

Chicago Tribune



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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

WAR IN UKRAINE

US to provide land mines to Kyiv

Biden administration's shift on policy designed to help slow battlefield advances of Russian infantry

By Samya Kullab, Iliia Novikov and Lolita C. Baldor
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — The Biden administration announced Wednesday that it will give Ukraine antipersonnel mines to

help it slow Russia's battlefield advances, marking the second major shift on U.S. military support for Kyiv in days.

After allowing Ukraine to use longer-range American missiles to launch strikes deeper into Russia, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the shift in Washing-

ton's policy on antipersonnel land mines for Ukraine was needed to counter changing Russian tactics.

The war, which reached its 1,000-day milestone Tuesday, has largely been going Russia's way. Moscow's bigger army is slowly pushing Ukraine's forces backward in the eastern Donetsk region, while Ukrainian civilians are being maimed and killed by Russian drones and missiles often fired from inside Russia.

Individual ground troops, rather than forces more protected in armored carriers, are leading the Russian battlefield advance, so Ukraine has "a need for things that can help slow down that effort," Austin said during a trip to Laos.

The announcement comes two months before President-elect Donald Trump replaces President Joe Biden in the White House. Trump has pledged to swiftly end the war without offering any

details as to how and has criticized the amount the U.S. has spent on supporting Ukraine.

Biden administration officials say they are determined to help Ukraine as much as possible before he leaves office, and they announced Wednesday that the U.S. intends to cancel half of the debt — some \$4.6 billion — Ukraine owes to the country. State

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MICHAEL MADIGAN TRIAL

Moody: Speaker awarded his allies

Ex-precinct captain testifies he was given do-nothing contract

By Jason Meisner, Megan Crepeau and Ray Long
Chicago Tribune

Ed Moody spent a lifetime as one of Michael Madigan's most loyal precinct captains: an enthusiastic door-knocker, prolific vote-getter, and key pillar to the House speaker's prodigious political power.

But that dynamic was flipped on its head Wednesday, when Moody strode into federal court to testify as a crucial prosecution witness in his former boss's corruption trial.

In a highly anticipated moment, Moody, 60, entered U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey's 12th-floor courtroom in a dark gray suit and walked briskly past Madigan at the defense table without looking in his direction. The ex-speaker's gaze followed him all the way to the witness stand.

"My name is Ed Moody," he began, and continued his testimony with a relaxed attitude and a voice so loud that prosecutors asked him to back off the microphone. From the defense table, Madigan stared at Moody, his mouth downturned but otherwise expressionless.

Moody was then asked a question at the center of the corruption case: How much work did he do over the years in exchange for monthly checks from various ComEd contractors close to Madigan?

Little to none, Moody answered.

Moody's testimony, which largely mirrored what he told a jury in last year's related "ComEd Four" bribery trial, could be highly damaging for Madigan. He is the only one of the subcontractors paid by the utility to take the stand against the former speaker and tell the jury that Madigan was behind the surreptitious arrangement.

During his nearly four hours on direct examination, Moody took the jury through his four decades in politics, which began with a chance meeting with Madigan while out walking with his twin brother, Fred, in Chicago's West Lawn neighborhood.

It was during their time as Madigan's top political workers

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CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Chicago's drinking problem?

Some Chicago bar and restaurant owners said Wednesday that Mayor Brandon Johnson's proposed 35% tax hike on liquor sales would be ruinous to their businesses. Damon Patton, founder and CEO of Moor's Brewing in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood, above, added to the latest opposition to the mayor's 2025 budget plan. "Beer is a volume game, so the margins on it are very thin," Patton said. "You need a lot of volume to kind of make money in this business, and a tax hike would definitely hinder that progress." **Chicagoland, Page 4**

Judge nixes attempt by husband to stop funeral

Woman found dead in high-rise stairwell

By Sylvan Lebrun
Chicago Tribune

The family of a woman who was found dead in a South Loop stairwell last month will be allowed to proceed with her funeral on Saturday after a Cook County judge Wednesday denied an emergency motion by the woman's husband to stop the burial.

Caitlin Tracey, 36, of New Buffalo, Michigan, was found dead on Oct. 27 at the bottom of a stairwell in a luxury high-rise building where her husband, Adam Beckerink, lives. Earlier this month, her parents successfully won custody of her remains after arguing in court that Beckerink, who was married to their daughter for six months, had a



Andrew Tracey, left, his wife, Monica Tracey, and attorney Andrew Cuniff leave the courthouse after a hearing in the case of the remains of the Traceys' daughter on Wednesday in Chicago.

TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

history of abusing her.

Beckerink, who faces two pending charges of domestic violence against Tracey in Michigan, had filed a motion Monday to temporarily prevent Tracey's parents from proceeding with her funeral. He argued in an affidavit he would be "irreparably harmed and deprived of the ability to direct the disposition of his wife's remains for which he is entitled to and has priority under both Illinois and Michigan law."

During Wednesday's hearing, Judge Eve M. Reilly questioned Beckerink's attorney Telly Stefanias regarding his client's end goal with the recent filing, with a representative from the Cook County medical examiner's office noting that their office could not take back Tracey's remains.

"Is that what you're asking me to do, give (the remains) back?"

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Conservative group targets mail-in ballot counting law

By Rick Pearson
Chicago Tribune

A conservative legal organization is ratcheting up its opposition to the requirement in Illinois that mail-in ballots be counted for 14 days after Election Day by calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse federal court rulings that upheld the law because three Republican plaintiffs lacked the legal standing to challenge it.

The appeal, filed Tuesday by the organization Judicial Watch, also asks the nation's highest court to clarify rulings about who has the right to appeal post-Election Day challenges, after many lawsuits contesting individual state results of the 2020 election filed on behalf of Donald Trump were tossed for lack of standing. Judicial Watch was

Turn to Ballots, Page 2

Chicago reacts to education pick

Donald Trump's nominee to lead the U.S. Department of Education has some public school students and parents fearful of her vow to overthrow the office. **Chicagoland**

Abortion opponents sue Pritzker

Half a dozen groups and employers who oppose abortion are aiming to stop a law that requires insurers in Illinois to cover reproductive care at no cost to patients. **Business**

Republicans block Gaetz report

House Ethics Committee Republicans voted Wednesday against releasing the panel's long-running investigation into the nominee for attorney general. **Nation & World**

TODAY'S WEATHER



High 41 Low 39

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 16

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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