

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Sex abuse at centers labeled as rampant

Ex-youth detainees allege mistreatment in sweeping lawsuit

By Rebecca Johnson
Chicago Tribune

Hundreds of former residents of juvenile detention centers are accusing the state and Cook County of failing to protect them from “persistent and prevalent” sexual abuse by employees in youth prisons across Illinois in another set of sweeping lawsuits.

“These abuses are horrific in nature,” said attorney Todd Matthews at a Tuesday news conference in the Loop. “This has to stop, it has to stop. It has to be dealt with.”

The complaints, filed Monday in the Illinois Court of Claims and Cook County Circuit Court, detailed widespread abuse from 1996 to 2021. The more than 270 plaintiffs in the lawsuits — about 40 women and 230 men — join hundreds of others who have alleged similar abuse.

Michael Moss, now 30, said in the suit that he was sexually abused by two detention officers when he was 17 years old in the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, formerly called the Arthur J. Audy Home. One of the officers abused Moss while he was in the restroom and in his cell, performing oral copulation on him, the suit said, and another threatened to send Moss to solitary confinement if he didn’t allow abuse to continue.

“When I was 17, I made a few mistakes (and) ended up at the Audy Home. The employees at Cook County beat me, threatened me and sexually abused me,” Moss said Tuesday. “I wouldn’t wish my situation on anybody.”

“I have a wife and two kids, and even now, I feel so difficult at times to even talk about. I went through what I went through because it was a lot of shame and a lot of guilt and a lot of pain that I felt over a

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Roma Khan, president of Barrington Student Safety Organization, wears the organization’s signature pink vest near the railroad crossing along Route 59 on Sept. 18 in Barrington. **STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Pedestrian protections at rail crossings lacking

No gates added yet at lines in Chicago area where 2 women were killed this year

By Robert McCoppin
Chicago Tribune

Two railroad lines, two tragedies. Two young women who were killed by trains while walking across the tracks in the Chicago area this year were not the first victims on those lines — but no pedestrian crossing gates had been added at the sites in question.

Months later, no new gates have been put up. Authorities say they are working on it, though it’s unclear when they might be installed.

While road-rail crossings in

the Chicago area typically have gates to stop vehicles, there often are no such protections for pedestrians.

Of 971 rail crossings with roadway gates in Cook and the collar counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties, only an estimated 204, or 21%, have pedestrian gates, according to the Illinois Commerce Commission, which regulates crossings.

Nationally, pedestrian incidents and fatalities are rising at a higher level when compared to overall accidents at crossings. While overall accidents at rail crossings increased 15% from

2020 to 2023, the number of pedestrian incidents increased 20%, and the number of pedestrian fatalities increased 31%, according to federal data.

Though the ICC does not have data on the number of road-rail crossings in Illinois with adjacent pedestrian crossings, advocates say that where such crossings exist, more safety is needed.

“There should be pedestrian gates at all crossings where pedestrians are using them,” said attorney Jim Pullos, who has filed suit in one of the recent local cases.

Walkers typically are much

closer to trains, which can extend 3 feet beyond the tracks on both sides. In many cases, one train passes before the victims began crossing the tracks, when another train from the other direction, its noise possibly drowned out by the first train, comes unexpectedly. Pedestrian gates could help prevent such accidents by staying down when a second train is coming.

Two recent fatalities, in northwest suburban Barrington and Chicago’s Hegewisch community, involved such

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Dr. Harry Wilkins stands inside one of the new operating rooms in the Gift of Hope Organ Donor Care Center at Rush University Medical Center on Sept. 16. **EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

New center for organ donors at Rush is first of its kind in Illinois

By Lisa Schencker
Chicago Tribune

Tucked away behind unassuming double doors on the fifth floor of Rush University Medical Center sits a new, very different type of medical unit.

It’s a unit for patients who will save lives, even though they themselves have no hope of survival.

The Gift of Hope Organ Donor Care Center at Rush is the first of its kind in Illinois. The center

accepts patients from area hospitals who’ve been declared brain dead and who’ve been authorized to be organ donors. At the center, doctors and nurses work to keep donors’ organs functioning and ultimately procure their organs, so they can be transported to some of the more than 104,000 people now on waiting lists for organs in the U.S. The center received its first donor Sunday.

Those behind the center say it’s a more efficient way of recov-

ering organs that will save more lives.

“It will lead to more organs transplanted,” said Lisa Hinsdale, director of organ operations for Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, the not-for-profit organization that’s responsible for recovering organs from deceased donors in the northern two-thirds of Illinois and Lake County, Indiana.

“If one more organ can be

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Biden at UN: US can’t retreat from the world

In address to General Assembly, he shares optimism on peace

By Aamer Madhani,
Matthew Lee and Zeke Miller
Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Joe Biden declared in his final address to the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday that the U.S. must not retreat from the world, as Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon edged toward all-out war and Israel’s bloody operation against Hamas in Gaza neared the one-year mark.

Biden used his wide-ranging address to speak to a need to end the Middle East conflict and the 17-month-old civil war in Sudan and to highlight U.S. and Western allies’ support for Kyiv since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. He also raised concern over artificial intelligence and its potential to be used for repression.

His appearance before the international body offered Biden



President Joe Biden addresses the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday at its N.Y. headquarters. **JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP**

one of his last high-profile opportunities as president to make the case to keep up robust support for Ukraine, which could be in doubt if former President Donald Trump defeats Vice President Kamala Harris in November. Biden insisted that despite global conflicts, he

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INSIDE

Israel ratchets up Hezbollah attacks

Thousands race out of southern Lebanon as sides trade strikes, spurring fears of an all-out war between Iran-backed Hezbollah and Israel. **Nation & World**

No strangers to adversity

White Sox fans “don’t deserve” to endure this historically bad season — but they should be used to it by now, writes Paul Sullivan. **Chicago Sports**

