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The Milk Run in 1905

David Larson

That's John Hills in the driver's seat. Behind him is a short one-day collection of milk cans from farms that were found outside of Belvidere in 1905. John rode a route that crossed the county, and he was well known for his personality, for his bright outlook, and because he collected the milk cans.

Today when a family wants milk, they might also prepare a longer list of items they need for the family pantry, they will bring the list to a local supermarket, choose a carton of milk along with other items, and return home. In a matter of minutes, they are home with a glass of milk or measuring milk as a component of a dish that will be served that night. Getting a carton of milk today is far less rigorous than in 1905.

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John Hills driving a milk wagon, 1905

'A Real Farm Crisis': Illinois Farm Bankruptcies Rise for 3rd Straight Year

Rising land rent, an unstable export market and record farm debt are blamed

Tara Sun Medill Illinois News Bureau

With the growing season well underway in Illinois, farmers once again are struggling to turn an abundant harvest into survival.

In 2025, family farm bankruptcies surged 46% nationwide — reaching 315 filings and marking the third consecutive year of increases. The Midwest recorded 121 filings in 2025 — up 70% from the prior year.

The trend has only accelerated. In April alone this year, 62 Chapter 12 farm bankruptcies were filed nationwide — a 130% jump from the prior year and the highest monthly total since February 2020. The USDA projects total farm debt will rise 5.2% to a record \$624.7 billion in 2026, with 330 bankruptcy cases filed.

"I'm scared about there being a real farm crisis," said Eliot Clay, executive director of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts. "This could come down to people being able to save their farms — just knowing that they could put it into some conservation easement or something. Like, they need anything that they can get."

For Illinois, the crisis is playing out as lawmakers just finished a budget session that

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Illinois is Experiencing More Tornadoes — But Receiving Less Federal Disaster Aid

As 2026 sets a record for tornadoes in Illinois, blue states struggle to get federal emergency funds

Jenna Schweikert Capitol News Illinois

Illinois has seen a record number of tornadoes just six months into the year after a series of spring and summer storms barreled their way across the Midwest, causing millions in damage as federal disaster assistance wanes in Democrat-led states.

Experts chalk the sudden increase up to temporary fluctuation, although a small increase over decades is in line with current climate change research. But more severe weather events could strain local and state governments as recent analysis shows blue states have struggled to get federal aid requests approved under the Second Trump Administration.

The National Weather Service confirmed a record 153 tornadoes in Illinois as of June 23, a number all but guaranteed to increase as teams continue to evaluate late June storms while more tornadoes are bound to occur in the second half of the year. Before 2023, Illinois hadn't recorded more than 73 tornadoes in a calendar year since 2006.

When looking at recorded tornadoes since 1950, there is going to be an increase mainly because of better equipment and reporting

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Bailey Campaign Embraces Artificial Intelligence in New Era of Politics

State lawmakers consider requiring campaigns to disclose AI-generated ads

Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

Artificial intelligence-generated images and videos are ushering in a new era for political campaigns and Republican Darren Bailey is leading its introduction in Illinois during his second run for governor.

From showing Gov. JB Pritzker wearing a Green Bay Packers cheesehead and Brett Favre jersey, to cartoonish videos portraying the governor lounging on the beach to the Bailey-Del Mar campaign logo displayed in the Chicago sky like the Bat Signal, Bailey's campaign has made AI-generated images and videos a regular part of its social media content.

Bailey's running mate, Aaron Del Mar, told Capitol News Illinois that AI content serves a key purpose for their campaign.

"From an algorithm standpoint, when we post something static, it doesn't have engagement," Del Mar said. "When you start posting some of these AI images that you're describing, the engagement goes off the roof. Your accessibility to the algorithms is off the charts."

Winning the algorithms to reach more viewers on social media is important for Bailey's campaign, which mostly relies on small-dollar

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Cocktails-to-go, New State Agency Among Laws Taking Effect July 1

14 new laws will begin with new fiscal year

Ben Szalinski

Capitol News Illinois

July 1 marks a second New Year's Day in Illinois as a new budget takes effect along with more than a dozen new state laws.

In addition to the state's nearly \$56 billion fiscal year 2027 budget being implemented and the 1-cent motor fuel tax increase being suspended for the remainder of the year, 14 news laws will go into effect on Wednesday.

Cocktails-to-go

A pandemic-era allowance is now law six-and-a-half years later. Senate Bill 618 makes cocktails-to-go permanent.



Jean Babb, 97, Belvidere, July 1
Debra O'Linda Bailey, 66, Belvidere, July 4
Dawn Brinkmeyer, 62, Belvidere, July 4
Lewis "Warren" Emry, 96, Belvidere, July 1
Kenneth Loeffel, 91, Marengo, July 7
Shirley (Dennison) Perona, 102, Harvard, June 29
John "Jack" Politic, 79, Caledonia, July 10
Larry Van Hout, 76, Harvard, July 8



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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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Illinois lawmakers passed legislation during the pandemic that allowed restaurants and bars to sell cocktails and mixed drinks for pickup or delivery as businesses were closed to in-person customers. That will be allowed to continue permanently under the new law.

AI and bullying

Posting unauthorized artificial intelligence images can be considered cyberbullying in Illinois schools under House Bill 3851. This includes posting or distributing sexual images. Creating sexual images of children can also be charged under the state's child pornography laws under a law passed in 2025.

"Many people are using AI to produce harmful materials, which has led to a whole new level of cyberbullying," Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel, D-Shorewood, who sponsored the bill, said in a statement. "We cannot let our laws fall behind technology. This legislation helps our state meet current challenges and ensures bullying via AI is addressed in the school code."

Illinois lawmakers have broadly sought to regulate artificial intelligence, including its presence in schools.

