pritzker does, too.

“To sit here and tell us that he has made life more affordable, I mean, no one is realizing that,” he said in an interview. “I really believe a third term — just the economy and ultimately the Chicago Bears — I personally believe it is going to be a huge win. That it is going to be a huge win that is going to shock this state and this nation.”

High property taxes and the SAFE-T Act criminal justice reform that abolished cash bail remain top talking points for Bailey, who thinks problems with the law have become more apparent to the public over the last four years.

Bailey is also calling for a 1% cap on property taxes, which are levied by local governments and not the state, pointing to such policies in neighboring Iowa and Indiana. His supporters said they liked the idea and Bailey said he believes the state can reprioritize enough funding in the budget to cover education costs if school districts are limited in what they can raise in property taxes.

But Bailey is also facing backlash from Pritzker’s campaign for what is apparently taught in the private school he founded with his wife, Full Armor Christian Academy, which teaches a biblically based curriculum that includes the teaching of creationism in science classes.

The Pritzker campaign has criticized the school for using textbooks that suggested humans and dinosaurs once roamed the earth at the same time, though it is a generally accepted scientific conclusion that dinosaurs predated humans by about 65 million years.

Bailey didn’t deny that curriculum’s teaching in an interview with WGN-TV last week and later told reporters at the State Fair to “ask Fred Flintstone.”

“Everything the man says is a lie,” Bailey told CNI on Monday, referring to Pritzker. “My wife and I took our family to the Ark Encounter. There’s nothing in any curriculum. We took our family to the Ark Encounter. He saw that on our Facebook page so he wants to throw that out there. He’s tossing things at the wind.”

The school received a violent threat on Friday, Bailey’s campaign said, blaming Pritzker’s rhetoric.

As for the Fred Flintstone comment, Bailey said it was a “humorous” reference to Pritzker dressing up as the cartoon character on Halloween last year. The fictional Fred Flintstone cartoon character lived at the same time as dinosaurs.

Bailey has also selected other names for

Pritzker, including calling him a “jackass” earlier this month. He said it’s what voters want to hear. Pritzker, in turn, has called Bailey dangerous and an “extremist Donald Trump puppet.”

“Everywhere I go, people say, ‘Darren, we need you to step up. We need you to be real, we need you to get the message out,’” Bailey told CNI. “When I say jackass, it’s the party’s symbol.”

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The League of Women Voters Plan an Event

The League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford will present “Concert For a Cause: Democracy” on Saturday, September 12 at 7:30 pm. The event takes place at the Maddox Theater on the campus of Rockford University, 5050 E. State Street. It will feature performances by internationally acclaimed artists Rockford native Joe Jencks and Chicago’s official troubadour Mark Dvorak. This patriotic music event will celebrate community and our democracy. There will be a silent auction, cash bar and lots of singing along.

The LWVGR is a non-partisan, grassroots community organization. It’s mission since 1922 is to empower voters and protect democracy. The goal for the event is to bring the greater Rockford community together and carry our message forward through song and story.

To prepare women for their rights and responsibilities as members of the voting public, leaders of the Woman’s Suffrage Movement established the League of Women Voters of the United States on February 14, 1922. By autumn of that year, Julia Lathrop of Rockford, helped then to establish the League of Women Voters of Illinois and the League of Woman Voters of Winnebago County later renamed, League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford.

Rockford native Joe Jencks is known internationally for his music of social consciousness and heartfelt human themes. Jencks has penned several number one folk songs

including the ever-relevant “Lady of the Harbor” and also spent seven years as musical director for an annual retreat, “Warriors Heart to Art,” writing songs with military veterans.

Chicago’s Troubadour Mark Dvorak has given concerts in almost all of the United States and has made visits to Finland, Canada and Ireland. He has released twenty albums of traditional, Americana and original song including 2020s Let Love Go On and 2024s Live & Alone. The Chicago Tribune called him ‘masterful,’ and the Fox Valley Folk Festival describes him as “a living archive of song and style.” www.markdvorak.com.

For further information, please contact Concert Chair Carol Bailey, (815) 262-0133 or Joan Sage, (815) 979-0621.

