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The Belvidere Bus Company

By David Larson

In early 1946, O.B.Fensholt of Janesville requested the City of Belvidere issue him a temporary, 60-day permit to operate a city bus service. Fensholt said if the people of Belvidere accepted and supported the service after 60 days, he would apply for a permanent license.

Not all of the troops had returned from duty overseas in World War II. The war was over for almost a year, and the possibilities seemed endless. The depression that preceded the war was gone and the threat of fascism had been eradicated. Television was about to sweep the country.

Continued on Page 4

Inaugurate Bus Service at Belvidere.



A Belvidere Bus taken the first day of service March 18, 1946

Regulators Weigh Natural Gas, While Clamping Down on Chicago Utility

Illinois Commerce Commission sparked controversy among unions

By Andrew Adams Capitol News Illinois

Natural gas is fueling a fight between consumer advocates, a powerful utility company and the state. Amid competing advertising campaigns, accusations of mismanagement and state decarbonization efforts, the Illinois Commerce Commission is starting a process that will shape how the state regulates the increasingly controversial industry.

While Chicago considers passing an ordinance to ban natural gas in some new building construction – following the lead of places like New York City and Seattle – state officials are moving more slowly in an attempt to ensure Illinois meets its goal of having 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

The ICC launched a process dubbed the “Future of Gas” last week that will inform the governor, legislature and other policymakers on potential policy changes. The process was initiated by the ICC after they tamped down requests for rate increases from all of the state’s major gas utilities.

“We need to get this right,” ICC Chair Doug Scott said at a virtual workshop with over 350 advocates and industry officials last week. “We get one really good shot at this.”

He added the process “is not designed to meet a pre-ordained conclusion.”

Rob Kelter, senior attorney at the Environmental Law and Policy Center, praised the new approach to regulation and Scott’s personal attention to the proceeding while welcoming the fact that these discussions are happening outside of a traditional rate case, where utilities have more say in setting the agenda.

“Everybody pays gas and electric bills and also everyone is affected by the current gas and electric systems,” Kelter said.

Both electric and gas companies are involved with the “Future of Gas” proceeding, which is expected to last until summer 2025, although the precise timeline and the scope of what will be discussed are still tentative.

“What I hope will result from this is a lot of good, productive discussion that objectively analyzes the state’s options for reducing carbon emissions,” Kelter said.

A spokesperson for Peoples Gas, Chicago’s natural gas utility, echoed that sentiment and

Announcing the New Bus Routes. Effective Tuesday Morning, April 9

Bold black lines indicate the path of the four bus routes

Komatsu Mining Truck Named 2024 ‘Coolest Thing Made In Illinois’

Truck was one of more than 200 entries in the 2024 ‘Makers Madness’ contest

By Cole Longcor Capitol News Illinois

A mining truck manufactured by Komatsu was crowned the winner of the 2024 “Makers Madness” contest, earning the title of “the coolest thing made in Illinois” at the Governor’s Mansion Wednesday.

The truck was one of more than 200 entries in the 5th annual contest hosted by the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association and sponsored by Comcast Business. The bracket-style contest lasted eight weeks and collected almost 315,000 votes for the products entered, narrowing them down to the top 16, then to the final four, which were recognized Wednesday.

Continued on Page 5

Continued on page 2

Komatsu from page 1

The truck, made by Komatsu in Peoria, has a hauling capacity of up to 400 tons and has “new innovations in suspension transmission, electric drive technology and autonomous operation,” according to Komatsu. The 980E-5 truck weighs more than 1.3 million pounds.

Dan Funcannon, a vice president at Komatsu, said the trucks are the “coolest machines on the planet.”

“These machines are manufactured in Peoria and shipped around the world to support mining the minerals and materials that are required to do this manufacturing around the globe,” he said at the ceremony Wednesday. “We feel it’s a big honor and also responsibility to sell these products throughout the world.”

Gov. J.B. Pritzker congratulated the finalists and said manufacturing is key to the state’s economy.

“This room is full of talented and driven people who continue to propel our state toward a brighter future,” he said. “Our economic growth is due in large part to the thriving manufacturing sector that you all help to build every day.”

Three other finalists were also recognized at the ceremony, covering a wide range of products. Mullen’s Imitation French Dressing, made by J.D. Mullen Company in Palestine, was founded by World War I veteran and Illinois restaurateur John

Mullen. The MQ-25 Stingray Drone Refueler, built by Boeing in Mascoutah, is the first unmanned aircraft to refuel another aircraft midflight. Enviro Buildings’ Mod Box, made by Craig Industries in Quincy, is a modular insulated outdoor building used for construction and security offices.

According to the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association, the industry is responsible for almost a third of the state’s jobs and contributes more than \$580 billion to the economy annually.

The Rosenberg moon habitat, made by Ingersoll Machine Tools in Rockford, was the 2023 winner. Another mining vehicle, the 797F mining truck by Caterpillar, was named the winner in 2020.

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Conviction Overturned After 35 Years Served

Illinois leads nation in overturned wrongful convictions but has one of the lowest repayment structures

By Dilpreet Raju Capitol News Illinois

In December, 57-year-old Brian Beals spent Christmas with his sister Pattilyn for the first time 35 years.

Beals was exonerated and freed from Robinson Correctional Center in southeastern Illinois on Dec. 13 after a Cook County circuit court judge vacated his conviction and dismissed charges against him.

“In that moment, I was just trying to process how this all happened,” Beals told Capitol News Illinois. “Prison erases your ability to have hope.”

In 1990, a jury convicted Beals of first-degree murder for a shooting that killed a 6-year-old boy and injured his mother in Chicago’s Englewood neighborhood. He maintained his innocence as he was sentenced to 80 years in prison – essentially the rest of his life.

But last year, new evidence presented by the Illinois Innocence Project prompted a reexamination of Beals’ case. A Judge found the assigned detective had a pattern of police misconduct, and newly enhanced photographic evidence showed Beals was likely the target, rather than the perpetrator, of gunfire.

Beals said he’s taking time to celebrate but is also now properly grieving family he lost while locked up.

“I’m now the second-oldest person in my nuclear family; it’s dramatically different,” Beals said. “I lost a brother, my mother, I lost my aunt, my uncle. They all passed away while I was incarcerated.”