Department of Early Childhood

The new Department of Early Childhood will officially launch on July 1, completing one of Gov. JB Pritzker's top priorities of his second term.

Senate Bill 1 to create the new agency passed the General Assembly with bipartisan support in 2024 and calls for consolidating a variety of early childhood services that are spread across multiple state agencies under one roof. Those include oversight and funding of preschools, childcare centers, home visiting and early intervention programs.

Pritzker tapped Teresa Ramos to direct the agency. She worked in childcare advocacy before joining the governor's office's education policy team.

Lawmakers appropriated \$2.1 billion from the General Revenue Fund to the new agency in fiscal year 2027, which also begins July 1.

Contraband report

The Department of Corrections will have to report more information about contraband in its facilities as the department continues to face scrutiny around substance exposures. Senate Bill 2201 requires the department to annually report data about what contraband is found, where it was discovered, how it got into the facility, and any disciplinary action that was taken as a result.

It also requires IDOC to report on medical responses and hospitalizations for staff members, including the cause.

Statewide public defender

The bricks of the new Office of State Public Defender can begin being laid on July 1, as House Bill 3363 requires an 11-member commission to be appointed by Oct. 1. The commission will identify

the costs and funding sources to establish the Office of State Public Defender. The remainder of the bill, including additional processes to set up the office, will take effect Jan. 1. Locally, Democratic legislators voted for House Bill 3363 and Republican voted against.

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Supreme Court Decisions and Bias

Bob Evans

Rockford University

We begin where we will end. As logicians remind us, correlation does not by itself constitute causation. The mere fact that the Supreme Court occasionally, or even frequently, endorses a conception of executive authority that appeals to Donald Trump does not make the justices Trumpian stooges. There appears to be instead an overlap of views on the scope of executive authority.

First, some numbers. In its most recent complete term the Supreme Court rendered 67 decisions. Of these, a full 24 were unanimous. An additional 10 were decided "per curiam". These are decisions "by the court". They are announced on behalf of the entire Court, with no breakdown of the vote on either side of the decision. For the remaining "split decisions", the composition of the votes for and against the decision varies.

So the record belies the conclusion that the Supreme Court suffers from a bitterly divided, partisan liberal-conservative split. A few cases, albeit controversial, important ones, seem to generate the myth of a profound division among the justices.

With respect to our concerns about the relationship between the executive and judicial branches, many cases were utterly unrelated to this relationship. Some important decisions were agreeable to Donald Trump personally, but they had nothing to do with executive authority.

Some, on the other hand, offended his preferences. If the justices were truly Trumpian justices they would never have ruled in favor of mail-in ballots, or extended counting periods for votes. Yet they did. The decision that was really infuriating for Trump was the decision in favor of "birthright" citizenship. Donald Trump cares about few issues more than this one.

Now what about the cases that actually did involve executive authority? The record is mixed. Some decisions seem to constrain the executive, while some seem to expand executive authority.

First, the restraints. The Court ruled against the executive imposition of tariffs, noting that this was a legislative decision. The Court denied the President the authority to "call up" a state's national guard in the absence of a genuine national emergency. The Court denied the President the authority to dismiss a Federal Reserve Board Governor during her legislatively defined term. These are all cases in which the Court defined and enforced the boundaries of executive authority contrary to the wishes of the current executive.

So far we would have to question the assertion that the majority of Supreme Court justices simply take their marching orders from Donald Trump. We must, however, acknowledge that the Court has indeed rendered decisions that do expand executive authority.

In a 2024 decision, *Trump v US*, the Court ruled that Presidents had absolute legal immunity for all official acts within their core Constitutional powers. In another decision, *Trump v Wilcox*, followed by *Trump v Slaughter* this spring, the Court endorsed the President's authority to dismiss at will the heads of almost all administrative agencies. The one exception stipulated was a member of the Federal Reserve Board. The *Slaughter* decision overturned a precedent to the contrary of almost 100 years. There are other decisions that seem to expand executive authority.

So what is happening? The Supreme Court has indeed interpreted executive authority generously. But it is not at the behest of Donald Trump. A majority of the justices has endorsed a Constitutional theory labeled by scholars "unified executive theory."

The argument is in fact simple, although controversial. Article II of the Constitution begins with a "vesting clause". It reads, "The executive

power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America." Get that? The executive power—all of it—is vested in the President.

The Article I legislative vesting clause, and the Article III judicial vesting clause are not so absolute. Their vesting is somewhat qualified. Whatever is an executive power is vested completely in the President and nowhere else. That is the theory of the unified executive.

Two points need to be made in conclusion. First, a majority of Supreme Court justices, led by Chief Justice Roberts, has endorsed this particular theory of executive authority. It is one of several debated by lawyers, judges, and scholars. Second, unified executive theory may appear to flatter Donald Trump, but that is solely because he happens currently to occupy the Oval Office. The theory applies to the office, independently of the current occupant. Donald Trump will not occupy the Oval Office after 2028. A Democrat might. Another Republican might. The word that we should remember is "precedent", not "President" Trump, Jones, or anyone else.

We end where we began. As logicians remind us, correlation does not by itself constitute causation.



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Milk Wagon

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John did not deliver milk to the homes. His job was picking up cans of milk for delivery to the creamery. When the cans of raw milk reached the creamery—and there were several in Boone County in 1905—the milk would first pass through a pasteurization process that would kill any bacteria found in the milk. From that point, pasteurized milk would be packaged and put on ice for delivery the next morning to customers.

In those days, milk was delivered either in pails or glass bottles. A pail was left on the porch to be filled by the deliveryman and retrieved by the homeowner. In other instances, milk was delivered in glass bottles that the family would pay a deposit to use. Accounting and payment was done in an envelope placed with the empty bottles. When the bottles were empty, the customer would wash out the bottles and place them on the porch in what was called as the milk box to be replaced by full bottles the next day. That service lasted into the 1960s in Belvidere.

