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FREE

Illinois Promised to Protect Immigrants: Local Officials Helped Deport Them Anyway

In over a third of Illinois counties, cops, sheriffs, and even prosecutors helped ICE route at least 150 people into deportation since Trump returned to office, despite a state law preventing this.

Aura Bogado

This story is being published in partnership with The Intercept, a nonprofit news organization dedicated to holding the powerful accountable through fearless, adversarial journalism.

Minutes after Riverton police officer Brad Herzog ran 31-year-old Daniel Torrez Perez's name through a law enforcement database one night in April 2025, his phone rang. It was the FBI.

"Every bell and whistle went off," said Jack Griffin, the agent on the other end of the line.

Herzog had pulled Torrez over for going 15 miles above the speed limit on a rural two-lane highway just northeast of Springfield. Herzog ran Torrez's name and date of birth on his squad car laptop to confirm his identity. His search tripped a federal alert, and within minutes Griffin was on the line.

The exchange was captured on body-worn camera footage obtained by Injustice Watch through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Torrez had an administrative Immigration and Customs Enforcement warrant, meaning ICE was seeking to arrest him for deportation.

Griffin was with the FBI, not ICE. His call that night reflects the bureau's increased role in immigration enforcement in the second Trump administration.

Under Illinois law, Herzog couldn't hold Torrez for federal agents.

In 2017, Illinois passed the TRUST Act on the principle that immigration is governed by federal civil law and local police have no business enforcing it. It was a sentiment bipartisan enough that a Republican governor, Bruce Rauner, signed it.

The law limits Illinois law enforcement agencies' ability to assist immigration agents: They can't transfer people to ICE custody without a criminal warrant signed by a judge, allow ICE agents to call or visit someone in a local jail, or "assist in any capacity with an immigration agents' enforcement operations."

Griffin knew that the immigration warrant was off-limits to Herzog.

"I know you can't act on that," Griffin told him. "I know this puts you in a weird bind."

Then the FBI agent offered a way around it: Torrez also had an outstanding state warrant on a DUI

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Concerns Raised Nearly a Year Before The Discovery of 56 Decomposing Bodies

A City Council member's office complained to city officials twice in one week that residents were griping about odors from the business

Casey Toner & Maggie Dougherty

This story is a collaboration between Illinois Answers Project and Capitol News Illinois.

Nearly a year before 56 decomposing bodies were found at the South Chicago Chapel, sparking outrage and calls for reform, a Chicago alderperson's office complained to city officials twice within a week that residents were complaining about odors from the business and noted in the second complaint that the business owner had a history of mishandling human remains.

Yet when a city inspector visited the business two days after the first complaint, he spent 20 minutes on the scene, took a few photos, including one of an empty gurney in the funeral home's parking lot, dismissed the complaint after he was told that the smell came from a burning garbage can outside — and gave no indication in his 67-word narrative that he tried to go inside, according to the previously unreported document, obtained by Illinois Answers Project and Capitol News Illinois.

Chicago Ald. Peter Chico (10th) told the Chicago Sun-Times earlier this month that the only complaints his office received about South Chicago Chapel prior to the recent discovery of bodies were related to alleged "gang funerals" held at the funeral home.

But new records show his office reported odor complaints and concerns from residents about the facility as early as last September.

On Sept. 26, Chico's office sent a request to the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection seeking information about the funeral home's business license after learning the couple that operated the company, Clark and Johanna Morgan, had run Heights Crematory in Chicago Heights. The state shut down the facility last year after finding 100 improperly stored bodies on the site.

Chico's office told the city in a 311 complaint: "We have received odor complaints ... from residents and were provided with some concerning information regarding the business owner." The complaint linked to a news segment about the Morgans' involvement at Heights Crematory.

A BACP spokesperson said the department checked to see whether the funeral home had a license and reported back to Chico's office that it

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Illinois Hospitals to Lose Billions Through Medicaid Policy Change, Study Finds

New caps on 'state directed payments' threaten safety-net, critical access hospitals

Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Illinois hospitals stand to lose upwards of $4 billion in revenue over the next several years due to impending changes in Medicaid rules that limit states' ability to direct higher reimbursement payments to facilities that serve the most vulnerable populations.

That's according to a recent study by KFF, a nonpartisan health policy think tank, as well as estimates by the Illinois Health and Hospital Association.

And unless Congress acts to reverse those policies before they take full effect, IHA officials warn, roughly half the hospitals in Illinois could be forced to reduce staff, cut back on services or close altogether.

"The governor's people have consistently said that they don't have a printing press over in the Capitol, and that they're not going to be able to fill in this revenue," David Gross, IHA's senior vice president for government relations, said in an interview. "So it's a concern that some of the estimates that have been undertaken in Washington assume that the state's going to pick up the costs of these cuts."

State Directed Payments

The upcoming change affects a little-known practice within Medicaid known as "state directed payments," or SDPs. Those are supplemental reimbursement rates that some hospitals are paid for specific services.

Most states today, including Illinois, operate their Medicaid programs under a "managed care" model. That means they pay for-profit health insurance companies a flat per-person fee each month to manage the care of Medicaid recipients. Those companies, known as managed care organizations, or MCOs, are then responsible for reimbursing hospitals and other providers for the services they provide.

Currently, states are allowed to direct their MCOs to pay higher reimbursement rates to particular hospitals for specific services to help keep those facilities financially viable or to make sure certain services remain available in their communities.

"They are a critical piece to ensuring that hospitals are able to provide access to the Medicaid population in Illinois and across the country," said Ben Winick, IHA's vice president of healthcare finance.