But for those years he lost in prison, Beals’ exoneration doesn’t mean any automatic reimbursement from the state of Illinois. And the journey to get any sort of restitution for his decades of wrongful imprisonment is complicated, and one Beals believes is unfair.

Because of the way the system is structured, Beals’ potential compensation essentially stopped accruing after he served 14 years. A new bill in the General Assembly would seek to remove the roughly \$200,000 cap on payments to exonerees that maxes out at the 14-year mark, replacing it

with a payout of \$50,000 per year, capped at just over \$2 million.

Illinois’ compensation practices

The path for most exonerees to find some version of justice travels through the Illinois Court of Claims, where Illinoisans can file claims to recover damages against a state agency or employee. Claimants seeking money for a wrongful conviction must first obtain a certificate of innocence from the circuit court in which they were convicted; something Beals’ lawyers say they see no major challenges in obtaining.

It’s a process that more people are undertaking in Illinois than in any other state in the nation. Illinois leads the U.S. in wrongful convictions, with 531 exonerees on record at the National Registry of Exonerations, which is managed by multiple universities and is the only national database tracking wrongful convictions.

Despite only having about 4 percent of the country’s population, Illinois is responsible for 16 percent of overturned wrongful convictions in the U.S. Over 90 percent of exonerees in Illinois are Black or Latino compared to the nationwide rate of 65 percent. In January, Illinois saw four more men exonerated – all charged with murder in Cook County.

But as the state is a national leader in wrongfully convicting people, it’s near the bottom of all states in reimbursing exonerees for the time they wrongfully served.

Illinois’ current pay structure allows the court of claims to award exonerees at their discretion up to a certain amount, limiting maximum payouts based on time served.

Continued on Page 3



- Quentin “Troy” Crabtree, 58, Harvard, April 11
- Victoria Diss, Belvidere, April 5
- William Garand, 81, Belvidere, April 10
- Bryan Grelyak, 58, Harvard, April 10
- Thomas Schaefer, 78, Belvidere, April 10
- Janice Shattuck, 87, Belvidere, April 14
- Ella Stackowicz, 102, Belvidere, April 10
- Denise Steurer, 61, Marengo, April 5
- Robert Whitney, 96, Formerly of Belvidere, Feb. 6
- Ralph Wilson, 92, Belvidere, April 9



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Richelle Kingsbury Aug. 1955 - June 2013

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

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

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Conviction

from page 2

For exonerees who served less than five years in prison, the maximum payout, which has increased incrementally to adjust for inflation, is about \$85,000. Those who served up to 14 years can receive around \$170,000, and anyone who served more than 14 years is limited to a total of about \$200,000.

For Beals, Illinois' statute essentially dictates that the court of claims cannot reimburse him for the last two decades of his wrongful sentence, due to the 14-year cap. A maximum payout would equate to less than \$6,000 per year spent in prison, well below even half of the federal poverty line.

Beals said the current structure doesn't provide justice.

"There needs to be more attention on this issue," he said. "It's not fair, obviously. You're compensated less (per year) for the time you're incarcerated."

Josh Tepfer, a lawyer at the Exoneration Project – a legal group providing free aid to those claiming innocence – said he recently represented a man in a similar position as Beals.

"Francisco Benitez, my client, just spent over 30 years in prison," Tepfer said. "Now he can only get the same amount as someone who did 14 years, so that doesn't make a lot of sense."

For the 373 claimants that have already been compensated under state statute, Illinois has paid out average sums of about \$112,000 per exoneree, according to the latest data compiled by Jeffrey Gutman, director of George Washington University Law School's Public Justice Advocacy Clinic.

That comes to an average of \$15,000 per year imprisoned, the second lowest amount per year of all states that have paid out statutory claims to date.

"The way that Illinois has done it has always been unfair to people who have been in prison the longest," Gutman said.

Illinois' proposed fix

Last year the Illinois House unanimously approved a measure that would increase statutory compensation for those who have been wrongfully convicted to \$50,000 per year of wrongful imprisonment, maxing out at the \$2 million cap that otherwise governs court of claims payouts. It would apply to all pending and future claims.

It was one of two bills regarding exoneration that cleared the House unanimously last year, but both are awaiting a committee assignment in the Senate. Those measures – House Bill 1015 and House Bill 1016 – have since been combined into a single amendment to HB 1015. Capitol News Illinois was not able to schedule an interview with the bill's Senate sponsors, including lead sponsor Sen. Elgie Sims, D-Chicago, despite numerous outreach attempts over several weeks.

The proposed amendment to HB 1015 offers partial-year reimbursement and \$25,000 per year awaiting trial, and it indexes pay to increase with inflation each year up to 5 percent.

Should it become

law, about 40 exonerees would be eligible for an increased payout in addition to the roughly 20 state claims currently pending in the Illinois Court of Claims, according to the National Registry of Exonerations.

Gutman said while other states that have upped their pay structures have applied the changes retroactively, Illinois would face a unique challenge in doing so because almost 400 claimants have received compensation over the years.

Louisiana, which has almost 90 exonerees, changed its pay structure in 2022. The legislature addressed equity by allowing prior exonerees one year to apply for supplemental pay at the new rate.

A rigid \$50,000 per year would not only be a significant change in pay but a shift of power from the court of claims. Under current law, the court of claims has discretion over the award, only up to the stated limits.

While Tepfer said the court of claims can be "often very generous" within the parameters of the law, it's ultimately the statutory limits that make the current law unfair. He is supportive of

Continued on page 5

Congressman Daren La Hood Reports

Press Release

Ways and Means Committee visits Illinois

As Chairman of the House Ways and Means Work and Welfare Subcommittee, I hosted a field hearing in Chicago at the Pacific Garden Mission to discuss the dignity of work and lifting folks out of poverty. Government programs should be designed to provide every opportunity for individuals to grow their capacity and be connected to meaningful work. Our hearing was an opportunity to learn from experts and community members about how we can better families and workers.

I joined Greta Van Susteren on The Record to discuss the field hearing and the Ways and Means Committee's work to bolster our workforce.

Advocating for pro-growth tax policies

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act jumpstarted our economy, allowing small businesses to invest more, raise wages, and expand their workforce. At our Ways and Means full committee hearing last week, I highlighted the positive impact TCJA

had on Illinois families.