But milk wasn't the only product that came from creameries at the turn of the century. Some of the milk would be moved to another area of the creamery where the milk would sit for a short period before being churned into butter. Surplus milk was transferred to Elgin, which was known as the butter capital of the Midwest at the turn of the century.

Some of the milk was processed into cottage cheese. Finally, other areas of the creamery produced cream, buttermilk and even aged cheese. Some of the local creameries of that era produced large wheels of Swiss, Brick, Cream, and Cheddar cheese.

But that was not John's job. John's job was to pick up the full cans of milk and to engage the farm families that he served.

Local dairy farmers would contract with the creamery where they sold their milk. Market prices were agreed upon that determined the price paid the farmer. John's job, besides hefting the cans and driving his team of horses, was to engage the farmers and entertain the family.

John began his route early in the morning because farmers began their days at about the same time. In some instances, 4:30AM or 5AM was not too early. Starting the day at that hour was appreciated because running a dairy farm meant milking the cows twice every day, early and late.

Cows do not take holidays. Milking began at dawn. The work was hard and in addition to milking the cows, farmers also had to feed the cows and that was without the benefit of tractors, augers, or conveyers used in today's large-scale milking parlors. Feeding was managed by retrieving bailed hay from the barn and shoveling corn or ground corn into baskets or even wheelbarrows to deliver to where the cows stood while being milked. The Starline Farm Products Factory in Harvard produced barn buildout products for dairy farmers.

The pails of milk were carried from the barn to the milk house where the milk was poured into the large cans where the milk would sit until

John came with his wagon. He often arrived at the farms when the milking was underway. He would pick up the cans from the morning and those from the night before. Though John did not have a lot of time to waste at any farmstead, he often had time enough to talk with the farmer or maybe even get a piece of pie before he left for another stop.

The photograph of John was taken on what was a warm late spring or summer day. John likely did not have the umbrella unfurled every day. The day John posed for the photographer with his umbrella unfurled he was traveling on the Poplar Grove Road. He had stopped just north of Simon Luhman's corner, which we believe is the farm on the southeast corner with Marengo Road when the photographer set up his tripod and asked for John to "Watch the birdie." The route John rode ended at the Borden's Creamery.

So much has changed since 1905 when this photograph was shot. Milk is not carried today in a horse-drawn wagon, milk is not delivered to the creameries in large milk cans, and Poplar Grove Road is paved.

Farming

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delivered few meaningful results for an industry under siege. Gary Asay, who has farmed in Illinois since 1976 and sold crop insurance for more than 20 years, sees clear reasons to worry.

"The increase in the number of bankruptcies and the increased buying of higher-level crop insurance are both signs of the stress that's in the industry," Asay said. "Farmers are under stress. They may be having to borrow more money. Therefore, they want more protection."

Crop insurance, he pointed out, can't fully protect farmers from losses. The most common policy, Revenue Protection, covers only up to 85% of projected revenue.

"Even with the best crop insurance coverage you can buy, if that coverage is below your cost of production, you can still lose money without even collecting," Asay said.

In 2025, U.S. soybean production totaled 4.26 billion bushels, with the average yield per acre estimated at a record high 53.0 bushels per acre. Illinois alone harvested more than 639 million bushels in 2025.

Then, in February 2025, the U.S. imposed a 10% tariff on Chinese products. And China — once the world's largest buyer of U.S. soybeans — stopped purchasing U.S. crops. Last September marked the first month since 2018 that imports from the U.S. fell to zero, according to China's General Administration of Customs.

Farmers had entered the 2025 season with a smaller safety net after the projected price for the crop insurance guarantees fell by 8.7% that year. The drop meant less protection heading into the spring planting. But because yields were high, most farms still generated revenue above their guaranteed floor. Although farmers grew plenty, they sold every bushel for less than it cost to produce.

"A lot of farmers cannot sell their corn or

soybeans at a profit right now, just because the price is so low," Asay said.

Bankruptcies in agriculture rarely follow a single bad year. For U.S. farmers, the financial squeeze began well before 2025.

Real estate debt — tied to the land farmers rent or own — is expected to reach \$404.3 billion in 2026, a reflection of the high cost of farmland that has squeezed so many operators.

"Overhead costs represent the largest cost component on the U.S. farm, accounting for nearly one-half of total costs during the 2020-24 period," said Joana Colussi, a research assistant professor of agricultural economics at Purdue University, citing Purdue data. "Eighty percent of the farmers in the Midwest, they rent the land."

Colussi has tracked the financial squeeze on farmers across the Midwest. When land prices rise, so does the rent — a fixed cost that farmers pay regardless of crop prices or yields. That leaves farmers searching for ways to keep operations going. "The way to continue being competitive is to try to reduce the costs," she said.

Diversification into niche markets — non-GMO (genetically modified organism), organic or specialty crops — offers one path forward, though Colussi mentioned it's not a quick fix

Farm crisis reminiscent of the 1980s.

Rep. Charlie Meier, R-Okawville, who is a farmer himself, described the current moment as reminiscent of the 1980s farm crisis. "There were massive bankruptcies in the '80s," Meier said. "A lot, a lot of farms went under."

The trigger now and then is the unstable export market. But the financial strain was already visible. In 2025, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago reported that 5.6% of farm loans were classified as having "major" or "severe" repayment problems — the highest since 2020. That means borrowers were falling behind on payments or reworking their loans. It's an indicator that many farmers were struggling to repay old debt while borrowing more to plant the next crop.