Nearly all states use SDPs as part of their overall Medicaid payment system. Gross described them as "a way to enhance what have traditionally been low

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Roger Gerald Johnston

Roger Gerald Johnston , age 75 of Pulaski, TN passed away August 13, 2026 at NHC Scott. He was a native of Clinton, Iowa, a retired rail carman with the railroad, an United States Army Veteran of the Vietnam War.

Survivors are: 4 Children-
Stacey Johnston-Mayes (Anthony) Glen Carbon, IL
Kevin Johnston & fiancee Melissa Vega Lawrenceburg, TN
Tyler Johnston (Paige) Broken Arrow, OK
Shawn Johnston Lorton, VA

Significant Others
Lurretta Daugherty Pulaski, TN
2 Brothers - Michael Johnston Columbia, TN
Allen Johnston (Ronnie) Erie, IL
1 Sister- Jerrie Ann Powlistha (Richard) Clinton, IA
2 Grandchildren- Graham & Brady Johnston
Several Nieces & Nephews

Preceded in death by:
Parents- Gerald & Delores Frances Johnston
Sister- Barb Melvin

LORETTO MEMORIAL CHAPEL
is in charge of all arrangements.
(931) 853-6995

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Congressman Darin LaHood (R)

Press Release

House Republicans' Working Families Tax Cuts Act is delivering real relief for hardworking Americans. From no tax on tips and overtime to helping businesses reinvest, hire workers, and raise wages, the bill's pro-growth policies are putting more money back in Americans' pockets and strengthening our economy.

I was proud to help deliver these tax cuts and will keep working to make life more affordable for families across the 16th District.

The best solutions for our communities start at the local level. I enjoyed meeting with Franklin Grove Village President Eric Grendahl and Township Supervisor Karla Grendahl to learn more about their priorities, including investments in water and sewer infrastructure.

I'm grateful for all the time and effort they put in to support the people of Franklin Grove!

It was great to join local business leaders in Dixon for a roundtable discussion on support for Republicans' work to cut unnecessary red tape, ways to drive investment in our Main Streets, and how my Affordable Housing Tax Credit Improvement Act is helping expand access to housing.

I'll keep working to advance policies that create opportunities for communities across the 16th District to grow and thrive.

It was exciting to see the progress on Walmart's new automated distribution center in Belvidere, which will be the largest facility of its kind in the country and support 1,200 good-paying jobs.

Projects like this show why pro-growth tax policy and reducing unnecessary regulations are critical to creating jobs and strengthening communities across the 16th District.

Our rural communities are the backbone of the 16th District. It was great to meet with Steward Village President Hugh McKiski to discuss the village's infrastructure needs and how my office can help.

I'll continue fighting to make sure every community, no matter the size, has a strong voice in Washington.

I appreciated the opportunity to visit the new Crusader Community Health facility in Rockford to discuss how Congress can support their mission and expand access to quality care across the Greater Rockford Area.

With their staff assisting in 1 in 4 births in Winnebago and Boone counties, their work is critical to ensuring women and families throughout our community have access to the care and resources they need.

China is Iran's largest trading partner, providing resources used to fund their terrorist proxies, weapons programs, and drone technology.

They must face consequences if they continue to support a regime that openly threatens America and global security.

Representive LaHood represents rural Boone County.

Foster Introduces Bill to Improve Financial Sector Security Amid Rising AI Risks

Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL) representing Belvidere introduced legislation to strengthen oversight of technology service providers that support the financial services industry as advances in artificial intelligence (AI) create new risks for financial institutions and their customers.

The Strengthening Oversight for the Financial Sector Act would give the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) and the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) the authority to oversee third-party vendors used by the entities they regulate. This authority, which is available to other federal financial regulators, had been temporarily granted to the NCUA but has since expired, leaving a dangerous gap in oversight.

As AI makes it easier to identify and exploit vulnerabilities, reliance on third-party technology vendors could provide an attractive opening for attacks on financial institutions. This bill would close that gap and help protect consumers, financial institutions, and the broader financial system from outside threats.

"As AI makes cyberattacks more sophisticated, it is even more important to ensure that third-party vendors don't become a weak link in our financial system," said Rep. Foster. "We have learned the hard way how much damage supply chain vulnerabilities can cause, and third-party vendors are attractive targets. This bill will give regulators the tools they need to better protect Americans' money and sensitive data as AI-assisted cyber threats grow."

The authority to oversee third-party vendors has been requested by NCUA and FHFA directors from both political parties. The Government Accountability Office and the Financial Stability Oversight Council have made similar recommendations regarding the need for oversight of third-party vendors' vulnerabilities to AI risk.

Foster Introduces Bipartisan Legislation to Expand Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Representatives Bill Foster (D-IL) who represents Belvidere and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) introduced the bipartisan Public Service Loan Forgiveness Inclusion Act of 2026 to expand the types of student loan repayment plans eligible for forgiveness and support those who forgo potentially lucrative careers to work in public service.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program was established in 2007 and requires the Department of Education to forgive federal student loans after borrowers make at least 10 years of qualifying payments while working for certain public service employers. Currently, 97 percent of public servants who have applied for loan forgiveness have been denied. Millions of borrowers who enrolled in the PSLF program were told after they had already made payments that they had the wrong type of loan or repayment plan and would not qualify for forgiveness under the program.

This bill would allow payments made under a broader range of payment plans—including graduated repayment plans, extended repayment plans, and the new tiered standard repayment plans—to count toward PSLF for a borrower's first 60 qualifying payments.

"The rising cost of higher education is forcing more Americans to take on significant student debt. This financial burden can often discourage talented individuals from pursuing a career in public service," said Rep. Foster. "It's past time to expand which student loan repayment plans qualify for forgiveness and make the process easier to navigate."