Illinois Attorney General Joins Suit Against Postal Service Over Mail Voting

Case follows Supreme Court ruling allowing Trump administration to proceed with restrictions

Peter Hancock

Capitol News Illinois

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced Wednesday he has joined a multistate lawsuit against the U.S. Postal Service challenging new rules that purport to give it authority to regulate mail-in voting in federal elections.

The suit was filed two days after the U.S. Supreme Court reversed a lower court order that had blocked the Trump administration from implementing an executive order that seeks to bar anyone who is not listed on a federally approved database of U.S. citizens from casting a mail-in ballot.

“We are asking the court for emergency relief because the administration is trying to undermine our citizens’ access to voting within weeks of the midterm elections,” Raoul said in a news release. “The U.S. Constitution plainly gives states — not the executive branch — the power to administer elections, and I am committed to swiftly fighting against this blatantly unconstitutional rule.”

The case was filed in federal court in Massachusetts, the same court that issued an injunction in July blocking the Trump administration from implementing the executive order. Plaintiffs include attorneys general from 23 states, including Illinois, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro.

Trump’s executive order

On March 31, President Donald Trump issued an executive order entitled “Ensuring Citizenship Verification and Integrity in Federal Elections.” It calls on the Department of Homeland Security to create a “State Citizenship List” for each state identifying residents of that state who are confirmed to be U.S. citizens who

continued on page 7

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LEGAL NOTICES

Public Hearing Notice
Meeting Date: September 9, 2026 at 10:00am
Agenda Items: Consolidated Vehicle Purchase through the Illinois Department of Transportation and the expansion of Medical Rides to Rockford, IL
Staff Contact: Erin Marshall, PCOM Grant Manager
Boone County Government will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 10:00am at the Boone County Administration Campus located at 1212 Logan Ave., Belvidere, IL 61008.
The purpose of the hearing is to consider the consolidated vehicle purchase with the Illinois Department of Transportation to be used to get replacement and expansion vehicles for public transportation. The other item on the agenda is the change of service, expanding service into Rockford, IL for medical appointments. Currently, clients 59 years and younger or those that do not meet RMTD's paratransit qualification, are dropped off at RMTD's Eastside Transfer Center to connect to a bus that will take them to the destination. This change would allow clients to be dropped off at the exterior door of the building for their appointment. The public is invited to attend and comment.
Karl Johnson
Boone County Board Chairman
Published in The Boone County Journal 9/1/26

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
BOONE COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Notice is hereby given that the Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the County Board Room, 1212 Logan Ave, Belvidere, IL 61008 upon the following petition:
The applicants, Tim and Alex Niedzielak, are requesting a zoning map amendment pursuant to Chapter 3.06 Text and Zoning Map Amendment and Chapter 7.09 R-E, Residential Exurban District of the Boone County Unified Development Ordinance to rezone Lots 19, 20, and 21 of Mallard Point Subdivision, parcels 05-08-328-001, 05-08-328-002, 05-08-328-003 from R-1 Residential Single-Unit Dwelling District to R-E Exurban District. Located in incorporated Belvidere Township, Boone County, IL.
All persons interested may appear at the hearing and be heard at the stated time and place.
Carl Rudy, Chair, Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals
Published in the Boone County Journal on Tuesday September 1, 2026.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, for and on behalf of the People of the State of Illinois, Plaintiff,
Parcel # 21920014TE
Job # R-92-005-13
v. Case # 2026ED2
CPG Investors, LLC; BMO Harris Bank, N.A.; US Small Business Administration; St. Charles Bank and Trust Company; Washington State Bank; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants.