Ahead of the 2026 legislative session, farm groups pushed for estate tax relief, one of the Illinois Farm Bureau's top priorities, along with payouts for farmers to protect their land and programs that help them find new buyers for their crops. But in a tight budget year, those priorities stalled.

The Illinois Farm Bureau did not secure passage of the Family Farm Preservation Act, which would have raised the state's estate tax exemption from \$4 million to \$6 million, reducing the tax burden on inherited farms and making it easier for young farmers to keep the land and operations intact.

State Rep. Sharon Chung, DBloomington, who serves on the House Agriculture Committee, was also unable to get a relatively small boost for farmers through this session.

She pushed for a \$10 million increase in funding for Soil and Water Conservation Districts through House Bill 4755. But the final Fiscal Year 2027 budget held funding at \$4.5 million for the third straight year, far short of what advocates say districts need. These districts are trusted by local farmers because they work alongside them,

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Farming

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offering advice on how to farm more efficiently at a lower cost.

Clay, the district's executive director, said the biggest need is giving districts "the financial certainty that they can hire and keep people hired."

Without that, districts see constant turnover. That means farmers lose access to experienced local advisors who understand their land and can help them navigate conservation practices that might save money and keep them afloat.

"Agriculture is the No. 1 producer for our economy in Illinois," Chung said. "Anything we can do to help prop that up is so important."

Despite those unpassed bills, farmers did secure a few victories. The final budget included changes to the Farmland Assessment Law — extending a tax break for conservation practices through 2031 — and avoided cuts to key programs, including the Illinois Department of Agriculture, agricultural education and cover-crop incentives that enrich the soil.

While farmers had hoped Springfield could do more, they also recognized that forces shaping the industry go far beyond the influence of legislators: falling crop prices, an unstable export market and rising costs.

As farmers face mounting distress, the history of the 1980s hangs over the heartland.

"There's just not enough room for error right now. Something that happened in the past can take down a farmer today," Asay said.

Tara Sun is a graduate student in journalism with Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media and Integrated Marketing Communications, and is a fellow in its Medill Illinois News Bureau working in partnership with Capitol News Illinois.

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Tornadoes

from page 1

methods, state climatologist Trent Ford said. But even when scientists adjust for reporting, there is still an increase evident, particularly in the Midwest.

Climate change or simple fluctuation?

What's difficult is figuring out why that is happening, because it's not just one factor contributing to the increase. Stories attributing an eastward shift in "Tornado Alley" entirely to climate change don't always acknowledge the fact that the Midwest has always been a hotspot for tornadoes in addition to the Great Plains region, Ford said.

There are some signals for climate change, such as an increase in early spring tornadoes and outbreaks of multiple tornadoes in one severe storm.

But generally, the past four years are not what climatologists would expect as a symptom of climate change.

"The question of, would we expect what's happened over the last four years to occur (the) next four or five years, might be 'no' because of how unusual the last four years have been," Ford said. "There's not likely a very strong climate change signal in getting this number of tornadoes."

Although the high frequency over the last four years could partially be due to climate change, Ford said it's more attributable to normal weather variability because climate change trends take place over much longer periods of time: decades or more, not a handful of years.

"We do see an increasing trend in tornadoes that is possibly attributed to climate change within the Midwest, but it's a very small increase. It's not a doubling of the frequency; that's not how climate change works," Ford said.

Tornado damage

This year, several tornadoes have caused severe damage to communities across the state, including five EF-3s verified by the National Weather Service. Those are tornadoes with winds between 136 mph and 165mph. Tornadoes with the most severe rating, EF-5, are extremely rare.

On March 10, an EF-3 ripped through Kankakee County and across the state line into Indiana, killing three people, destroying dozens of structures and significantly damaging hundreds more.

Another EF-3 moved at similar speeds through Effingham and Jasper counties the evening of June 17, injuring two and destroying and damaging dozens of structures in the area. That same evening, an EF-2 damaged parts of Coles County, just north of Effingham.

In southern Illinois' rural Jefferson County, an EF-3 killed two on June 22. EF-3 tornadoes have also been confirmed in Washburn and Streator. Dozens of EF-1s have also caused damage all over the state, from metropolitan areas to rural farmland.

The effect tornadoes have on metro vs. rural areas is largely the same, but available infrastructure like accessible shelters and broadband can have a more targeted effect in rural areas, Ford said.

Decrease in federal aid

At the same time, a decrease in federal disaster assistance is putting more pressure on local and state governments as communities rebuild following these severe weather events.

"Historically, (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the federal government have come in after a disaster and provided essentially the resources, where coordination is the local, the state, making sure everybody gets what they need," Ford said. "That system is really important for communities be able to get back on their feet, for people to be able to rebuild, so it's extremely important that all forms, local, state, federal government are working together and in good faith."

A Politico analysis found Democrat-led states saw just 23% of their disaster requests granted in

the first year of Trump's second term, compared to 89% for their Republican counterparts. Under the past six administrations — including Trump's first term — states led by either party saw similar rates of approval, between 70% and 90%. The analysis also found that the administration takes twice as long to issue decisions on requests from blue states.

Last fall, the Trump administration denied two requests for assistance after July and August storms caused severe flooding in the Chicago area. Gov. JB Pritzker criticized the decisions as "politically motivated," although FEMA has denied that in media statements. The U.S. Small Business Administration did approve low-interest loans for businesses impacted by the August flooding.

"They (FEMA) are slow in responding with the dollars that they promise, and you know there are only so many dollars that a state has for what should be covered by federal emergency management," Pritzker told reporters in Decatur on Monday.

Pritzker visited Kankakee County within two days of the March 10 storm. He surveyed damage from the June 17 EF-2 in Charleston on June 22 and said he is communicating with officials from Effingham and Jefferson counties.