Illinois Regulators Propose Expansion To Self-Exclusion for Compulsive Gamblers

The changes could open new ways to self-ban through mail, online or through provider referrals

Casey Toner and Maggie Dougherty

This story is a collaboration between Illinois Answers Project and Capitol News Illinois.

Illinois gambling regulators are looking to make it easier for compulsive gamblers to ban themselves from legal gambling under rules proposed Thursday afternoon.

The changes proposed by the Illinois Gaming Board, which could take years to fully implement, would expand the enrollment options for the self-exclusion list. Nearly 16,000 people have signed up for the list, which allows people to bar themselves from sports betting, casinos and other forms of legalized betting.

The list does not apply to the state's massive network of more than 50,000 slot machines. According to a study commissioned by the state, an estimated 383,000 Illinois adults have a gambling problem, and another 761,000 are at risk of developing one.

An Illinois Answers Project and Capitol News Illinois investigation found that for every $100 the state collected from gambling tax revenues last year, it spent less than 6 cents on addiction treatment. The report exposed holes in the state's patchwork of treatment resources, including obstacles with the state's self-exclusion program.

Addressing roadblocks to self-exclusion

For now, gamblers can only sign up for the self-exclusion list to ban themselves for terms of five years or more. Experts say that roadblock prevents many people from seeking help.

Applicants to the list can visit one of 32 in-person sites in Illinois, half of which are casinos, which for compulsive gamblers may invite additional temptation and discourage signup. Outside Chicago, the options are scarce with only five options that aren't casinos sanctioned by the Gaming Board.

"Illinois offers no notarized mail alternative, no treatment provider pathway and no online portal presently in operation as offered in comparable jurisdictions," said Illinois Gaming Board administrator Marcus Fruchter while introducing the rules.

"Research shows that shame, embarrassment, stigma and procedural friction at the point of entry are among the barriers most consistently reported by persons who considered but did not complete self-exclusion enrollment."

A separate proposed rule looks to add new six-month, one-year and three-year exclusion options, with automatic re-enrollment but the option to opt out of the program at any time.

People on the five-year or indefinite exclusion tiers would still need to take the step of obtaining an affidavit or letter from a certified gambling addiction counselor. The letter would require the counselor to confirm the individual is no longer a problem gambler, a high bar to pass.

Alyssa Wilson, a Fresno State University associate professor who studies gambling, said she thought "Illinois could really do a lot" if they stopped the minimum five-year term for exclusion. She said shorter "cool-off" periods could reduce barriers for people seeking gambling addiction help.

A third proposed rule would prohibit gambling companies from directing targeted marketing at people coming off the self-exclusion list for a period of 12 months or more.

The IGB voted unanimously to move forward with all three proposed rule changes, which will now go to the General Assembly's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules for public comment and review, a process which could take six

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charge, he noted. Herzog couldn't arrest Torrez on the immigration warrant, but he could arrest him on the state one. The charge had nothing to do with immigration, but the outcome Griffin wanted was the same.

"You can take him under the state warrant, and that would hold him overnight," Griffin said. "I don't wanna miss my opportunity here."

Herzog agreed to arrest Torrez on the state warrant and book him into the local jail, ensuring he wouldn't be released that night.

"I appreciate that, thank you very much," Griffin said, adding that he'd look for Torrez the next morning.

"Sounds good," Herzog replied.

In the first 15 months following President Donald Trump's return to office, local officials from at least 75 agencies across Illinois fed information to federal immigration agents, sometimes in apparent violation of state law. In over a third of Illinois counties, at least one police department, sheriff's office, or state's attorney's office collaborated with federal agents. At least 150 people in Illinois were swept into the immigration system this way, in a state that presented itself as a shield against it.

Injustice Watch's investigation draws on more than 30 hours of body-worn camera footage, 394 records requests, and more than 100 court filings, as well as conversations with more than 20 people who were flagged, detained, or deported, and more than 50 of their relatives. Many would talk only on the condition of anonymity, afraid of retaliation, or ashamed of what had happened to them.

Illinois' TRUST Act is one of the strongest laws in the nation meant to protect immigrants and has often been cited as a national model. More than a dozen states, including New York and California, have similar laws.

But the records unearthed in Illinois show a pattern of continued collaboration with federal immigration agencies that raise questions about the limits of such laws: Sheriffs honoring ICE detainers the law forbids them to honor. Police departments emailing federal agents the home addresses, employers, and daily whereabouts of people stopped for speeding. A local detective asking ICE to run the immigration status of an armed-robbery victim. Officers with a local badge and an ICE email address, sharing immigration data that's supposed to be off-limits to them. Jails releasing people directly to waiting ICE agents, at the federal government's direction.

The TRUST Act came with exceptions: Police can act on a federal criminal warrant, volunteer someone's immigration status, or release an arrest report on request. And it left shared databases untouched — simply running a name through a law enforcement database is enough to trip a federal alert, the way it did the night Torrez was pulled over.

Some agencies refused to turn over records sought through FOIA requests; Injustice Watch is suing more than a dozen local, state, and federal agencies to pry them loose. The true count of people swept up under local-federal collaborations is almost certainly higher, in part because of missing records.

When taken one by one, collaborations between local officials and federal immigration agents may appear as small, isolated incidents. But at the end of that paper trail are at least 150 people uprooted from their lives in Illinois and funneled into the deportation system, in a state whose leaders had promised over and over again that it wouldn't happen here.

Collaboration by keystroke

The most common kind of collaboration was also the simplest: a local official pulling up a record and emailing it to an ICE agent. Roughly 85 such exchanges appear across the records reviewed by Injustice Watch.