Strengthening America's national security

Last week, the House voted to extend Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. We face the greatest terrorist threat since 9/11. The most important tool our Intelligence Community has to keep Americans safe from those threats is Section 702 of FISA, but it must be reformed to protect American civil liberties from abuses. Over the past year, Intelligence Committee Republicans have worked to address the unacceptable Section 702 abuses, like the inappropriate FBI query I believe was committed against me, and the Title I FISA abuses outside of Section 702, like those in the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. The RISAA incorporates over 50 FISA reforms and marks the largest reform of the FBI in a generation.

At a time when Iran, Russia, and the CCP are working every day to undermine our freedom and our interests around the globe, and with a wide open southern border, allowing Section 702 of FISA to expire or be gutted would put our country at grave risk. The RISAA takes the necessary steps to overhaul the FBI, prevent the abuses committed against President Trump's campaign from happening again, protect American civil liberties, and bring much needed transparency to the FISA Court, while also allowing our intelligence services to continue to hunt down terrorists and bad actors.

I joined CBS Chicago to discuss the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the importance of stamping out Iran's malign influence around the globe.

Visiting with IL16 Constituents

I met with my IL16 Veterans Advisory Board in Dixon to hear from members across our district about issues facing the veterans community. I am grateful to those in Illinois who have defended our freedom. I appreciated the feedback on how Congress can continue to support our vets.

Thanks to Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe for meeting with us during his visit to Washington!

We had a good discussion about the Fox Creek Bridge Replacement Project and economic development. I'll continue to work with the City of Bloomington to support their efforts in DC.

Congressman Foster's Amendment to Sanction Iranian Drone Sales Passes House

Press Release

An amendment offered by Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL) to institute U.S. sanctions on any financial institution that helps facilitate the sale of Iranian-built drones, or "unmanned aerial vehicles" (UAVs), passed the House as part of the Iran-China Energy Sanctions Act.

"Iran's support of terrorist organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis has been destabilizing the Middle East for far too long. Iran's use of UAVs to attack Israel this past weekend demonstrates the need for strong sanctions that would make it harder for Iran to equip terrorist groups with deadly drones that can be used to target U.S. service members or our allies," said Foster. "I'm proud that my amendment would cut off resources to Iran's UAV manufacturers and hold the financial institutions that help our adversaries acquire these drones accountable."

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Bus from page 1

At 6AM on March 18th, two red and yellow busses began to roll over Belvidere streets (see photograph on page one). In the early hours, there were few riders, but when children started out for school, the buses were packed. Mid-morning ridership slowed, but exploded at noon with children again along with some working adults, who were trying out the service.

The rides were free that first day until 2PM. As a result of the experience, many purchased discounted, 14-ride ticket packages on the first day.

Each bus followed the same route with 15 minute intervals. The route repeated every 30 minutes, so as one bus finished, another was scheduled to be in the middle of the same route.

That strategy quickly unraveled with the first bus lagging, because so many boarded the lead bus, causing it to delay due to loading time being extended. This left few passengers for the second bus to pickup with most passengers on the first bus, which had the reverse effect of speeding up its travel on the route. By the end of the route, the second bus was seen following the first with few riders. Such was the first day.

Fensholt stated in that evening's *Belvidere Daily Republican*, a strong daily supporter of the new business along with the Belvidere Chamber of Commerce, "It is a matter of straightening out the kinks."

With free rides having ended and crowds of children at certain times better managed, Fensholt hoped to get a better understanding if the Belvidere Bus Company was worth continuing.

Fensholt brought in two additional buses two days later, and completely changed the route by dividing the city into two different routes that more completely covered the city, linking them with a transfer point.

Buses ran every 15 minutes. One route started at South State Street and Logan Avenue and wove through the southwest returning to South State Street before traveling through the northeast side. The other route would head toward North State Street, making loops through the northwest and southeast sides. The routes overlapped on State Street for transfers.

By the end of March, the routes were revised yet again. An expanded fleet of five buses covered four routes and charter service was offered with the fifth bus. On State Street, one could catch a bus every seven minutes. The advertisement of the new routes was published in the *Belvidere Daily Republican* and in the high school newspaper, *Bel-Hi News* (see photograph on page one). Belvidere was much smaller in 1946 with a population of nearly 9,000. In Fensholt latest revision the Belvidere was divided into four different routes that composed quadrants whose origin was at the Kishwaukee River and State Street with northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest routes linked with a series of transfer points along the common North and South State Street.

A special route running at 7AM and 4PM from South State Street out Locust Street to the distillery provided service for the distillery workers. The city was completely covered with a bus stopping every 15 minutes and not more than three blocks from any location. The fifth bus in the fleet was reserved as a backup or for charter service, which it offered to the schools for sporting events and class trips.

The I.O.U. Club as a part of their Friday noon lunch program discussed the bus with great enthusiasm.

The YMCA and the Free Methodist Church produced a trip for the children of Belvidere to go to the zoo in Brookfield. The cost of the trip was \$1. The Belvidere Bus Company provided transportation.

In an editorial in the April 17th edition of the *Belvidere Daily Republican*, the publisher warned, "It is time that Belvidere did some sober thinking about its bus line." The editorial went on to say, "Unless Belvidere wakes up very soon, it will find that bus transportation has again reverted to a dream...everyone admits that the buses are a 'good thing,' but too few people are using them."

In order to retain bus service after the trial period, Fensholt required a \$500 quarterly loss insurance pledge from the community, funded by local businesses through the organization of the Belvidere Chamber of Commerce president Fred Falkenstein.

Only \$300 was pledged, and service ended. Some members of the business community dissaged that a bus service in Belvidere was worth the additional cost. Fensholt and others believed that having a bus service would be a good incentive for new industries to locate in Belvidere had he been able to survive long enough to become profitable.

Whether the \$275 million dollar Metra train that planned to come to Belvidere and Rockford will meet a similar fate has yet to be seen.

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Regulators

from page 1

added the state's gas distribution system will play a major part in reaching the state's climate goals.

"Natural gas, along with emerging technologies such as Renewable Natural Gas and Hydrogen, will be critical to meeting Chicagoans' need for reliable, affordable, decarbonized energy," Peoples Gas' David Schwartz told Capitol News Illinois in a statement.