State and federal agencies completed damage assessments in Kankakee on March 30, and despite initial indications, did not seek individual or public assistance through FEMA. The SBA did approve low-interest emergency loans for small businesses with uninsured damage. Pritzker said he expects the state will seek federal assistance for the June tornadoes, either through FEMA or the SBA.

"We've got to make sure that we're literally clearing the streets, restoring power, all the things that need to be done immediately," Pritzker said. "Then we start to do an assessment with the local emergency management teams."

To submit a request for public assistance to FEMA, the county and the state must first issue an emergency declaration, followed by a presidential declaration, Pritzker said. FEMA can issue both public assistance and individual assistance grants after a disaster declaration. The state or county must also reach a cost per person threshold to qualify for the funds, although this doesn't guarantee a request for aid will be granted. FEMA considers cost, insurance coverage, community impact and other available resources in its evaluations for individual and public assistance.

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Take notice that on February 13, 2025, a Petition for Termination of Parental Rights was filed under the Juvenile Court Act by the Kane County State’s Attorney in the Circuit Court for the 16th Judicial Circuit and on May 12, 2025, the matter of In Re the Interest of Jatayveon Franklin, a minor, was transferred from Kane County and accepted by Boone County on June 5, 2025.

On July 30, 2026 at the Boone County Courthouse located at 601 N. Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois at 2:00 p.m. in courtroom #3, or as soon thereafter as the cause may be heard, a Petition for Termination of Parental Rights hearing will be held regarding declaring the minor a ward of the ‘court under the Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THIS PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO THE MINOR’S ADOPTION. YOU MAY LOSE ALL

PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. Unless you appear in court, in person, on July 30, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of proceedings in this case, including the filing of any amended petitions to terminate your parental rights.

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

Dated: 6/16/26 PAMELA CODUTO, CIRCUIT CLERK
by: Kristina L. Pearson, Deputy Clerk
Published in The Boone County Journal Nov 30, July 7 & 14, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
BEFORE THE ZONING COMMITTEE OF THE VILLAGE OF
TIMBERLANE, BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/11-13-7 and 65 ILCS 5/11-13-14 and the Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance of the Village of Timberlane, the Zoning Committee of the Village of Timberlane, Boone County, Illinois, will hold a public hearing on JULY 23, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Village of Timberlane, Village Hall, located within the Immanuel North Lutheran Church, 2940 Charleston Court, Caledonia, Illinois 61011, to consider the petitions described below filed by Roundabout Ventures, LLC, an Illinois limited liability company, the owner of record of the property described below.

SUBJECT PROPERTY: Approximately 23.65 acres located at the northeast corner of Illinois Route 76 (Fairgrounds Road) and Caledonia Road, commonly known as 10568 Caledonia Road, Belvidere (Village of Timberlane), Boone County, Illinois, and identified as Boone County Permanent Index Numbers 05-11-300-015, 05-11-100-018 and 05-11-100-019, presently zoned I-L Light Industrial District. A complete legal description of the Subject Property is on file with the Village Clerk and available for public inspection.

NATURE OF THE RELIEF REQUESTED: Roundabout Ventures, LLC has filed an omnibus land-use application consisting of four petitions seeking the following relief, in connection with the development and use of the Subject Property for a self-service storage facility with outdoor commercial vehicle storage and two off-site sign structures:

PETITION No. 1 — SIGN VARIANCES. Variances from the Village of Timberlane Sign Ordinance (Ord. No. 012-292-01), including Sections 5.6.2, 5.6.7, and 5.6.8, to authorize two (2) off-site sign structures on the Subject Property at their existing dimensions and configuration, including sign face area, number of faces, height, spacing, and illumination, including external LED floodlight illumination of one static sign structure and a full-color electronic multi-message (LED) display on the other sign structure.

PETITION No. 2 — SITE DEVELOPMENT VARIANCES. Variances from the Village of Timberlane Zoning Ordinance (Ord. No. 025-079-01), including Sections 1.7, 4.3, and 10.5, concerning off-street parking quantity; parking and storage area surfacing; curb-and-gutter, wheel-guard, and striping requirements (Sections 4.3.J, 4.3.K, and 4.3.L); maximum lot coverage; and front-yard setback, as applied to the proposed self-service storage facility and its outdoor storage area.

PETITION No. 3 — ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS. Amendments to the text of the Zoning Ordinance and the Sign Ordinance, namely: (a) amending Chapter 2 (Definitions) and Chapter 4 (Off-Street Parking) to distinguish “Parking Areas” from “Outdoor Storage Areas” and to add a new Section 4.3.Q; (b) amending Section 10.3.1.C (I-L Light Industrial District permitted uses) to add self-service storage facilities and accessory outdoor storage of recreational vehicles, boats, campers, and trailers, and adding a definition of “Self-Service Storage Facility”; (c) amending the definition of “Lot Coverage” in Chapter 2 and Section 1.7; (d) amending Sign Ordinance Section 5.6.8.G (off-site sign height); (e) amending Sign Ordinance Section 5.6.2.H.7 and adding a new Section 5.6.15 to permit electronic multi-message displays in the I-L Light Industrial District subject to operational standards; and (f) adding a new Section 18.4 to Chapter 18 (Performance Standards) cross-referencing those operational standards.

PETITION No. 4 — SPECIAL USE PERMIT. A Special Use Permit under Chapter 14 of the Zoning Ordinance and 65 ILCS 5/11-13-1.1 to authorize commercial vehicle storage in the I-L Light Industrial District on the Subject Property, including the outdoor parking and storage of commercial, work, contractor, recreational, and similar vehicles, trailers, and equipment.

The petitions also request such other, further, alternative, or related relief as may be necessary or appropriate to grant the relief described

above, including any variance, amendment, or special use reasonably related to or in support of the petitions.