The TRUST Act specifically prohibits state and local law enforcement officers from "providing information in response to any immigration agent's inquiry or request for information regarding any individual in the agency's custody" unless required to by a judge's warrant or federal law.

César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, an Ohio State University law professor who studies how criminal and immigration systems intersect, describes this type of collaboration as one built on "the kinds of professional relationships that commonly develop among law enforcement officers, especially in small communities where people know each other."

Most are "entirely aboveboard," he said, but they can sometimes "clash with directives, like what we see in the TRUST Act."

In Tinley Park, a southwest Chicago suburb, communications with ICE agents flowed freely.

It started, the department's emails show, at an early 2025 law enforcement meeting in Hinsdale, where Tinley Park detectives met Homeland Security Investigations special agent Daniel Mejdrech. Word moved through the department that Mejdrech, as one officer later put it in an email, "may be interested in cases with individuals with warrants that are not citizens or on a visa."

In March 2025, Detective Justin Rzeszutko emailed Mejdrech a suspect's passport photo and asked for "recent USA entry/exit photos." The agent wrote back that the man had used aliases, had been deported from Canada, and sat on "a watchlist," and offered to help locate him if the detective sent along addresses or associates. When Rzeszutko later secured an arrest warrant, Mejdrech volunteered muscle: "If you want manpower when you grab him, say the word and I can bring some folks."

In April 2025, an ICE agent asked Tinley Park officer Jason L'Amas for "lead data" on a man the officer had stopped for speeding. The officer sent back the man's driver's license number, home address, phone number, and employer, and flagged where to find him: "His crew is doing work in Tinley Park currently."

Months later, in a case first reported by the Chicago Tribune, L'Amas emailed an ICE deportation officer a report about a different man; days later, the ICE officer wrote back: "Just a heads up we took this guy into custody today." Injustice Watch identified the man and confirmed he was deported to Honduras.

Ed Yohnka, a director at the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, said these two exchanges may have violated the TRUST Act. Individual officers using informal connections with federal agents to share information about people they'd encountered without a warrant "is not supposed to be something that state or local police inquire about," he said.

The first email exchange, he said, was a sign of something broader: a culture or belief in the Tinley Park Police Department that assisting with immigration enforcement was appropriate behavior, despite state law.

Tinley Park Police Chief Thomas Tilton didn't respond to questions about his officers' interactions with federal immigration officials. Neither did Village Manager Pat Carr.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul has extraordinary power to investigate TRUST Act violations: He can hold hearings, examine officials under oath, and issue subpoenas for records. But he rarely exercises that authority.

"The Attorney General's office uses a compliance-oriented approach in carrying out its TRUST Act enforcement responsibilities," Raoul said in a statement. "This approach includes providing trainings, technical assistance and nonregulatory guidance to law enforcement agencies throughout Illinois." He declined to answer questions about Tinley Park or to specify how many times his office has taken enforcement action under the statute.

The ACLU of Illinois, meanwhile, has long pushed the Attorney General's Office for increased monitoring of the law.

"One of the things that we often see in law enforcement generally is that individual officers too often believe that they can apply their own judgment to what should be permissible as opposed to what is required" under the state and federal law, said Yohnka. "And then there isn't the kind of vigorous accountability for those actions."

The officers with two badges

In Hoffman Estates, a detective found a federal contact in his own department. Tom LaPak has been a police officer there since 2001 and, since 2004, a Homeland Security Investigations task force officer assigned to its financial investigations group. He carries a village badge and uses an ICE email address.

That's because task force officers like LaPak are local cops the state cross-deputizes to work federal criminal cases.

The TRUST Act carves out room for this: It allows local officers to work with agencies like Homeland Security Investigations on criminal matters "in order to ensure public safety."

The law doesn't allow federal agents to use that partnership to enforce immigration law. For example, the law draws a line between tracking down a scam ring and checking a victim's immigration status.

Records reviewed by Injustice Watch show some officers appeared to have crossed that line anyway.

On the morning of Sept. 4, 2025, Marc Shaw, a Hoffman Estates detective, emailed LaPak about an armed robbery — but not to ask about the robber.

Shaw wrote that "some red flags have been raised with the victim": The case might be staged, he suspected, to support a U visa claim.

A U visa offers a path to citizenship for certain victims who report crimes and cooperate with police. Both that protection and Illinois' own TRUST Act rest on the same idea: encouraging immigrants to come forward to law enforcement without triggering their own deportation.

But Shaw's email treated a victim's possible path to protection as a reason to suspect him of fraud.

"I was wondering if it's possible to check his citizenship status to see if I'm tracking this correctly or the issues that have been arising are coincidental," Shaw wrote.

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LaPak wrote back the same afternoon. "I'm still waiting on confirmation, but it appears he is a Visa overstay," he wrote. "He should have left the U.S. in 2016."

"Ok thanks that's definitely good to know," Shaw replied. "I appreciate it!"

Reached by phone, Hoffman Estates Police Chief Kasia Cawley said her department didn't violate the TRUST Act. She also defended her detective, who she said had recently participated in a training on spotting U visa fraud and had a hunch that something was off because there were no witnesses to the crime, she said.

The man was never charged — or told his status had been checked.

Cooperation with task force officers ran the other way, too, with the federal government reaching through them to enlist local officers in immigration operations.

On Jan. 13, 2025, a week before Trump's inauguration, a Homeland Security Investigations Chicago supervisor emailed dozens of agents and task force officers about "several operations in furtherance of the new administration's objectives." A joint operation with Enforcement and Removal Operations — ICE's deportation arm — was set to run Jan. 21 through 27. It would focus, the email said, on "non-citizens who pose the highest public safety risk," along with employer inspections of area businesses.