Schwartz pointed to technological developments in capturing natural gas from waste products like food, using new gas-powered appliances for heating buildings and the ongoing replacement of pipes as steps that would reduce or even eliminate the gas system's carbon footprint.

But Kelter said he is skeptical of the claims made by boosters of the new technology – a position shared by other environmental and consumer advocates.

"The state has climate goals that require us to change how we heat and cool our homes," he said. "We've got to move toward a system that's reliant on renewable energy."

Peoples Gas faces scrutiny

While the ICC weighs the future of the gas system generally, it's also investigating the current state of Peoples Gas. The company's controversial "safety modernization program," designed to replace Chicago's aging pipe infrastructure, was put on notice in November, when the ICC paused any spending related to the program and began an investigation into it.

That investigation began in earnest last week, with Peoples Gas filing its first testimony in the case. The company was also granted a rehearing on the decision to pause spending after it claimed some work was still necessary.

Read more: Chicago utility pushes back against state oversight, asks for further rate increase

The investigation is expected to last until January 2025, while the rehearing will last until late May or early June 2024.

Consumer advocates have praised the decision to shorten the leash on Peoples Gas' pipe replacement program, while also recognizing the need to replace Chicago's natural gas pipes – some of which are more than 100 years old.

But Abe Scarr, the head of the consumer advocacy group Illinois PIRG, said the program's costs have grown, in part, due to Peoples Gas conducting other work under the guise of replacing old pipes or "emergency" repairs.

"I think it's pretty clear Peoples Gas hasn't really kept to the scope of that work," Scarr said.

Schwartz, of Peoples Gas, said the company provided options to the ICC for reducing the scope of the work or more narrowly targeting the program when the company can begin work again.

"We will continue to seek authorization to move forward with the needed work," Schwartz said. "Modernization of Chicago's underground energy delivery system is crucial for the safety, reliability, affordability and environmental sustainability of Chicago's heating system."

Fallout from ICC decisions

Since the ICC's bombshell rulings in November limiting several utilities' rate requests and investigating Peoples Gas, one labor union launched a pressure campaign on the commission and the governor urging them to walk back some of the decisions.

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, which represents about 23,000 members in Illinois and neighboring states, launched a series of advertisements claiming that the decisions were a "natural gas ban" and urged

prioritizing pipeline safety in the transition to a cleaner energy system.

"I don't think any of us have seen enough facts in front of us to say that the natural gas system will be obsolete," Local 150 spokesperson Kristine Kavanagh told Capitol News Illinois.

Because of the decision to pause Peoples Gas' infrastructure spending, Kavanagh said about 200 members of her organization lost their jobs in addition to hundreds more in other unions.

While the union endorsed Pritzker in his most recent general election in 2022, his campaign organization launched a series of response ads pushing back on the union's claims.

"At a time when too many working families are struggling to pay their heating bills, the governor knows that putting their bottom line ahead of that of a record-profit-earning utility is the right thing to do," Pritzker campaign spokesperson Christina Amestoy said in a written statement.

The back-and-forth ads between the union and the Pritzker campaign illustrate a potentially growing fight between the governor and one of the Democratic Party's core bases of support.

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Conviction

from page 3

the proposed change.

"It will up what they receive, and I think that's warranted. I mean, \$50,000, that's a pretty small amount annually...that doesn't even account for all the mental anguish and time away from family," he said.

Lauren Kaeseberg, co-director of the Illinois Innocence Project and someone who represented Beals, said raising exoneree pay is about doing what is right. She and Beals spent a week in January in Springfield speaking to lawmakers about challenges exonerees face.

"The state is acknowledging that 'We got this wrong and here is this amount of money that's going to compensate you for the time that you were taken and held captive for all those years,'" Kaeseberg said. "We need to compensate people at an amount that is respectful and that acknowledges their worth."

Other avenues

Those seeking compensation beyond what the court of claims can offer also have the right to sue in civil court. Likely due to the restrictive nature of Illinois' compensation structure, 473 exonerees have filed civil claims for damages compared to 404 who have filed direct claims through state law.

Still, exonerees interested in receiving pay outside of the court of claims face a more onerous process that can drag on for years and requires a higher burden of proof. These suits usually take place in federal court and often focus on allegations of misconduct, rather than compensating exonerees for time unjustly served. Awards are usually paid out by taxpayers through the parties named responsible, such as county or city police department. Some municipalities, including Chicago, have wrongful conviction insurance to cover parts of the payout.

But less than half of all U.S. plaintiffs who have been wrongfully convicted and sought pay have received any compensation, according to

the National Registry of Exonerations. In Illinois, civil suits have a far lower success rate than statutory claims. Most exonerees that seek pay from the court of claims receive it, but only about 30 percent of all Illinois exonerees who filed cases in civil court have won them.

Illinois faces a backlog with almost 279 pending wrongful conviction civil cases, nearly seven times more than the next closest state, New York at 41.

But with an average payout of more than \$5.5 million, the 123 successful civil claimants in Illinois received millions of dollars beyond what the court of claims could pay out.

Brian Beals is still waiting to see the outcome of HB 1015 before making any claims of his own.

He should have no problems obtaining a certificate of innocence since the Cook County State Attorney's Office issued a celebratory news release the day Beals was released. But Kaeseberg said that is not the same for all counties or cases. Some prosecutors, she said, would prefer to not have a case they litigated result in an incorrect verdict.

For now, Beals said he is trying to understand technology's many advances but is happy to be spending time with family during what has been a "surreal" couple of months.

"I had three generations of family with me on Christmas Day and I'm very fortunate to have that experience, my first Christmas at home in 35 years," Beals said. "I'm catching up."

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Giannoulas Calls for Disclosure of Lobbyist Contracts

Bill would give secretary of state more power to enforce ethics laws

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

For decades, lobbyists in the Illinois Statehouse have been required to report how much they spend wining, dining and entertaining lawmakers.

Currently, though, there is no law requiring lobbyists to disclose how much they are paid by corporations, industry groups or other special interest organizations.

That would change under a bill now pending in the Illinois House. House Bill 4591, an initiative of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulas, would, for the first time in Illinois, require lobbyists to disclose how much they are paid by each of their clients.

"Right now, we're only seeing part of the picture. We're seeing what the lobbyist is spending to change or implement a policy," Amy Williams, an attorney in the secretary of state's office, told the House Ethics and Elections Committee Wednesday. "We're lacking what the client is spending to change or implement a policy, and the client is the driving force behind those policy implications."