TIME AND PLACE OF HEARING; HOW TO PARTICIPATE: The public hearing will be held at the date, time, and place stated above. At the hearing, any person desiring to be heard will be given an opportunity to be heard with respect to the petitions. Written comments may be submitted to the Village Clerk at or before the hearing.

WHERE TO REVIEW THE PETITIONS: The petitions, the proposed text amendments and ordinances, the site plans, and all supporting documents are on file with, and available for public inspection at the office of, the Village Clerk, Village of Timberlane, P.O. Box 56, Caledonia, Illinois 61011, during regular business hours.

The hearing may be continued from time to time without further published notice except as required by law. The Zoning Committee will, following the public hearing, make findings and a recommendation to the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Timberlane, which will act upon the petitions.

Dated: July 6, 2026.
VILLAGE OF TIMBERLANE, BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
By: Debra Marner, Village Clerk
Published in the Boone County Journal 7/7&14/26

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF
THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, Plaintiff,
-v.- 19 CH 89

CHRISTOPHER J MURPHY A/K/A CHRISTOPHER MURPHY;
ROBIN L MURPHY A/K/A ROBIN L MARCUCCILLI A/K/A ROBIN MURPHY; CAPITAL ONE BANK (USA), N.A.; CANDLEWICK LANE ASSOCIATION, INC.; MARINER FINANCE, LLC, Defendants.
118 Spinnacre Place NE,
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 3/19/2025, an agent of Auction.com, LLC will conduct the Online Only auction at www.auction.com, with the bidding window opening on 8/10/2026 at 10:00 AM CDT and closing on 8/12/2026 at 10:00 AM subject to extension, and will sell at public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate.

LOT 66 IN CANDLEWICK LAKE UNIT NO. 3 ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NO. 72-123 IN THE RECORDER’S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.
Commonly known as 118 Spinnacre Place NE, Poplar Grove, IL 61065
Property Index No. 03-22-476-004
The real estate is improved with a Single Family Residence.
The judgment amount was \$159,401.01

Sale Terms: Full Sale Terms are available on the property page at www.auction.com by entering 118 Spinnacre Place NE into the search bar. If sold to anyone other than the Plaintiff, the winning bidder must pay the full bid amount within twenty-four (24) hours of the auction’s end. All payments must be certified funds. No third-party checks will be accepted. All bidders will need to register at www.auction.com prior to placing a bid. 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 Plaintiffs attorney: McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP (312) 346-9088 please refer to file number 20-04072IL.

Auction.com, LLC
100 N LaSalle St., Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60602 – 872-225-4985
You can also visit www.auction.com.
Attorney File No. 20-04072IL
Case Number: 19 CH 89

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.
6088-967002
Published in The Boone County Journal July 14, 21, 28, 2026 SW

ASSUMED NAMES

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

No. DBA4289 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a CARPENTRY business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of BARAGLIA TRIM that its location is or will be 10042 TANGLEWOOD CIRCLE 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: 224-291-1537
Weston Anthony Baraglia 10042 Tanglewood Cir
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: June 22, 2026
Amy E. Ohlsen, Clerk & Recorder of Boone County
Published in Boone County Journal 6/23, 6/30, 7/07 - P

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

No. DBA4290 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a STAINED GLASS MAKING AND SELLING business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of THE GLASS GARDNER that its location is or will be 925 WHITNEY BLVD 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: 815-566-5957
Christine Elizabeth Gardner 925 Whitney Blvd.
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: June 22, 2026
Amy E. Ohlsen, Clerk & Recorder of Boone County
Published in Boone County Journal 6/23, 6/30, 7/07 - P

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

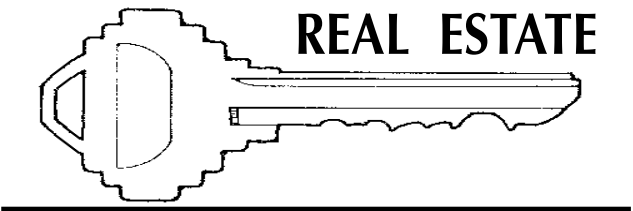
No. DBA4291 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a HVAC business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of HCE that its location is or will be 226 ANDREWS DR in BELVIDERE in the County of BOONE COUNTY, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.

Phone Number: 815-721-1696
MANUEL ALEJANDRO MARQUEZ 226 ANDREWS DR
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: June 8, 2026
Amy E. Ohlsen, Clerk & Recorder of Boone County
Published in Boone County Journal 6/30, 7/7, 7/14/26 - P

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

No. DBA4289 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of ALIEN EYES that its location is or will be 1668 PARKSIDE DRIVE 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: 815-289-9545
COLIN J TOOHEY 1668 Parkside Drive
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: July 9, 2026
Amy E. Ohlsen, Clerk & Recorder of Boone County
Published in Boone County Journal 7/14, 7/21, 7/28, 2026 - P



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

U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, Plaintiff,
-v.- 19 CH 89
CHRISTOPHER J MURPHY A/K/A CHRISTOPHER MURPHY;
ROBIN L MURPHY A/K/A ROBIN L MARCUCCILLI A/K/A ROBIN MURPHY; CAPITAL ONE BANK (USA), N.A.; CANDLEWICK LANE ASSOCIATION, INC.; MARINER FINANCE, LLC, Defendants.
118 Spinnacre Place NE,
Poplar Grove, IL 61065

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Commonly known as 118 Spinnacre Place NE, Poplar Grove, IL 61065
Property Index No. 03-22-476-004
The real estate is improved with a Single Family Residence.
The judgment amount was \$159,401.01

Sale Terms: Full Sale Terms are available on the property page at www.auction.com by entering 118 Spinnacre Place NE into the search bar. If sold to anyone other than the Plaintiff, the winning bidder must pay the full bid amount within twenty-four (24) hours of the auction’s end. All payments must be certified funds. No third-party checks will be accepted. All bidders will need to register at www.auction.com prior to placing a bid. 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 Plaintiffs attorney: McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP (312) 346-9088 please refer to file number 20-04072IL.

