



MATTHEW MURPHY

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Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



Obstacles deter the path toward dream

Out of work and running out of time, migrants struggle to find jobs in Chicago

By Nell Salzman | Chicago Tribune

After a month of standing in Home Depot parking lots in Chicago hoping to find work, Rayni Cuadrado had finally found a day job.

The 29-year-old from Maracaibo, Venezuela, moved metal scrap and took measurements Thursday inside a decimated church in Lawndale. He had once dreamed of studying art in his home country, he said, but due to the political and social unrest there, he instead walked to the United States with his daughter to find work.

Like countless other groups of migrants and undocumented workers across the city, Cuadrado has been getting up at 5 a.m. every day for the past month to stand in parking lots and wait to be picked for day labor jobs. When a vehicle drives by, he said there is a rush.

People want to find work so badly they will push each other.

"This is my first job in America. The majority of people don't want to hire us," he said.

While he's living in a city shelter now, he hopes to make enough money to find an apart-

ment for himself and his 4-year-old daughter. But he isn't part of the group of migrants who qualify for a work permit authorization.

Thousands of people who

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Above: Matthew Anderson, 19, right, watches Rayni Cuadrado, 29, of Venezuela, change a drill bit Thursday while clearing debris from a broken doorway at New Promise Land Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood. Cuadrado, who had been going to Home Depot every day for a month, said it was his first substantial job after arriving in the U.S in November.

ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Burke gets automatic bump in pension

Ex-Speaker Madigan now in line for hike before new trial date

By Ray Long Chicago Tribune

Only days after being convicted in a sweeping federal corruption case, former Ald. Ed Burke began the new year by collecting a bigger pension check courtesy of an automatic hike that former House Speaker Michael Madigan is also all but guaranteed to get now that his own corruption trial was recently postponed until fall.

Burke, Chicago's longest-serving alderman, stands to collect nearly \$50,000 this year — half of his new \$99,200 annual pension rate — because pensions aren't cut off for City Hall officials convicted of corruption until they are sentenced, which for Burke isn't scheduled until mid-June. As a result, Burke received his annual 3% bump right on schedule when the calendar turned to 2024.

Madigan, the longest-serving speaker in American history, meanwhile, will continue to safely collect his roughly \$153,400 annual pension thanks to this month's court win that secured him a six-month delay in his trial. The postponement means Madigan stays on track to get his own automatic 3% pension increase in July, taking his retirement income to \$158,000 a year. Had Madigan's original April 1 trial moved forward as scheduled, a conviction could have prompted his pension payments to be suspended before the increase kicked in.

The cases of Burke and Madigan spotlight how the public pension spigot can take a while to shut off when public officials face legal troubles. And the two Southwest Siders from neighboring wards stand to benefit from the variety of lucrative laws that favor long-time politicians in Chicago and Springfield.

Still, the city and state pension rules for elected officials could

Turn to Pension, Page 12

INSIDE



JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

'It's shameful. It's absolutely shameful'

Bulls fans boo late GM Jerry Krause during Ring of Honor celebration. His widow, Thelma, struggled to hold back tears. Chicago Sports

UN official warns of famine in Gaza

Twin specters of widening regional war and intensified suffering of civilians loomed over the Middle East on Saturday. Nation & World

Illegal bribe or legitimate 'gratuity'?

How a \$13,000 payment to an Indiana mayor could alter political corruption cases in Chicago

By Jason Meisner and Megan Crepeau Chicago Tribune and Amy Lavalley Post-Tribune

It was Christmastime 2013, and Portage Mayor James Snyder was in trouble.

His mortgage business had tanked, the IRS was after him for a significant tax debt, and on top of that he had holiday spending to account for. His \$62,000 salary as mayor of the small working-class town just wasn't cutting it.

So Snyder showed up unannounced to Great Lakes Peterbilt, the local truck dealership he'd helped to win two lucrative city contracts.

"I need money. That's what I'm here for," the mayor told

the owners. Days later, they cut Snyder a check for \$13,000, saying it was for "consulting" that was never fully performed.

As alleged bribes go, it wasn't exactly the crime of the century. And his lawyers argued it wasn't a bribe at all, but a legal gratuity, a thank-you gesture to Snyder for shepherding the city contracts to their firm.

A decade later, that agreement in a small office in north-west Indiana is the focus of a legal battle that has wound its way all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has decided to take up Snyder's appeal and render a decision that could change the face of public corruption prosecutions across the country,

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Former Portage, Indiana Mayor James Snyder and his family arrive at federal court in Hammond for his sentencing on Oct. 13, 2021.

KYLE TELECHAN/POST-TRIBUNE