JURY DEMAND
NOTICE OF PUBLICATION
The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you,
Non-Record Claimants and Unknown Owners, defendants in the above entitled suit, that the above named plaintiff has filed its Complaint in said Court in the Law Division thereof, for condemnation pursuant to the eminent domain laws of the State of Illinois, of the lands and premises in the Complaint situated in Boone County, State of Illinois, to wit:
Owner CPG Investors, LLC
Route FAP 525 (US 20)
County Boone
Job No. R-92-019-20
Parcel No. 21920014TE
P.I.N. No. 05-32-300-026
Section (6,15,14) R&HBR
Station 80+19.80
Station 82+68.97

EASEMENT
That part of the Southwest Quarter of Section 32, Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Boone County, Illinois, with bearings and grid distances referenced to the Illinois State Plane Coordinate System, East Zone NAD 83 (2011), with a combined factor of 0.99997273, described as follows:

Commencing at the Southeast corner of said Southwest Quarter; thence South 89 degrees 38 minutes 40 seconds West on the south line of said Southwest Quarter, 46.19 feet to the Northeast corner of the Northwest Quarter of Section 5 Township 43 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Boone County; thence South 89 degrees 34 minutes 05 seconds West on the north line of said Northwest Quarter, 203.81 feet; thence North 00 degrees 18 minutes 30 seconds East, 101.43 feet to the north right of way line of US 20, being the south line of a tract of land described in the Warranty Deed to 2009 Properties, LLC as recorded on July 18, 2013, as Document Number 2013R05714 in the Recorder's Office of Boone County, being the Point of Beginning.

From said Point of Beginning: thence continuing North 00 degrees 18 minutes 30 seconds East on the west line of said 2009 Properties tract, 227.39 feet; thence North 89 degrees 00 minutes 36 seconds East, 40.56 feet; thence South 00 degrees 54 minutes 34 seconds East, 210.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 15 minutes 10 seconds East, 85.88 feet to an existing building; thence South 00 degrees 00 minutes 41 seconds East, along said building, 10.12

feet; thence North 89 degrees 23 minutes 21 seconds East, along said building, 104.61 feet; thence North 71 degrees 29 minutes 25 seconds East, 15.27 feet to the east line of said 2009 Properties tract; thence South 00 degrees 18 minutes 27 seconds West on said east line, 13.19 feet to the north right of way line of US 20 and the south line of said 2009 Properties tract; thence South 89 degrees 34 minutes 05 seconds West on said north right of way line and said south line of said 2009 Properties tract, 250.00 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 0.2841 acres, more or less (area based on ground distances).

PIN:05-32-300-026; that summons was duly noticed out of the said Court against you as provided by law and that said suit is now pending. The said Complaint is for the ascertaining of the just compensation to be paid to the owner: CPG Investors, LLC; BMO Harris Bank, N.A.; US Small Business Administration; St. Charles Bank and Trust Company; Washington State Bank; CAI Customs Alloys, Inc.; Rockford Local Development Corporation; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Generally, for the fee taking and temporary easement acquisitions to the above described real property sought to be acquired for the purposes of widening a public highway.
Now, therefore, unless you the said above named defendants, unknown owners and non-record claimants file your appearance in the said suit, in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Boone County, Law Division, Boone County Courthouse, Boone, Illinois on or before October 9, 2026, an order or default may be entered against you at any time after that day and judgement entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.
Dated: Boone, Illinois
Pamela Coduto
Clerk of the Circuit Courthouse
Date: July 8, 2026
Kwame Raoul, Attorney General,
Vincent D. Pinelli, Special Assistant Attorney General
Attorney for Plaintiff, 70 West Madison, Suite 4300, Chicago, IL 60602; Attorney No. 3122437
Published in The Boone County Journal Sept 1, 8, 15, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, for and on behalf of the People of the State of Illinois, Plaintiff,
v. Case # 2026ED1
Parcel # 205113016
205113016TE-A
205113016TE-B
Job # R-92-005-13
Nancy Gambino; The People of the State of Illinois, Department of Labor; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants.

JURY DEMAND
NOTICE OF PUBLICATION
The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you, Non-Record Claimants and Unknown Owners, defendants in the above entitled suit, that the above named plaintiff has filed its Complaint in said Court in the Law Division thereof, for condemnation pursuant to the eminent domain laws of the State of Illinois, of the lands and premises in the Complaint situated in Boone County, State of Illinois, to wit:
Owner Nancy Gambino
Route F.A.P. 517 (US Bus 20)
County Boone County
Job No. R-92-005-13
Parcel No. 205113016
P.I.N. No. 05-20-400-023
Section L-R-1
Station 102+28.71
Station 104+32.32