Auction.com, LLC
100 N LaSalle St., Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60602 – 872-225-4985

Illinois 'Reviewing' DOJ's Threat to Prosecute State Election Officials Over Noncitizen Voting

Letter is latest in a series of efforts to crack down on unfounded allegations of vote fraud

Peter Hancock **Capitol News Illinois**

The Illinois State Board of Elections said Wednesday it is "reviewing" a letter from the U.S. Department of Justice threatening criminal prosecution of any official who allows noncitizens to cast ballots and requesting information about how the state intends to prevent noncitizens voting.

The letter, dated Tuesday, July 7, was addressed to ISBE Executive Director Bernadette Matthews. It was similar to letters reportedly sent to top election officials in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

It also appeared to be part of a multi-pronged effort by the Trump administration to crack down on illegal voting by noncitizens, something election experts say is exceedingly rare.

In addition to Tuesday's letter threatening prosecution, DOJ is also suing Illinois and dozens of other states for access to the state's complete, unredacted voter registration list, including sensitive information such as voters' dates of birth, driver's license numbers and partial Social Security numbers. The federal government has not been successful in any of those lawsuits thus far.

The Trump administration is also proposing new regulations that would prohibit the U.S.

Postal Service from transmitting mail-in or absentee ballots to or from voters who are not included on a federally approved list of U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote, though a federal judge has blocked that effort.

Tuesday's letter, DOJ's demands

The three-page letter sent Tuesday was signed by Harmeet Dhillon, who heads DOJ's Civil Rights Division. It cites several federal statutes that make it a crime for noncitizens to vote in federal, state or local elections, or to falsely represent themselves as citizens.

It concludes with a warning that "any election officer, including the chief election officer of the state, who knowingly retains noncitizens on the state's (State Voter Registration List) or facilitates noncitizens in receiving ad casting ballots could be subject to criminal liability."

"The Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, would like to assist your state in complying with these federal laws," the letter states. "Please respond to this letter within five days informing us of how the state of Illinois intends to ensure it is complying with these federal laws at both the state and local level and how the Department can assist in those efforts."

President Donald Trump has long claimed, without evidence, that voting fraud — including fraudulent mail ballots and illegal votes by noncitizens — cost him the 2020 election. He has continued to make unfounded claims about noncitizen voting since winning back the presidency in 2024.

In August 2025, DOJ demanded Illinois election officials hand over the state's complete, unredacted voter registration database, saying it needed that information to determine whether Illinois was complying with federal laws requiring states to maintain accurate, up-to-date voter rolls.

After Illinois refused to comply, citing state and federal privacy laws, DOJ sued the state in federal court in Springfield. It has also sued dozens of other states for refusing similar demands. So far, every court that has issued a decision in those cases has ruled against DOJ, but the Illinois case remains pending before Judge Colleen Lawless.

Several labor and civil rights organizations have intervened in the Illinois case supporting the

state's refusal to hand over the information and urging the court to dismiss the suit.

Attorneys for those groups have argued that DOJ's stated reason for seeking the data — to enforce voter list maintenance requirements — is just a pretext. They say the real reason it wants the information is to develop a national registry of eligible voters, something they argue is beyond the federal government's constitutional authority.

Federal voting list

In a March 31 executive order, Trump directed the Department of Homeland Security to compile such lists for each state and transmit them to each state's chief election official. Those lists are to include the names of state residents who are U.S. citizens and will be 18 years of age or older at the time of the 2026 election.

The order also directed the U.S. Postal Service to initiate new administrative rules to prohibit transmitting mail-in or absentee ballots from any individual who is not listed on the federal list of eligible voters.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul joined a coalition of 22 other states and Washington, D.C., in filing a federal lawsuit challenging that order. And on June 25, a federal judge in Massachusetts struck down the major provisions of that order as unconstitutional beyond the authority of federal agencies.

DOJ has since filed notice that it intends to appeal that ruling. And in the meantime, USPS has not withdrawn its proposed rules concerning mail-in ballots.

On Thursday, July 2, the deadline for submitting public comment on those proposed rules, Gov. JB Pritzker joined a coalition of eight other Democratic governors in submitting written comments opposing the rule. Raoul was also part of a coalition of 24 state attorneys general opposing the rule.

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

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Sat 9-1

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419 S. State St. Bel.

815-544-2075



Bailey

from page 1

donations and is not expected to raise massive amounts of money. Pritzker, on the other hand, has spent more than \$300 million of his own money on his first two races for governor and already put over \$25 million into this year's race.

Creating AI images also saves the campaign money, Del Mar said, adding that they cost less than traditional images created by human graphic designers.

Pritzker's campaign says it won't be showing anyone AI images. Campaign manager Chris Shallow told Capitol News Illinois the campaign has an internal policy against it.

"We use AI in the way that I think most modern organizations do," he said. "Largely its around helping our team work smarter on research, data analysis, there are applications in cybersecurity that we use AI for. A lot of behind-the-scenes stuff."

What Bailey is posting

Misleading imagery isn't new to politics, and campaigns have long distorted images to negatively portray opponents.

"The distinction I would draw between photoshop and AI is that photoshop is based on a real image," Shallow said. "What Darren Bailey is doing is creating fictional, completely-generated-by-AI content that is not even remotely based in reality."