"It is important that as many personnel as possible — including our task force officers — participate," the supervisor wrote.

The distribution list included officers at police departments in Urbana, Peoria, Decatur, and across central Illinois — local cops looped into the planning of a federal deportation operation.

Two police chiefs reached by Injustice Watch distanced themselves from the operations. Urbana Police Chief Larry Boone said his task force officers joined a Zoom briefing but didn't participate in removal operations. Peoria's chief, Bradley Dixon, said his officers didn't either. Decatur chief Brad Allen did not respond to questions.

Collaboration by default

When Riverton officer Herzog ran Daniel Torrez's name the night of that traffic stop, he didn't contact the FBI; the database did.

Fingerprints taken at booking are automatically routed through a network of databases that flows from the Illinois State Police to the FBI. From there, they reach the Department of Homeland Security, where they're checked against immigration databases. An arrest for almost anything — a DUI, shoplifting — can surface a decades-old immigration record and tell ICE exactly where to find the person.

Injustice Watch reviewed more than 40 federal court affidavits in which a fingerprint taken at a local booking and matched against federal records helped build an immigration case.

Spencer Reynolds, senior counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and a former Department of Homeland Security attorney, said the automatic sharing of data "is a fundamental threat to protective laws for residents and visitors in any given state."

In a statement, a spokesperson for the FBI said agents "work within the law and policy to support our partners in immigration enforcement and protect the U.S. from a variety of threats."

In interviews and emails, local police chiefs described the booking process as one beyond their control. Fingerprints are automatically sent to the state and federal systems, and local agencies can't opt out of the system or dictate what Illinois State Police or federal agents do with the data. As O'Fallon chief Kirk Brueggeman put it, the department has "no say in how a federal agent — operating under a different set of laws — uses those resources that we do not control."

Illinois State Police Director Brendan Kelly didn't respond to questions about how his agency transmits data to federal agencies.

Kelly was handpicked by Gov. JB Pritzker, who consistently made promises to protect all residents across Illinois. Shortly after Trump was elected in 2024, Pritzker told cable news, "I'm going to do everything I can to protect our undocumented immigrants." At a conference this past April, he recalled how he's been standing up to Trump's anti-immigrant policies since the president's first term.

Pritzker didn't respond to questions about how state police share immigration-related information.

The automatic transmission of data is so pervasive that it even touches the few departments that, in a review of public records, turn ICE away when it comes knocking.

In February, Zenobia Jones, an administrative staffer for the Atlanta, Georgia, immigration court prosecutor, asked Aurora police records staff for documents related to an individual — but didn't get far.

"The Illinois TRUST Act generally prohibits local law enforcement from sharing information with federal immigration agencies with limited exceptions," wrote Aurora police records manager Elizabeth Robles. Jones never wrote back. Two months later, an ICE deportation officer named Gregory Ortiz made a similar request from the same department. Robles handed Ortiz the same response. Ortiz never wrote back, either.

But for all the resistance the Aurora Police Department put up against ICE requests, it couldn't stop the automatic sharing of fingerprints gathered in the course of routine arrests — three of which, court records show, were used as part of federal immigration cases.

A roundabout way to honor ICE detainers

The U.S. Marshals Service takes custody of people accused in federal criminal cases, as well as some of those serving shorter sentences. Because it operates no jails of its own, the agency contracts with local jails for bed space, including facilities in Illinois.

The TRUST Act bars Illinois jails from similar contracts with ICE, and explicitly bars them from honoring ICE detainers — civil requests to hold a person past their scheduled release. It also prohibits jails from handing anyone over to ICE.

Some jails do it anyway, at the Marshals' direction.

In October 2025, a man who'd pleaded guilty to drug charges was in Marshals custody at the Marion County Jail in southern Illinois. Marshals administrator Lauren Patterson emailed an ICE agent asking if the agency could take him from the jail, then told the jail ICE would collect him on Oct. 12.

That day, a sergeant confirmed to Patterson and several ICE agents that the man "was picked up by ICE approximately 0715 this morning."

Two months later, the Marshals Service instructed the jail to release another man into ICE custody, and once again, the jail obliged.

Marion County Sheriff Kevin Cripps, who runs the jail, insists his office did nothing wrong.

"We at no time had contact with ICE," he said. His jail houses people for the Marshals Service, and when he releases them he does so only while "acting under their authority."

Documents reviewed by Injustice Watch suggest a similar pattern across other Illinois jails. In effect, the Trump administration, not Illinois law, decides whom a state jail releases to immigration agents.

In a statement, the Marshals placed responsibility on the sheriffs.

"Should state law prohibit the jails from honoring detainers," a spokesperson said, the agency "would anticipate that the jails follow their state law."

Asked whether his office would do anything to address the practice, Attorney General Raoul declined to answer.

State laws bind local officials but can't bind the federal government. As professor García Hernández explained, "the Marshals Service or DHS, they can come knocking as often as they like" — it's up to local officials to abide by state law. But, he added, so many loopholes are baked into laws like the TRUST Act that it can "allow the exceptions to swallow the rule."

In some counties, sheriffs aren't taking direction from the Marshals Service and are instead honoring ICE detainers directly — a direct violation of the TRUST Act. Records indicate that at least four counties have done so since Trump returned to office.

In late June 2025, Hancock County State's Attorney Bobi James emailed ICE agent Ron Shevela about an upcoming plea deal that would release a man her office was prosecuting. But there was a snag: The agent would be out of town until July 1, and the prosecutor worried nothing would keep the man jailed past his release.

"I could send you a detainer before then, if you'd like," wrote the agent.

"That would probably be necessary," James replied.

