

# Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

**ELECTION 2024** COOK COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

## Dem candidates differ on plans to handle crime

O'Neill Burke, Harris present contrasting visions for retail theft, juvenile offenses

By **A.D. Quig**  
Chicago Tribune

The two Democratic candidates for Cook County state's attorney on Thursday provided starkly different visions over how harshly they'd prosecute smaller retail theft crimes and minors accused of carjacking while also saying they'd tackle the systemic problem

of wrongful convictions differently. In the first televised debate between the two looking to succeed State's Attorney Kim Foxx, former Illinois Appellate Judge Eileen O'Neill Burke and ex-prosecutor and corporate lobbyist Clayton Harris III attempted to draw distinctive lines about how they'd direct the office for the next four years.

With early voting approaching for the March 19 primary, the two agreed on a need to balance the office's prosecutorial mandate with the restorative justice practices implemented under Foxx. Both were assistant state's attorneys in the office at the start of their legal careers, but O'Neill Burke has touted her decades in and around the county's court system — as a prosecutor, defense attorney and judge — as a key advantage. Harris, meanwhile, has argued his time in the prosecutor's office, manage-

ment experience in government and academic expertise make him the best choice. During the one-hour televised debate on WLS-Ch. 7 and WGBH/Univision, Foxx's record over the past years and questions about whether the candidates would continue or diverge from her policies in response to Chicago's crime were ever-present. "If you think things are going just fine right now, I'm not your candidate. Mr. Harris is your candidate," O'Neill Burke said about Harris,

who has been endorsed by Foxx's mentor, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. While the debate was mostly civil, Harris and O'Neill Burke diverged on where to place thresholds for prosecuting retail thefts as a felony, the treatment of minors arrested for carjackings and coordinated retail thefts, and how to manage morale in an office that experienced significant attrition during the pandemic.

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## Fed jury still out in Collins tax case

Ex-state legislator charged with filing false IRS returns

By **Jason Meisner**  
Chicago Tribune

The fate of former state legislator Annazette Collins is in the hands of a federal jury after closing arguments were held Friday on charges alleging she vastly underreported her lobbying and other income in tax returns and twice failed to file tax returns at all, cheating the IRS out of nearly \$100,000.

The jury of seven men and five women began discussions at about 4 p.m. Friday. U.S. District Judge Jorge Alonso sent them home for the weekend after about an hour and 45 minutes of deliberations did not yield a verdict.

The panel was told to return to the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse at 10 a.m. Monday.

Collins, 61, is charged with three counts each of filing a false tax return and failing to file a return. The most serious counts carry up to three years in prison.

Collins was a longtime state

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## Guilty plea made in bribery scheme

Ex-transportation official admits to offer to state senator

By **Jason Meisner**  
Chicago Tribune

A longtime Chicago political operative pleaded guilty Friday to a scheme to bribe then-state Sen. Martin Sandoval on behalf of a suburban construction company that needed state approval for a development in East Dundee.

William Helm, the onetime deputy commissioner of the Chicago Department of Aviation and a former state transportation official, also admitted in a plea agreement with prosecutors that he and others helped arrange \$40,000 in bribes to other, unnamed officials.

He also pleaded guilty to a tax count showing he vastly underreported his income over a five-year period, costing the IRS and the state of Illinois about \$9,000.

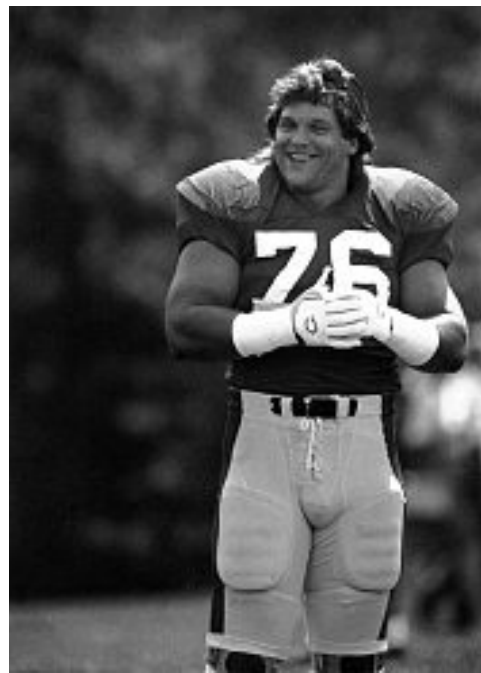
Preliminary sentencing guidelines call for up to about four years in prison. However, prosecutors have agreed to ask

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Pipe band helps celebrate Bears great Steve McMichael's Hall of Fame call



E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE



CHARLES CHERNEY/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## PLAYING TRIBUTE

**Above:** The Bagpipes & Drums of the Emerald Society band arrives at the home of Bears defensive lineman Steve McMichael in Homer Glen on Friday for a celebration of his election to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

**Left:** McMichael at Bears camp in Lake Forest on Aug. 28, 1990.

**Inside:** The wiring McMichael had for the 203 games he played for the Bears from 1981 to 1993 carried well beyond the field. He was on an unrelenting quest to contribute in any way he could. Dan Wiederer's story in **Chicago Sports**.

## Israel plans evacuation of city in Gaza

Expected Rafah invasion draws wave of criticism

By **Josef Federman, Najib Jobain and Bassem Mroue**  
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday said he has ordered the military to prepare a plan to evacuate civilians from Rafah ahead of an expected Israeli invasion of the densely populated southern Gaza city.

The announcement came after heavy international criticism, including from the U.S., of Israeli intentions to move ground forces into the city that borders Egypt. Rafah had a prewar population of roughly 280,000, and according to the United Nations is now home to some 1.4 million additional people living with relatives, in shelters or in sprawling tent camps after fleeing fighting else-



Members of Israeli security forces arrest an antiwar demonstrator Friday in the occupied West Bank. HAZEM BADER/GETTY-AFP

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