LAND
EXHIBIT A
That part of the Southeast Quarter of Section 20, Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, Boone County, State of Illinois, with bearings and grid distances referenced to the Illinois State Plane Coordinate System, East Zone NAD 83 (2011 ADJ), with a combined factor of 0.9999985, described as follows:

Commencing at a found mag spike at the northeast corner of said Southeast Quarter of Section 20 per Monument Record recorded May 18, 2010, as Document Number 2010R03363 in the Recorder's Office of Boone County; thence South 89 degrees 38 minutes 27 seconds West, on the north line of said Southeast Quarter, measured along the north line thereof; thence South 00 degrees 53 minutes 21 seconds West, on said west line, 56.00 feet to the existing southerly right of way line of US Business Route 20 as described in the Warranty Deed to the People of the State of Illinois recorded March 14, 1994, as Document Number 94-2190, in said Recorder's Office and the Point of Beginning.
From said Point of Beginning: thence North 89 degrees 43 minutes 48 seconds East, on nsaid southerly right of way line, 73.06 feet; thence South 81 degrees 44 minutes 22 seconds West, on said southerly right of way line, 132.01 feet; thence South 89 degrees 43 minutes 46 seconds West, 187.32 feet; thence South 87 degrees 20 minutes 37 seconds West, 16.71 feet to said west line of the East 861.00 feet ; thence North 00 degrees 53 minutes 21 seconds East, on said west line, 20.28 feet, to the Point of Beginning, containing 0.0624 acre, more or less (area based on ground distances).

Owner Nancy Gambino
Route F.A.P. 517 (US Bus Rte 20)
County Boone County
Job No. R-92-005-13
Parcel No. 205113016TE
P.I.N. No. 05-20-400-023
Section L-R-1
Station 102+45.00
Station 104+10.00

EASEMENT
EXHIBIT B
20513016TE-A
That part of the Southeast Quarter of Section 20, Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, Boone County, State of Illinois, with bearings and grid distances referenced to the Illinois State Plane Coordinate System, East Zone NAD 83 (2011 ADJ), with a combined factor of 0.9999985, described as follows:

Commencing at a found mag spike at the northeast corner of said Southeast Quarter of Section 20 per Monument Record recorded May 18, 2010, as Document Number 2010R03363 in the Recorder's Office of Boone County; thence South 89 degrees 38 minutes 27 seconds West, on the north line of said Southeast Quarter, 820.96 feet, to a perpendicular line; thence South 00 degrees 21 minutes 33 seconds East, on said perpendicular line, 75.64 feet to the Point of Beginning.
From said Point of Beginning: thence South 00 degrees 16 minutes 14 seconds East, 5.00 feet; thence South 89 degrees 43 minutes 46 seconds West, 25.00 feet; thence North 00 degrees 16 minutes 14 seconds West, 5.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 43 minutes 46 seconds East, 25.00 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 0.0029 acre, more or less (area based on ground distances).

20513016TE-B
That part of the Southeast Quarter of Section 20, Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, Boone County, State of Illinois, with bearings and grid distances referenced to the Illinois State Plane Coordinate System, East Zone NAD 83 (2011 ADJ), with a combined factor of 0.9999985, described as follows:

Commencing at a found mag spike at the northeast corner of said Southeast Quarter of Section 20 per Monument Record recorded May 18, 2010, as Document Number 2010R03363 in the Recorder's Office of Boone County; thence South 89 degrees 38 minutes 27 seconds West, on the north line of said Southeast Quarter, 680.96 feet, to a perpendicular line; thence South 00 degrees 21 minutes 33 seconds East, on said perpendicular line, 75.86 feet to the Point of Beginning.
From said Point of Beginning: thence South 00 degrees 16 minutes 14 seconds East, 5.00 feet; thence South 89 degrees 43 minutes 46 seconds West, 40.00 feet; thence North 00 degrees 16 minutes 14 seconds West, 5.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 43 minutes 46 seconds East, 40.00 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 0.0046 acre, more or less (area based on ground distances).