Lobbying is defined in state law as any form of communication conducted "for the ultimate purpose of influencing any executive, legislative,

Continued on Page 7

LEGAL NOTICES

**PUBLIC HEARINGS NOTICE:
Belvidere CUSD 100**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS CONCERNING THE INTENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BELVIDERE CUSD 100, TO DISCUSS THE DECISION TO POSSIBLY CLOSE A SCHOOL BUILDING.

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the community of Belvidere CUSD 100. The Board of Education will hold a public hearing on the 15th day of April 2024, at 5:30 p.m. The hearing will be held at The D100 District Office 1201 5th Avenue, Belvidere, IL. The purpose of the hearing will be to receive input from the community, to discuss the potential reconfiguration of our school buildings, and to discuss the decision to possibly close Perry Elementary School, 633 W. Perry Street, Belvidere, IL. By order of the President of the Board of Education of Belvidere CUSD 100.

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the community of Belvidere CUSD 100. The Board of Education will hold a public hearing on the 4th day of May 2024, at 10:00 a.m. The hearing will be held at the D100 District Office 1201 5th Avenue, Belvidere, IL. The purpose of the hearing will be to receive input from the community, to discuss the potential reconfiguration of our school buildings, and to discuss the decision to possibly close Perry Elementary School, 633 W. Perry Street, Belvidere, IL. By order of the President of the Board of Education of Belvidere CUSD 100.

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the community of Belvidere CUSD 100. The Board of Education will hold a public hearing on the 6th day of May 2024, at 5:30 p.m. The hearing will be held at Perry School 633 W. Perry Street, Belvidere, IL. The purpose of the hearing will be to receive input from the community, to discuss the potential reconfiguration of our school buildings, and to discuss the decision to possibly close Perry Elementary School, 633 W. Perry Street, Belvidere, IL. By order of the President of the Board of Education of Belvidere CUSD 100.

NOTE: You must be present in order to participate. The hearings held at the District Office will be live-streamed; the hearing held at Perry Elementary will not be live-streamed. Spanish language translation services will be available at all hearings. Should you need other translation services, please reach out to the District Office at 815-544-0301. Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 11, 18, 25, 2024

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

U.S. BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS OWNER TRUSTEE FOR LEGACY MORTGAGE ASSET TRUST 2021-GS1 Plaintiff,
-v-
2023 FC 64

**SHIRLEY A. JACOBSON, Defendant
NOTICE OF SALE**

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on February 21, 2024, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on May 21, 2024, at the NLT Title L.L.C., 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Lot Forty-Eight (48) as designated upon Plat No. 4 of Washington Heights Subdivision, being a part of the East Half (1/2) of the West Half (1/2) of the Southeast Quarter (1/4) of Section 35, Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third P.M., as platted and recorded in the Recorder's Office of Boone County, Illinois, on October 22, 1974 as Document No. 74-2373 in Plat File Index Envelope #2, situated in Boone County, State of Illinois.

Commonly known as 621 RUTH CIRCLE, BELVIDERE, IL 61008
Property Index No. 05-35-454-018
The real estate is improved with a single family residence.
The judgment amount was \$75,391.88.
Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. 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) (1) 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.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, contact MANLEY DEAS KOCHALSKI LLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, ONE EAST WACKER, SUITE 1250, Chicago, IL, 60601 (312) 651-6700. Please refer to file number 23-007321.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

MANLEY DEAS KOCHALSKI LLC
ONE EAST WACKER, SUITE 1250
Chicago IL, 60601
312-651-6700
E-Mail: AMPS@manleydeas.com
Attorney File No. 23-007321
Case Number: 2023 FC 64
TJSC#: 44-517

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.
Case # 2023 FC 64
6088-941339

Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 11, 18, 25, 2024

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

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A. Plaintiff,
-v-
19 CH 113

LAURA J. ANDERSON A/K/A LAURA J. BARRY A/K/A LAURA JEAN ANDERSON A/K/A LAURA JEAN BARRY A/K/A LAURA WIEDL, UNKNOWN HEIRS AND/OR LEGATEES OF ROBERT G. ANDERSON, DECEASED, TARA DOYLE, KYLE R. ANDERSON,

KOLIN R. MAYBORNE A/K/A KOLIN R. ANDERSON, TIM MILLER, AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ROBERT G. ANDERSON, DECEASED, ONEMAIN FINANCIAL OF ILLINOIS, INC. F/K/A AMERICAN GENERAL FINANCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS, INC., UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS Defendant

NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on February 22, 2022, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on April 30, 2024, at the NLT Title L.L.C., 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

THE NORTHERLY 1/2 OF THE EASTERLY 1/2 OF LOT 14 IN ASSESSOR'S SECOND ADDITION TO BELVIDERE, AS PLATTED AND RECORDED IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as 412 WEST MADISON STREET, BELVIDERE, IL 61008

Property Index No. 05-26-406-006
The real estate is improved with a single family residence.
The judgment amount was \$134,010.13.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. 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.

Where a sale of real estate is made to satisfy a lien prior to that of the United States, the United States shall have one year from the date of sale within which to redeem, except that with respect to a lien arising under the internal revenue laws the period shall be 120 days or the period allowable for redemption under State law, whichever is longer, and in any case in which, under the provisions of section 505 of the Housing Act of 1950, as amended (12 U.S.C. 1701k), and subsection (d) of section 3720 of title 38 of the United States Code, the right to redeem does not arise, there shall be no right of redemption.

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) (1) 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.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, contact The Sales clerk, LOGS Legal Group LLP Plaintiff's Attorneys, 2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301, Bannockburn, IL, 60015 (847) 291-1717 For information call between the hours of 1pm - 3pm. Please refer to file number 19-091405.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

LOGS Legal Group LLP
2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301
Bannockburn IL, 60015
847-291-1717
E-Mail: ILNotices@logs.com
Attorney File No. 19-091405
Case Number: 19 CH 113
TJSC#: 44-732

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.
Case # 19 CH 113
6088-940822

Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 4, 11, 18, 2024

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

FOR NORTH BOONE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200
The following bid notice was published by North Boone Community Unit School District 200:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Boone Community Unit School District 200 Board of Education is accepting bids for selective interior renovations and new construction associated with the construction of a classroom restroom at the North Boone High School.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The work is to be performed at North Boone High School, 17823 Poplar Grove Road, Poplar Grove, Illinois. Work is scheduled to take place from June 2024 through August 2024.