Both Bailey and Del Mar have posted a variety of AI images and videos on their social media pages since winning the March 17 Republican primary. Their use of it is part of a growing national trend in politics, where AI images, including some that are outright false and misleading but designed to look real, are being used in campaigns.

Bailey's campaign has created several videos portraying Pritzker as various characters. A series of videos shows the governor as a shady billionaire giving tax dollars to the Hyatt hotel, money to a Chicago peacekeeper he stood with for a photograph who was later charged in a violent crime, freeing inmates from electronic monitoring and lounging in the Bahamas with his "offshore trusts." Another shows Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson as babies fighting over a toy, with Del Mar writing in the post: "Constant fighting. Constant dysfunction. Constant failure. Illinois deserves adults in the room."

"I think those videos are dramatic portrayals of what some people in Illinois feels is happening to our state," Del Mar said. "We look at those kind of like political cartoons that have been around for well over 100 years. It's something that catches people's attention and portrays it in a different light."

Some images resemble a digitally drawn political cartoon. A May 18 post by Del Mar shows himself, Bailey and Pritzker tugging at the sides of a map for control of Illinois while a May 26 post portrays Pritzker's belongings being loaded into a moving truck outside the Capitol as Bailey and Del Mar walk in.

While Bailey and Del Mar have fed their online followers a steady diet of AI content, Del Mar said it likely won't appear in any TV ads or

mailers. He said he feels people are more likely to know the content is AI online.

Del Mar also said he doesn't feel like the campaign has crossed the line with any of its creations.

"I think those lighthearted ones are definitely appropriate," he said, pointing to an image they posted of their campaign logo as the Bat Signal over the Chicago skyline, designed to imply the campaign has arrived to help the city like Batman. "I don't think we've done anything with malice towards our opponent. Certainly we cut some edges here and there."

Some images are infographics with a variety of data on taxes, data centers, gas prices and immigration spending, though only one cites a source. They also include different portrayals of Pritzker, depicting him as overweight and smoking or as a king of sorts wearing toilet regalia — an apparent nod to the time Pritzker removed toilets from a home before he became governor to get a tax break.

Aside from the photo of Pritzker in Packers gear, none of the images or videos Bailey or Del Mar have posted appear realistic.

Bailey's campaign also recently used AI to make a "say no to data centers" campaign button. The post was flagged by Facebook as "AI info," which irked independent Collin Corbett's campaign.

"Only a politician like Darren Bailey who will say anything to get elected would post an image generated by AI to claim he's against data centers," Corbett said in a social media post.

Corbett's campaign has only shared one AI image, which was the thumbnail to a Bears podcast he appeared on. A spokesperson for Corbett said in an email that "we don't oppose AI, but we believe it's important in campaigns to elevate the work done by real people."

Pritzker stays traditional

Shallow declined to say how Pritzker's campaign would respond if Bailey posted more realistic looking false portrayals of the governor or used Pritzker's voice to say something he never actually said.

Pritzker's campaign plans to stick with more traditional methods, such as "by using real Illinoisians telling real stories about how the governor has improved their lives," Shallow said.

"We think it's more compelling than any AI slop that Darren Bailey's going to come up with," he said. "We don't need to manufacture anything. Darren Bailey, anytime he steps in front of a camera, he does our work for us. We just have to record it."

Shallow said he's not worried that Bailey's AI will have any effect on voters since it's only being posted on social media and is generally only seen by Bailey and Del Mar's followers.

Support for regulations

Pritzker told reporters in Decatur in June that he's not a fan of AI political content and supports regulations on it.

"It's deteriorating the political environment, if you ask me," Pritzker said. "So I think that, at a minimum, we should be watermarking any ad,

whether it's online or on television, and it should say this is produced by AI, or something like that, so people know this isn't real."

Del Mar said he supports similar requirements.

"I think that a disclaimer would be the easiest and probably most efficient way of doing it because you don't want to be able to slow down technology," he said.

Illinois lawmakers are contemplating something similar. A provision in a large election reform package that was filed at the end of the spring session but never advanced called for requiring disclosures on ads that use AI.

Sen. Mary Edly-Allen, D-Libertyville, who filed a standalone version of the bill, said she wants lawmakers to answer a key question: "Do we own our own likeness?" She added: "truth and reality is getting blurred between lies and people can't discern."

Under the bill, ads released four months before an election that use AI must have a disclosure on them. That includes written statements on graphic images, 3-second spoken statements before or after AI audio is used, and both written and spoken statements when AI is used in a video. Campaigns would have to provide notice to the State Board of Elections about the ad and could be subject to fines each time an ad is distributed. Media outlets that distribute the ads would not be regulated.

Edly-Allen said she also supports broader legislation that limits campaigns from altering images and not just with AI, such as changing what someone is wearing or the text of a sign they're holding. As an example, she said that as a former state representative, she rejected a proposed mailer that would've attacked her opponent, Republican Chris Bos, and portrayed him wearing a Make America Great Again hat because she did not want to alter his physical appearance. The hat was instead placed alone on the mailer.

"When you take someone's likeness and alter it to the degree that people are tricked or deceived, that's the red line for me," Edly-Allen said.

The requirements of the bill would've applied to the 2026 election had it passed and been signed by Pritzker by mid-June. Edly-Allen said she thinks momentum is growing among lawmakers to pass regulations.

"Unfortunately, it's always after the harms are done that people are like 'hey, we need to do something,'" she said. "How do we balance our First Amendment right to free speech and this idea that we can be protected as candidates?"

Regardless of how AI is regulated, its explosion in everyday society means it's likely to remain part of politics.

"It's a powerful tool that can help campaigns, and I think Democratic campaigns should be thinking about how to incorporate AI tools into their workflow," Shallow said.

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.