Said Parcels 20513016TE-A & B cntain a total of 0.0075 acre, more or less (area based on ground distances).
PIN:05-20-400-023; that summons was duly noticed out of the said Court against you as provided by law and that said suit is now pending. The said Complaint is for the ascertaining of the just compensation to be paid to the owner: Nancy Gambino; the People of the State of Illinois, Department of Labor; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Generally, for the fee taking and temporary easement acquisitions to the above described real property sought to be acquired for the purpose of widening a public highway.
Now, therefore, unless you the said above named defendants, unknown owner and non-record claimants file your appearance in the said suit, in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Boone County, Law Division, Boone County Courthouse, Boone, Illinois on or before October 9, 2026, an order or default may be entered against you at any time after that day and judgement entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.
Dated: Boone, Illinois
Pamela Coduto
Clerk of the Circuit Courthouse
Date: July 8, 2026
Kwame Raoul, Attorney General,
Vincent D. Pinelli, Special Assistant Attorney General
Attorney for Plaintiff, 70 West Madison, Suite 4300, Chicago, IL 60602; Attorney No. 3122437
Published in The Boone County Journal Sept 1, 8, 15, 2026

ASSUMED NAMES

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION
No. DBA4297 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a BAKING business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of L.A. SWEETS that its location is or will be 1721 8TH AVENUE in BELVIDERE, IL 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: 815-721-9470
MARIA ELIZABETH ARELLANO 1721 8TH AVE
BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS 61008
I, Amy E. Ohlsen, Clerk & Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: August 14, 2026
Amy E. Ohlsen, Clerk & Recorder of Boone County
Published in Boone County Journal 8/18, 8/25,9/2/26 - P

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION
No. DBA4298 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a CUSTOM APPAREL PRINTING business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of BELVIDERE SIGNATURE CREATIONS that its location is or will be 226 ANDREWS DRIVE in BELVIDERE, IL 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: 815-721-9470
MARIA ELIZABETH ARELLANO 1721 8TH AVE
BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS 61008

Voting**from page 5**

will be 18 at the time of the upcoming election.

It also directs the U.S. Postal Service to develop administrative regulations that would prohibit mail carriers from transmitting mail ballots to or from anyone who is not included on those lists.

The lawsuit cites some of the President's own social media posts as evidence that his executive order is part of a strategy to keep Republicans in power in Washington.

Those include a May 29, 2020, post on Twitter, which is now known as X, saying mail voting would "LEAD TO THE END OF OUR GREAT REPUBLICAN PARTY." It also cites an Aug. 18, 2025 post on Truth Social saying he aims to "get rid of MAIL-IN BALLOTS."

According to published news reports, however, Trump himself cast a mail-in ballot earlier this month in Florida's primary elections.

Implementing the restrictions

The Postal Service finalized administrative rules to implement the executive order on Friday, Aug. 21, before the Supreme Court issued its order the following Monday. But it remains unclear how, or whether, the new rules will be implemented ahead of this year's November elections.

A spokesperson for the Illinois State Board of Elections told Capitol News Illinois in an email Wednesday that it has not received any federal list of U.S. citizens residing in the state and has not been informed about whether one even exists.

New Illinois Law For Electric Bikes, Scooters*Lawmakers express safety concerns over lack of regulations***Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois**

New rules governing who can use electric bikes and scooters, including where and how fast they go, will go into effect next year following Gov. JB Pritzker's signature on Wednesday.

Pritzker signed Senate Bill 3484 which establishes regulations on "micromobility" transportation that include age requirements, speed limits and rules on where they can be operated. The bill takes effect Jan. 1.

"Technology is evolving, providing expanded mobility options for our neighbors through the rise in popularity of e-bikes and scooters," bill sponsor Sen. Ram Villivalam (D-Chicago), said in a statement. "But without clear regulations for these devices, we are seeing increased injuries and accidents — jeopardizing community safety."

The bill passed both chambers with bipartisan support on June 1 following several amendments throughout the spring session.

The new law was one of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias' top priorities during the legislative session. The Chicago mayoral candidate said unregulated micromobility devices have become a problem in the city.

"As these high-powered devices become faster and more common on our streets and sidewalks, the stakes are simply too high to leave them unregulated and outpacing public safety," Giannoulias said in a statement. "This law brings accountability and common-sense safety standards to our roads while helping prevent serious injuries and ensuring riders, parents and communities understand how to safely share the road."