Complete sets of the Bid Documents may be obtained beginning April 23, 2024 from the District Architect, Cashman Stahler Group, Inc. by emailing a request to Gregory Stahler at gstahler@cashmanstahler.com. Bid Documents will be made available to all Bidders who confirm they meet or exceed the District's bid qualifications.

No Mandatory Pre-Bid meeting is scheduled for this project. All Prospective Bidders are required to visit the project site prior to the submission of a Bid Proposal.

The public bid opening is anticipated at 2:00 P.M., Thursday, May 9, 2024, in the District Administrative Offices located at 6248 North Boone School Road, Poplar Grove, Illinois. Prior to the public bid opening, sealed bids will be received by 2:00 P.M., Thursday, May 9, 2024 at the District Administrative Offices.

Each bid submission must include a Bid Form, Bid Security in the amount of ten percent (10%) of the base bid, and all requested bidder qualification documentation confirming the Contractor meets all District bid qualifications. The successful Bidder will be required to furnish construction performance and payment bonds in the full amount of the contract.

The North Boone Community Unit School District 200 Board of Education is not obligated to accept the lowest or any other bid and reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any informalities and irregularities in bidding procedures and to award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder, or to accept any bid that in its sole opinion best serves the interests of the School District, as determined by the District.

END OF SECTION 000035

Restroom Renovation
CSG820 04/23/24
NBHS
000035-1

Issued For Bidding
Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 18, 2024

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
BOONE COUNTY
DATE FOR REQUEST OF NAME CHANGE (ADULT): TERESA MARIA MERRITT STEIN
Case No. 2024-MR-6

There will be a court date on my Request to change my name from: TERESA MARIA MERRITT STEIN to the new name of TERESA STEIN. The court date will be held on 05/21/2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008 in Courtroom #3
Published in the Boone County Journal - 04/18, 04/25, 05/02 (B)

Manchester Rural Fire Protection District #5

Public Notice is hereby given that at 8:00 P.M. April 24, 2024 a public hearing will be held at Manchester Town Hall 20904 Grade School Road, for the purpose of considering next years budget

The proposed budget will be on file and conveniently available to public inspection.

Terms and agreements between Fire District #5 and fire and rescue squads that serve Fire District 5 will be discussed and open to public comment.

Joel Nussbaum
Secretary of Manchester Rural Fire Protection District Number 5
Published in the Boone County Journal 04/18 B.

Public Hearing Notice

Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 11:00am
Agenda Item: Grant application to Region 1 Planning Council
Staff Contact: Erin Marshall, PCOM Grant Manager
Boone County Government will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, April 24th, 2024 at 11:00am at the Boone County Administration Campus located at 1212 Logan Ave., Belvidere, IL 61008.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider the grant application to the Region 1 Planning Council's Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) Application related to the replacement of Boone County Transit's urban buses. The public is invited to attend and comment.

Rodney Riley
Boone County Board Chair
Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 18, 2024

ASSUMED NAMES

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

No. DBA4191 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a ONLINE GIFT SALES business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of NET GOODIE that its location is or will be 9962 Whisper Ridge Lane, 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.

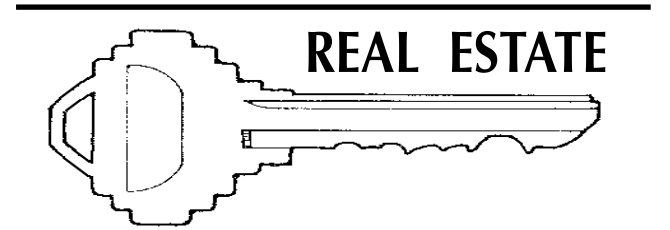
Phone Number: 815-703-9822
Ivy W. Brynolf, 9962 Whisper Ridge Lane, Belvidere, Illinois 61008
I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: April 2, 2024

Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 04/04,11,18 P.

**CHANGE IN CERTIFICATE OF OWNERSHIP OF
BUSINESS PUBLICATION NOTICE**

Public Notice is hereby given that on January 1st, A.D. 2012, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Boone County, Illinois, concerning the business known as EL CHEWY TRUCKING INC., located at 1601 JILLIAN COURT, BELVIDERE, IL 61008, which certificate sets forth the following changes in the operation thereof: Withdrawal of owner Sergio Espinoza.

Dated this 28th day of March, A.D. 2024
Julie A. Bliss, Boone County Clerk
Published in the Boone County Journal 4/18, 4/25, 5/2/2024 (P)



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

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A. Plaintiff,
-v-
19 CH 113

LAURA J. ANDERSON A/K/A LAURA J. BARRY A/K/A LAURA JEAN ANDERSON A/K/A LAURA JEAN BARRY A/K/A LAURA WIEDL, UNKNOWN HEIRS AND/OR LEGATEES OF ROBERT G. ANDERSON, DECEASED, TARA DOYLE, KYLE R. ANDERSON, KOLIN R. MAYBORNE A/K/A KOLIN R. ANDERSON, TIM MILLER, AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ROBERT G. ANDERSON, DECEASED, ONEMAIN FINANCIAL OF ILLINOIS, INC. F/K/A AMERICAN GENERAL FINANCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS, INC., UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS Defendant

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Commonly known as 412 WEST MADISON STREET, BELVIDERE, IL 61008

Property Index No. 05-26-406-006
The real estate is improved with a single family residence.
The judgment amount was \$134,010.13.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. 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.

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For information, contact The sales clerk, LOGS Legal Group LLP Plaintiff's Attorneys, 2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301, Bannockburn, IL, 60015 (847) 291-1717 For information call between the hours of 1pm - 3pm. Please refer to file number 19-091405.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

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LOGS Legal Group LLP
2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301
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847-291-1717
E-Mail: ILNotices@logs.com
Attorney File No. 19-091405
Case Number: 19 CH 113
TJSC#: 44-732

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.