Two days later, the ICE detainer landed in the jail administrator's inbox.

Hancock Sheriff Travis Duffy didn't respond to questions about the detainer; neither did prosecutor James.

Xanat Sobrevilla, who co-founded the advocacy group Organized Communities Against Deportations, said that for the families she works with, the trust communities have tried to build with local agencies is eroding.

"It's hard to continue to believe in something that continues to hurt you," she said.

After Riverton officer Herzog pulled Torrez over just outside Springfield, Torrez spent that night in the Sangamon County Jail, exactly as the FBI agent on the phone had wanted. Hours later, he was in ICE's grip.

In an affidavit, ICE deportation officer J.R. Hentz said Torrez was taken "into custody inside the booking area of the Sangamon County, Illinois jail" the day after he was arrested.

Sangamon County Sheriff Paula Crouch didn't respond to a request for comment; neither did her husband, Riverton Police Chief Bob Crouch.

Injustice Watch confirmed Torrez was deported to Guatemala late last year.

LEGAL NOTICES

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. 20513016
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. 20513016TE
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

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY
In the Interest of: Jordan Howell, A Minor
TO:Shurue Martin
Case Number 2026JA1

PUBLICATION NOTICE

ALL UNKNOWN FATHERS and TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
Take notice that on
5-18-26, Tricia L. Smith, Boone County State's Attorney,

filed a Petition for adjudication of wardship abuse and dependency petition under the Illinois Juvenile Court Act in the Circuit Court of Boone County, entitled "In the Interest of Jordan Howell, a Minor".A hearing will be held on the following date(s), or as soon thereafter as the cause(s) may be heard, at the Boone County Courthouse, located at 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008: October 15, 2026 3:00 PM in Courtroom 4

The Court may declare the Minor to be a ward of the court at the above-listed hearing(s).

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' ADOPTION. YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION, YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THE CHILD.

Unless you appear, you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of Amended Petition for Adjudication or a Petition to Terminate Parental Rights.

Unless you appear at the hearing(s) and show cause against the Petition, the allegations of the Petition may stand admitted as against you and each of you, and an Order or Judgment entered.

Date: September 1, 2026
PAMELA CODUTO, CIRCUIT CLERK
By: Kristina Pearson
Deputy Clerk
Published in The Boone County Journal Sept 8, 15, 22, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF LENORE NAPIER, DECEASED. Case No. 2026PR44

CLAIM NOTICE AND NOTICE TO UNKNOWN HEIRS

Notice is given of the death of LENORE NAPIER of 929 Raffaelo Vw., Mount Holly, North Carolina. Letters of Office were issued on August 25, 2026, to MARY NAPIER-GARCIA of 929 Raffaelo View, Mount Holly, NC, whose attorney is Robert C. Becker, Jr., 213 West Main Street, Genoa, Illinois 60135.

Heirs, including WILLIAM V. NAPIER JR, address unknown, within 42 days after the effective date of the original order of admission any heir or legatee may file a petition with the court to require proof of the will by testimony of the witnesses to the will in open court or other evidence. You also have the right under Section 8-1 of the Probate Act to contest the validity of the will by filing a petition with the court within 6 months after admission of the will to probate. Heirs against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court at the Boone County Court House, 601 N. Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, or with the representatives, or both, on or before March 1, 2027, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless an interested party terminates independent administration by filing a petition to terminate under Section 28-4 of the Illinois Probate Act.

PAMELA CODUTO (Clerk of the Circuit Court)
Published in The Boone County Journal Sept 8, 15, 22, 2026

Notice of Public Hearing
Concerning the Intent of the Board of Education of
Community Unit School District Number 100,
Boone, McHenry and DeKalb Counties, Illinois
to Sell $18,500,000 School Fire Prevention and Safety Bonds

Public Notice is Hereby Given that Community Unit School District Number 100, Boone, McHenry and DeKalb Counties, Illinois (the "District"), will hold a public hearing on the 21st day of September, 2026, at 6:00 o'clock P.M. The hearing will be held in the Central Office Lower Level Conference Room, 1201 Fifth Avenue, Belvidere, Illinois. The purpose of the hearing will be to receive public comments on the proposal to sell bonds in the amount of $18,500,000 for the purpose of conforming its existing facilities that house students to the building code promulgated by the State Board of Education of the State of Illinois, by altering, reconstructing and repairing said facilities and having equipment purchased and installed therein.

By order of the President of the Board of Education of Community Unit School District Number 100, Boone, McHenry and DeKalb Counties, Illinois.

Dated the 1st day of September, 2026.

Holly Houk
Secretary, Board of Education,
Community Unit School District
Number 100, Boone, McHenry and DeKalb Counties, Illinois

Published in The Boone County Journal Sept 8, 2026

Medicaid

from page 2

Medicaid rates in states."

New federal limits

For several years, according to KFF, federal rules have capped these state directed payments at the average rate paid by commercial insurers for those same services. Commercial rates tend to be about twice the rate paid by Medicare and more than twice the rate paid by Medicaid.

But under the budget reconciliation act passed by Congress in 2025 known as H.R. 1, or the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," states like Illinois that expanded their Medicaid programs under the Affordable Care Act will see their cap lowered to 100% of the Medicare rate.

The handful of states that did not expand their Medicaid programs will be capped at 110% of the Medicare rate.

Those new caps will be phased in over a number of years, starting in 2028.

"This idea that they have in Washington that we should pay at Medicare rates, the problem with that is that Congress continues to cut Medicare, and Medicare only covers about 70% of our hospital costs," Gross said.