The state already has some regulations for low-speed electric bikes and scooters, but regulation often varies at the local level. The bill creates new statewide standards for high-speed electric bikes and scooters, electric motor bikes, and electric unicycles and skateboards.

"Municipal leaders have been responding in real time as new electric devices appear on local streets, sidewalks and bike paths," Illinois Municipal League CEO Brad Cole said in a statement. "A statewide framework gives communities greater consistency while providing local officials and law enforcement with clearer guidance."

Law enforcement groups were also in support of the bill. Locally, all legislators supported the law except Cabello, who voted no, and McCombie, who did not vote.

What's changing

It creates a new tier of regulations for "high-speed" e-bikes, which have electric motors and can travel faster than 28 mph. Those would be regulated similarly to motorcycles and require users to have a driver's license, insurance, an ownership title and register the vehicle with the state. They also must be driven on roads.

"Low-speed" e-bikes are already regulated by the state, but the law creates new tiers that govern how old a person must be to drive them. Drivers must be 15 years old to operate a Class 1 pedal-assist bike that travels up to 20 mph, such as Chicago's Divvy Bikes, and a Class 2 motor-powered bike that doesn't have to be pedaled. People must be 16 years old to drive pedal-assist bikes that can travel up to 28 mph.

All low-speed e-bikes can be used on streets, bike lanes, paths and trails, but not on sidewalks.

Some high-speed electric scooters can reach speeds of 50 mph, but the new regulations limit riders to traveling up to 28 mph. Riders would be allowed to operate them on paths, bike lanes, roads with speed limits up to 35 mph, or roads with higher speed limits if there is a bike lane. Users must be 16 years old.

Low-speed electric scooters that top out at 20 mph would also be allowed on paths, bike lanes, and roads by users who are at least 16 years old, down from 18 years old in current law.

Battery-powered devices designed for young children would be unregulated aside from a stipulation they must stay on sidewalks and paths.

Users who violate the regulations could pay fines and have their devices confiscated and impounded by the police. They are also subject to other existing traffic laws and penalties as well.

Safety concerns

Supporters of the legislation say the devices create a safety hazard for both riders and pedestrians because some can travel more than 40 mph and can often be found sharing space on both sidewalks and busy streets.

Several crashes involving young riders on e-bikes have made headlines this summer. A Crystal Lake 15-year-old was left in serious condition in August and was found to be the at-fault driver when he drove in front of a car, according to police. A 14-year-old was killed in July when he crossed in front of an SUV while riding an electronic dirt bike in front of Wauconda High School.

In Chicago, a 16-year-old on a Lime e-scooter was killed when he lost control and was hit by a semi-truck near the intersection of Western Avenue and Irving Park Road in early August. Two other teens were killed in accidents on e-scooters on the city's South Side earlier in the summer.

The Secretary of State's office plans to use a public awareness campaign to make people aware of the new law and will be updating driver education materials.

Education**from page 2**

Bailey stepped down from his role in running the church shortly before launching his 2022 gubernatorial campaign. The Pritzker campaign ran ads at that time criticizing the school for using textbooks published by Bob Jones University Press that suggested humans and dinosaurs once roamed the earth at the same time.

This year, Pritzker's campaign placed inflatable dinosaurs outside a Republican Day gathering on the fairgrounds to mock Bailey.

The stunt infuriated Bailey, especially when asked by reporters to comment on it. Bailey did not directly respond to the criticism or state a position on evolution, telling a Chicago reporter he "wasn't there." He also accused Pritzker of using the issue to deflect attention away from the state's problems while focusing on running for President in 2028.

Then Monday, Bailey issued a statement saying the school had received a "threatening message" and he accused Pritzker of putting children in danger with by using "reckless" campaign rhetoric.

"Pritzker is free to attack Darren Bailey," the statement said. "He can spend his billions slinging all the political mud he wants at another candidate. But a governor who not only drags students, teachers, and families into the political gutter but also endangers them with his reckless rhetoric has lost any claim to moral leadership."

A spokesperson for Illinois State Police said in an email Monday that it is assisting the Clay County Sheriff's Office in investigating a threat made to the school but offered no additional comment.

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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