Case # 19 CH 113
6088-940822

Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 4, 11, 18, 2024

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

U.S. BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS OWNER TRUSTEE FOR LEGACY MORTGAGE ASSET TRUST 2021-GS1 Plaintiff,
-v-
2023 FC 64

SHIRLEY A. JACOBSON, Defendant
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Property Index No. 05-35-454-018

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For information, contact MANLEY DEAS KOCHALSKI LLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, ONE EAST WACKER, SUITE 1250, Chicago, IL, 60601 (312) 651-6700. Please refer to file number 23-007321.

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One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

MANLEY DEAS KOCHALSKI LLC
ONE EAST WACKER, SUITE 1250
Chicago IL, 60601
312-651-6700
E-Mail: AMPS@manleydeas.com
Attorney File No. 23-007321
Case Number: 2023 FC 64
TJSC#: 44-517

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Case # 2023 FC 64
6088-941339

Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 11, 18, 25, 2024

the lobbying business. Those would include, among other things, authority to investigate suspected violations of the act, to compel the production of documents and testimony as part of an investigation, and to review books and records of individuals applying to renew their lobbyist registrations.

Williams noted that all the provisions of the bill already exist, to one extent or another, in many other states. That includes compensation disclosure, which she said is required in 18 other states.

But that was the provision that generated the most resistance from those who work as lobbyists in the Statehouse.

Josh Witkowski, who operates a small lobbying firm called XLN Services, said he has no objection to disclosing gifts and donations provided to decision-makers because those can be seen attempts to influence a decision. But he described the contracts between lobbyists and their clients as private business transactions that should not be accessible in a public database.

"And all it's really going to do is continue this stigma of believing that money runs politics," he said. "And any lobbyists down here will tell you, a higher-paid lobbyist can implode just as well as a low-paid lobbyist can. The money that somebody is spending on lobbying doesn't necessarily mean they're going to be effective."

Holly Ambuehl, a lobbyist for Forefront, an association of nonprofit organizations and grantmaking foundations, also raised concerns about how such a requirement would affect small community-based organizations with limited administrative budgets, including those that represent poor and underserved communities.

"We have a lot of data to show that small nonprofits are more likely to be led by and be serving persons of color," she said. "And so there's an equity issue at play, as well, that's very important to Forefront where we need to be looking for ways to support those organizations instead of making it harder for them to fulfill their missions."

But Bryan Zarou, of the Better Government Association, argued that tightening the state's lobbying laws and requiring lobbyists to disclose their compensation are long overdue reforms in Illinois.

"This is not a new idea. Eighteen other states have this practice," he said. "From the BGA perspective, this is not about what lobbyists are making, but rather a transparency measure for the public to see who is paying lobbyists and how much."

Rep. Maurice West, D-Rockford, chair of the Ethics and Elections Committee and lead sponsor of the bill, said after the meeting that although a deadline has already passed for most bills to be sent to the floor of the House, the contents of HB 4591 could still be included in an "omnibus" ethics bill that may be introduced later in the session.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government. It is distributed to hundreds of newspapers, radio and TV stations statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, along with major contributions from the Illinois Broadcasters Foundation and Southern Illinois Editorial Association.

Illinois Senate Advances Changes To State's Biometric Privacy Law

Current Biometric Information Privacy Act subject of hundreds of lawsuits, several high-profile settlements

By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois

It's been more than a year since the Illinois Supreme Court "respectfully suggest(ed)" state lawmakers clarify a law that's led to several multi-million-dollar settlements with tech companies over the collection of Illinoisans' biometric data.

On Thursday, a bipartisan majority in the Illinois Senate did just that, approving the first major change to Illinois' Biometric Information Privacy Act since it was originally passed in 2008.

"(The state Supreme Court) invited the General Assembly to address this," state Sen. Bill Cunningham, D-Chicago, said Thursday of a high court decision last February that found fast food chain White Castle violated BIPA each time its employees used their fingerprints in the course of performing their jobs.

In that case, White Castle estimated it would be on the hook for up to \$17 billion in penalties as the law provides for \$1,000 in damages for "negligent" violations or \$5,000 for "reckless" or "intentional" violations.

Though the court made clear it wasn't ruling on the question of how damages stack up, it did "respectfully suggest" the General Assembly review BIPA "and make clear its intent regarding the assessment of damages under the Act."

"This bill is a response to that invitation," Cunningham said before passage of Senate Bill 2979.

The legislation, which passed 46-13, would change BIPA's violation accrual so that each initial collection of a fingerprint or other biometric data would amount to one violation, rather than a violation occurring for each individual scan. Employees might scan their fingerprints dozens of times per shift if they're unlocking doors or cabinets with those scans.

Illinois is the only state that grants residents the right to sue over businesses' improper collection and mishandling of biometric data – whether they are an employee or a customer. A business can violate BIPA by not getting written consent from customers or employees for the data being collected, not having a storage policy in place or not properly protecting the data.

Business groups have been clamoring for changes to BIPA in recent years as upwards of 2,000 lawsuits have been filed under the law since roughly 2018, resulting in a few high-profile settlements – including a \$650 million class-action payout from Facebook in 2020. The social media giant paid more than 1 million Illinoisans roughly \$400 each.

But it was a pair of decisions from the state Supreme Court last year that galvanized business groups' efforts to push for changes to the law. First, the court unanimously ruled that BIPA had a five-year statute of limitations – not the one-year limit sought by business groups. A few weeks later in the White Castle case, the court ruled 4-3 that each time a company improperly collected biometric data markers amounts to a separate violation of the law.

When BIPA became law more than 15 years ago, it was a novel concept meant to guard against technologies that, at the time, were still mostly the

Continued on Page 8

Lobbyist

from page 5

or administrative action at the State, municipal, county, or township government level."

People who engage in that activity professionally are required to register with the secretary of state's office. So, too, are the entities that hire them.

In addition to requiring disclosure of lobbyist compensation, HB 4591 would give the secretary broader authority to enforce state laws governing

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Biometric

from page 7

stuff of science fiction.

But as more and more companies began using technology like fingerprint and facial scans to identify customers and workers, it's also led to what opponents of the law have called a cottage industry for ambitious attorneys.

Business groups have been divided on Cunningham's proposal, with some offering full-throated support after the bill's passage on Thursday and others pointing to continued opposition.

Senate Minority Leader John Curran, R-Downers Grove, noted the split before he ultimately voted for the bill, but said he sided with the industry groups that support it.