That change is one of several in the law that are aimed at slashing nearly $1 trillion out of the Medicaid program over the next 10 years. According to KFF's analysis, the new caps on state directed payments will account for about $60.1 billion in reduced federal spending on hospital services nationwide, including about $4 billion in Illinois.

That represents about 77% of all federal spending on SDPs for hospital services, according to KFF. Illinois and seven other states will account for just over half of the total reduction.

KFF acknowledges that number only represents the federal portion of the revenue hospitals receive from SDPs. Total revenue losses could be higher or lower due to other policy changes within the budget law as well as how states and hospitals respond to those changes.

IHA, however, estimates the loss to Illinois hospitals will be about $3 billion over five years, starting in 2028 when the new caps start to be phased in.

Other Medicaid cuts

In addition to cutting state directed payments, the budget reconciliation bill also orders reductions in healthcare provider taxes, a major source for financing states' share of Medicaid costs. Those are taxes levied on hospitals, nursing homes and MCOs. The revenue generated is used to draw down federal Medicaid matching funds.

Currently, federal rules cap the amount states can raise from provider taxes at 6% of net patient revenue. But under a provision of the budget law that only applies to states like Illinois that expanded Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act, that 6% cap will gradually be cut starting in Fiscal Year 2028 until it reaches 3.5% in FY 2032.

"Both policy changes really work in tandem," Winick said. "The hospital provider tax is used primarily to finance the state-directed payments."

According to the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, the cuts in provider taxes will have ripple effects throughout the Medicaid program, extending far beyond hospital payments.

In a Feb. 6 memo, GOMB Director Alexis Sturm warned the new caps on provider tax revenues will result in a total $4.5 billion reduction in Medicaid funding by fiscal year 2031. That includes $1.7 billion from the reduction in provider taxes and $2.8 billion in federal matching funds.

"It should be noted that these amounts show the impact of H.R. 1 only through fiscal year 2031," Sturm wrote. "The total annual impact to the Medicaid program after full phase-in of the rate caps will be $6.1 billion by fiscal year 2033 — $3.8 billion of which is lost federal support.

Hospitals most at risk

Gross and Winick said all hospitals will feel the effects of the policy changes, but two classes of hospitals in particular — critical access hospitals and safety net facilities — are the most vulnerable. Those are the hospitals that have few other sources of revenue besides Medicaid and Medicare, and they account for about half of all hospitals in Illinois.

• Critical access hospitals are generally small facilities located in small towns and rural communities. They are defined in federal regulations as facilities that have fewer than 25 acute-care inpatient beds. They are located more than 35 miles from another hospital, although that requirement can vary depending on the terrain, and they operate 24/7 emergency rooms.

• Safety net hospitals are those that serve higher volumes of Medicaid and uninsured patients. Although there is not one standard definition for them, they tend to be located in urban areas and have open-door policies requiring them to treat any patient regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

On a statewide basis, Gross said, Medicare and Medicaid make up 30-40% of all hospital revenue. But for safety-net and critical access hospitals, they make up more than half. In 2025, according to state data, Medicaid covered 3.2 million people in Illinois, or about a fourth of the state's population. Another 2.4 million were covered by Medicare in 2024, according to KFF.

"So if you think about where Medicare patients show up, they show up in these rural hospitals, these critical access hospitals," Gross said. "And of course the Medicaid patients show up largely in part in our safety net hospitals. So those two groups of hospitals are really going to be challenged."

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.

Gamblers

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months to a year.

Gambling's rapid growth

Available gambling options have exploded since the state's self-exclusion list took effect in 2002. Gamblers in Illinois lost more than $2.5 billion at casinos and the lottery that year, less than a third of the $7.8 billion they lost last year at casinos or on slot machines, the lottery and sports-betting.

"Legalized gambling has grown significantly in Illinois and across the country," Fruchter said. "This expansion, particularly in the aftermath of the 2019 Gaming Expansion Law, necessitates corresponding updates to the self-exclusion program."

The changes would not apply to the state lottery's self-exclusion list, which operates independently.

Nor would they apply to the Illinois Gaming Board's involuntary exclusion list, which the Chicago Sun-Times reported contained only 34 publicly listed names. The Illinois Gaming Board has the power to ban people, including those convicted of illegal gambling, from entering casinos, but not sports wagering or video gambling.

Video gambling, which now inhabits all corners of the state from gas stations to carryout restaurants, was not around when the state's self-exclusion list was created, and the machines have never been integrated. Their absence has left users of Illinois' largest legal gambling market without an option to self-exclude.

The IGB passed a resolution Thursday affirming its commitment to changing that.

The resolution declared the board's intent to use identity card readers installed at video gaming locations, which would prohibit those on the self-exclusion list from playing.

Fruchter said the self-exclusion list will be implemented through the 9,000 slot machine locations statewide and move the state to a cashless system.

The state currently has a $162 million, 10-year contract with LNW Gaming, which builds slot machines and table games, to upgrade the state's terminals for self-exclusion among other features. The company has a Dec. 31, 2027, contractual deadline to complete the transition to the upgraded system, with fines for delays.

The Gaming Board also passed a rule to bring fantasy contests under its regulatory umbrella, as required by recent amendments to the Sports Wagering Act. Fantasy sports, though a legally distinct category from sports gambling under Illinois law, are now legally required to be included in the voluntary self-exclusion program and require players to be at least 21 years old.

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Bodies

from page 1

didn't, because one would only be required if the funeral home was selling retail goods such as caskets and flowers. There are over 53,000 active business licenses in Chicago, including more than 80 for funeral-related enterprises.

Agency records show the inquiry was marked as "Completed" within seven minutes of being opened.

