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ELECTION 2024

Experts dismiss Trump tax idea

Campaign rhetoric would not work in real life, they claim

By Andrew Duehren The New York Times

WASHINGTON-FormerPresident Donald Trump has spent much of the presidential campaign brainstorming new, and sometimes untested, ways to cut taxes. In the election's final stretch, he raised the possibility of going even further: eliminating income

During a Fox News segment Monday, Trump took questions at a barbershop in New York City. When asked if the United States could potentially end all federal taxation, Trump said the country could return to the economic policies in the late 19th century, when there was no federal income tax.

"It had all tariffs; it didn't have an income tax," Trump said. "Now we have income taxes, and we have people that are dying. They're paying tax, and they don't have the money

to pay the tax." În June, Trump floated the idea of replacing federal revenue from income taxes with money received from tariffs. Trump has not provided specific details of how that would work, and it is unclear if he wants to eliminate all federal taxes, including corporate income taxes and payroll taxes, or only end the individual income tax.

Either way, liberal and conservative experts have dismissed his idea as mathematically impossible and economically destructive. Even if Republicans control Congress, lawmakers are

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MICHAEL MADIGAN TRIAL



Former House Speaker Michael Madigan, center, leaves the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago on Thursday. CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Jury hears wiretaps

Contrary to defense, recordings suggest ex-speaker was hands-on boss

By Jason Meisner, Megan Crepeau and Ray Long

Chicago Tribune

A lawyer for former House Speaker Michael Madigan told jurors at the outset of his corruption trial that the Democratic powerhouse was "completely ignorant" of what people were saving behind his back and "never made a demand on anybody."

But in a case with hundreds of wiretapped recordings, it's Madigan's actual words that will matter. And the jury got an earful Thursday.

A series of wiretapped phone calls played in court captured the famously reticent Madigan speaking bluntly about everything from

forcing longtime state Rep. Lou Lang out of the legislature to calling then-state Senate President John Cullerton to the woodshed for campaign ads daring to criticize the speaker during the 2018 general election.

"I think this guy is going to be a continuing problem," Madigan told his longtime confidant, Michael McClain, on one call about Lang, a Skokie Democrat who was facing potential sexual harassment allegations. "If you think I'm wrong tell me I'm wrong but I don't see how (Lang) continues now."

In a later call, McClain told Madigan that Lang didn't seem to be getting the message, and asked, "When do you want me to call Lang and just lower the boom on him? Because he's not getting it." 'Sooner rather than later," Madigan replied.

The calls, which were captured on an FBI wiretap on McClain's phone, paint Madigan as hands-on to the extreme, ingrained in the day-to-day political minutia and particularly concerned about the negative optics the actions of others potentially posed for him.

In one intriguing call from 2018, Madigan asked McClain to get hold of Sam Panayotovich, a former state representative from Chicago who had a lobbying business with Joe Berrios, the longtime Cook County assessor who was under fire over campaign contributions from real estate lawyers who did business with his office.

"Are you in position to advise Mr. Panayotovich to stay away from me?" Madigan asked. according to the call played for

McClain immediately called Panayotovich. In that call, also played for the jury, he very sternly told him, "Hey, you made a request for you and Joe to go see the speaker. There is a feeding frenzy on this guy right now ... the optics

just aren't good for him." The calls played Thursday were the first among some 200 undercover audio and video recordings that form the center of the prosecution's case against Madigan, the nation's longest-serving legislative leader who ran the state

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Man pleads in murder of beloved wanderer

30-year-old sentenced to 47 years in prison

By Christy Gutowski

The man accused of setting Chicago's beloved "Walking Man" on fire as he slept defenseless on a city street will serve nearly 50 years in prison after admitting his guilt in the unprovoked fatal attack, prosecutors confirmed Thursday.

Joseph Guardia had a trial tentatively set to begin this week in the slaying of Joseph Kromelis, but the 30-year-old Melrose Park man instead accepted a plea deal Wednesday on first-degree murder charges.

Guardia must serve 100% of his 47-year prison term and would be in his 70s before he could be freed. He will receive credit, though, for the 881 days he has spent in jail since his arrest.



Joseph Kromelis, then 69, makes his way south on State Street near Madison Street on Aug. 8, 2016. He was hospitalized earlier that year after being attacked on Wacker Drive. PHIL VELASQUEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Kromelis, a distinctively dapper dresser often seen strolling alone along the streets of downtown Chicago, was attacked before 3 a.m. May 25, 2022, while he slept on the pavement in the 400 block of North Lower Wabash Avenue.

He died several months later at

During this week's court hearing, prosecutors read a victim-impact statement from Kromelis' sister. The woman, Erika "Ricky" Singree, of Alaska, died Sunday just days after her 80th birthday. She had been Kromelis' only living sibling.

Her daughter, Jami, who also lives in Alaska and attended the Cook County court hearing via videoconference, said she often told her mother stories about Kromelis' impact on Chicagoans.

"My heart is broken," the elder Singree wrote in her statement. "My brother just loved Chicago. He had his routine of walking the streets. He wanted to be left alone. He never hurt anyone. He was an angel with wings.

Kromelis, a former street peddler who preferred to keep

Turn to Murder, Page 4

NTSB: Operator in Yellow Line crash had alcohol in his system

By Sarah Freishtat Chicago Tribune

The operator of a CTA Yellow Line train that slammed into a snowplow on the tracks last November, injuring more than a dozen people, had alcohol in his system after the crash, a recent federal report found.

A hospital blood test around 11:20 a.m., about an hour after the crash, showed the 47-yearold operator had ethanol in his system at a level of 0.06 grams per deciliter of blood, according to a National Transportation Safety Board medical report made public in August. A later federal test of hospital blood samples detected ethanol at a rate of about 0.04 grams per deciliter, the NTSB report shows. No other substances tested for were detected.

The hospital test is "an unconfirmed clinical test," and it includes a disclaimer that results are not intended for legal purposes, the report notes.

The NTSB has not yet issued its final report on the November 2023 collision, including determining what likely caused the crash. Such reports typically take one to two years to come out.

In a statement, an NTSB spokesperson said the investigation is continuing, "however, at this time investigators have not found that the operator's actions contributed to the accident."

The NTSB medical report stated the effects of ethanol, the alcohol found in beer, wine and liquor, can vary depending on

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High **64** Low **44**

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 26

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