"I think they see it the way I see it," Curran said. "While I wish there was more in this...to do nothing leaves Illinois businesses subject to really annihilistic judgments."

After SB 2979 passed through a Senate committee last month, a coalition of influential industry groups said it didn't go far enough, especially because it wasn't retroactive and wouldn't help companies that have already been sued under BIPA.

Additionally, in recent weeks, advocates for Illinois' burgeoning data center industry have registered concern that Cunningham's bill doesn't specifically shield data centers from liability for storing biometric information on behalf of companies who may have violated BIPA.

After the bill's passage Thursday, Cunningham, a high-ranking member of the Senate, didn't close the door on a future amendment to address concerns from the data center industry.

"It's a bicameral legislature, so we'll see what happens in the House" he said. "But I think what we see here – the guts of this bill are going to stay in place and will, I think, be signed by the governor sometime this spring or summer."

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government. It is distributed to hundreds of newspapers, radio and TV stations statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, along with major contributions from the Illinois Broadcasters Foundation and Southern Illinois Editorial Association.

Cannabis Industry Calls for Ban on 'Delta-8' and Other Psychoactive Products

Delta-8 explodes in popularity, but burgeoning cannabis industry says it's a dangerous threat

By Hannah Meisel *Capitol News Illinois*

Illinois' largest cannabis business association is pushing to ban the sale of delta-8 THC, an increasingly popular psychoactive substance that's popped up in corner stores across the country in recent years.

New legislation filed in Springfield this week revives an ongoing debate over delta-8 and other hemp-derived products, which are totally unregulated in Illinois even as the state approaches the five-year anniversary of legalizing cannabis.

Read more: Cannabis regulatory reform bill fails to advance in spring legislative session

For those who've been trying to break into

Illinois' still-young cannabis industry, the state's inaction on delta-8 is an insult to the thousands of dollars and years of work that some business operators have put into trying to get their businesses off the ground.

"It is deeply disheartening and, frankly, a betrayal by the state to allow these shops to pop up and call themselves dispensaries," Ron Miller, a co-owner of his family-run Navada Labs and BLYSS Dispensary in Mt. Vernon, said at a Capitol news conference Thursday.

And for the industry's lead lobbying group, the Cannabis Business Association of Illinois, delta-8 represents other threats, including continued reports of Americans getting sick after consuming unregulated products, and the growing efforts to market delta-8 to young people.

At that news conference, CBAI Executive Director Tiffany Ingram stood next to a table filled with delta-8-infused candy and snacks in packaging strikingly similar to the multi-national brands they were designed to imitate. In one hand, Ingram held up a bag of Fritos corn chips and a similar-looking bag of "Fritos" snacks with small cannabis leaves on it.

Additionally, Ingram said, without having to pay cannabis-related taxes or other compliance costs, delta-8 businesses are not only undercutting legitimate licensed dispensaries, but the price is also accessible to kids.

"It says on the door you can only be 21 to come in," Ingram told Capitol News Illinois of her trips to faux dispensaries in Chicago's South Loop and Uptown neighborhoods to purchase some of the delta-8 products on display at the news conference. "But no one checked my ID."

State Rep. Eva-Dina Delgado, D-Chicago, said her 15-year-old daughter has told her that delta-8 products are very accessible to her peers.

"As a parent, there is nothing more scary than to hear stories from your child about how kids are 'greening out,'" she said. "And when I asked her questions like, 'Hey, are these kids getting the supply from their parents?' ...She says, 'Oh no, we just go to the corner store.'"

In addition to selling the products at corner stores and gas stations, delta-8-focused bakeries have also become a business model in the city of Chicago, according to reporting from the Chicago Sun-Times.

Under Senate Bill 3926, businesses caught selling delta-8 or other unregulated hemp-derived products would face a \$10,000 fine. Ingram acknowledged that the threat of fines is only as good as an enforcement mechanism but said the law would at least allow the state's Department of Agriculture to investigate the businesses.

Additionally, the bill would create 50 new state licenses for legitimate cannabis dispensaries and 50 new licenses for cannabis infusers, which Ingram said could help bring entrepreneurs

currently selling delta-8 into the fold. The measure would also require a state task force to study delta-8 products to ensure their safety, which Ingram characterized as more of a "pause" than an outright ban.

But those already operating in the delta-8 space said the bill would amount to an outright ban on delta-8 and other hemp-derived products.

Glenn McElfresh, a co-founder of Chicago-based hemp-derived beverage company Plift, called Thursday's news conference "very frustrating and full of inaccuracies."

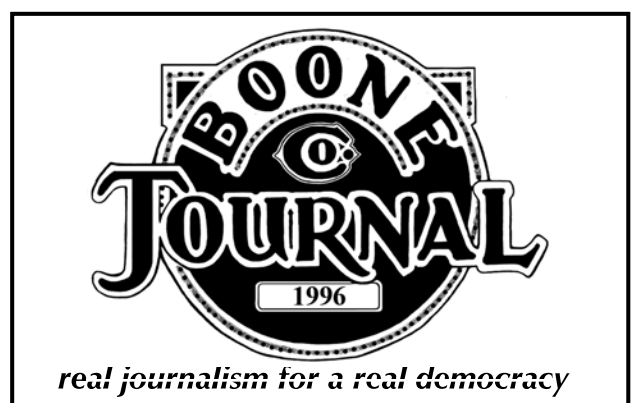
"Many of the claims made today do not represent the thousands of businesses who produce or sell safe, accurately labeled, and tested products," he said.

State Rep. LaShawn Ford, D-Chicago, has been pushing for regulation of delta-8 products, warning that prohibiting them would undermine the criminal justice goals of legalizing cannabis in Illinois. Ford and state Sen. Lakesia Collins, D-Chicago, are pushing a pair of bills that would restrict the sale of delta-8 products to anyone under 21, along with taxing them and creating a new class of state licenses for hemp businesses.

"We don't want to regulate thousands of current businesses out of existence," Collins said in a statement. "We want regulation, not termination, when jobs and opportunity are at stake, especially in Black and brown communities."

Hemp and marijuana are both derived from cannabis plants, but hemp can only contain 0.3 percent or less THC. If it contains more THC than that, it is considered marijuana. In 2018, the annual federal "Farm Bill" made the distribution and sale of hemp and its byproducts legal federally.

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