The city did not refer Chico's concern about the Morgans to the state agency that regulates funeral homes —the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, or IDFPR. Asked whether the city should have referred the concern to IDFPR, the BACP spokesperson noted, "when the alderman reached out to BACP, we responded."

The BACP also did not then investigate whether funeral products were being sold without a license at the facility, because such an investigation would first require a complaint, which the alderperson's office did not submit. It later conducted a review to confirm it did not need a business license at the time Chicago police, acting on a tip, discovered decomposing bodies at the site this August.

Chico's office declined to comment on whether they contacted other state agencies with their concerns or took any steps to shut down the funeral home.

Chico previously told Block Club Chicago that he was aware of the Morgans' ownership of the troubled Heights Crematory and South Chicago Chapel before the raid in August but he said he couldn't remember whether they were discussed at a community meeting he helped organize in March to discuss the funeral home.

The new records raise questions about how the Morgans were able to mishandle human remains at multiple locations while allegedly under scrutiny by state and local officials. State officials have been quick to point fingers and sidestep accountability for the regulatory environment that allowed the Morgans to continue mishandling human remains, with Gov. JB Pritzker blaming "bad actors" at the funeral home.

"What I have read so far is an indicator that there is somebody, it's not IDFPR (the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation), it's somebody on the ground at this funeral home, some people who have been doing terrible things," Pritzker said.

An attorney representing the Morgans, who are being sued for mishandling remains at both facilities, declined to comment.

Unidentified remains

A Cook County spokesperson said that nine of the 56 bodies found at South Chicago Chapel remained unidentified as of Friday afternoon.

She said they are trying to identify the remaining bodies using records for medical device implants and dental work. The earliest date of death they could trace was April 19, 2026.

A state law, the Illinois' Integrity in Death Care Act, took effect at the start of last year and tightened regulations around the 'chain of custody' of human remains by requiring funeral establishments to maintain a system for correct identification of human remains when they are in the facility's possession.

The bill was ushered through the state General Assembly after the discovery of extensive mishandling of bodies at a Carlinville funeral home, where at least 80 families were given the wrong remains. IDFPR allowed the funeral home director to continue operating for at least six months after it received a complaint about decomposing bodies in his care, revoking his license only after a local coroner went public with concerns.

At the South Chicago Chapel, none of the remains from South Chicago Chapel had tags listing the decedents' full name and date of birth or other unique identifiers, though some had funeral home or hospital tags. Many had to be identified using fingerprints, according to the medical examiner's spokesperson.

IDFPR records show that the bodies were "kept in an unrefrigerated area with deplorable conditions including rodent infestation, causing decomposition and maggot infestation of the bodies."

While state law requires crematories to maintain bodies in refrigerated conditions, the same is not true for funeral homes, which are expected to preserve bodies through embalming or cooling, or hold funerals in a timely manner.

IDFPR revoked Clark Morgan's funeral director and embalmer intern license in 2024, and temporarily suspended Johanna Morgan's funeral director and embalmer license earlier this month after the discovery.

The Morgans have not been charged criminally, though an Illinois State Police spokesperson said an investigation of the conduct at Heights Crematory is ongoing after Cook County State's Attorney Eileen O'Neill Burke initially declined to bring charges in the case. Chicago Police said it is conducting an independent investigation regarding the Morgans' handling of bodies at South Chicago Chapel.

Pointing fingers

Unlike many states, Illinois splits regulations of funeral homes and crematories between two agencies, with IDFPR licensing funeral home directors and embalmers, and the Illinois Comptroller's office overseeing crematories.

And because IDFPR regulates funeral home directors rather than funeral home establishments, it does not conduct regular inspections of the facilities — it only investigates if complaints are made.

Illinois is one of only four states in the U.S. that does not conduct any regular inspections of licensed funeral homes or crematories, while a majority of other states conduct either annual or biannual inspections, sometimes unannounced, according to a recent review by the Chicago Sun-Times.

IDFPR currently employs four investigators to investigate complaints against funeral home directors and other professions, including a chief who oversees the work. The agency plans to hire one additional investigator this fiscal year.

Michael D. Sharkey is a licensed funeral director in multiple states as well as an attorney who represents Illinois' Funeral Directors Association and the Funeral Directors Association in Minnesota, a state with less than half the population of Illinois.

He said Minnesota has three full-time funeral home and crematory investigators and recommended that Illinois hire more inspectors, conduct regular unannounced inspections and condense its death care industry oversight under one state agency.

"Good funeral homes don't worry about inspections because they're compliant 24/7, 365," Sharkey said. "It seems to me that in this case, the good people of Illinois deserve better, and that this might be something that is worth budgeting for."

Garbage dumping

According to city data, the first waste-related complaint against South Chicago Chapel was filed in January 2024. The complaint alleged that food trays, old chairs, furniture, and open bags of piled garbage dumped behind the funeral home were attracting rats.

Another 311 complaint filed in August 2025 alleged that the funeral home garbage can had "dropped all the garbage" on the street and alley.

Ald. Chico's office filed a 311 complaint alleging "open burning" at the funeral home on Sept. 17, 2025.

Two days later, a Chicago Department of Environment inspector visited the funeral home and called the resident who reported the burning to Chico's office. The resident informed him that the smell was the result of someone burning his trash can, according to his report. He left 20 minutes later.

A spokesperson for the department said the inspection was sufficient, because the inspector was sent to investigate an open burning complaint, not the funeral home itself.

On Sept. 26, 2025, Chico's office followed up seeking the business license for the chapel.

The last 311 complaint against the funeral home was filed at 2:39 p.m. on Aug. 6 detailing the grim discovery: Chicago police "found … bodies decaying inside of a closed funeral home."

Beth Hundsdorfer with CNI contributed reporting.

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.