

# Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

## ‘ComEd Four’ sentences delayed

Decision put off until after Supreme Court rules in bribery case

By Jason Meisner  
Chicago Tribune

Sentencing hearings in the “ComEd Four” bribery case involving former House Speaker Michael Madigan will be delayed until after the U.S. Supreme Court weighs in on a key federal bribery statute that has put several high-profile public corruption cases in limbo, a judge ruled Thursday.

Prosecutors had argued against the delay, saying defense attorneys were doing a premature victory lap and that there is a public interest in seeing the case through in a timely fashion.

In announcing his decision, however, U.S. District Judge Harry Leinenweber said it “makes sense to me to find out precisely” where the high court lands before proceeding to sentencing. He also quoted from the prosecutions’ opening statements at trial last year, which the judge said mirrored some of the exact issues in the Supreme Court filings.

Leinenweber’s ruling follows a similar decision by U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey, who agreed to postpone Madigan’s racketeering trial from April to October in order to have the Supreme Court’s decision in hand.

The case taken up by the Supreme Court involves James Snyder, the former mayor of Portage, Indiana, convicted of accepting \$13,000 from a company that had recently won contracts to sell the city garbage trucks.

He was originally tried and convicted of one count of bribery and one tax-related offense in 2019, but successfully moved for a new trial on the bribery count. The jury convicted him again following a second trial in 2021.

The question in the case is

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Franzo Lira, 42, from Caracas, Venezuela, sits on a bucket in his living room in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood on Feb. 18. “I’m working every day,” he said. “But I don’t have the money to buy furniture.” **ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

## From shelters to homes, but without certainty

State has spent \$41.4 million so far to resettle more than 5,000 households

By Nell Salzman  
Chicago Tribune

Migrants across the city are leaving shelters in droves, their belongings stuffed in trash bags they load into Ubers or Lyfts, which they’ve often arranged themselves to head to new homes.

More than eight months after state and city leaders said they wanted to help thousands of migrants find homes in Chicago, the government assistance program covering their initial

months of rent is moving faster than ever.

Migrants are now mostly settling on the South and West sides, where they say rent is more affordable with the approximate \$1,500-a-month rental assistance they say they receive from the state. Working in partnership with the city, nonprofit organizations in Chicago and case managers from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the state has spent \$41.4 million so far to resettle more than 5,000 households, according to the Illinois

Department of Human Services.

In the past month, the number of migrants residing in city shelters has decreased dramatically due to a combination of migrants leaving the city to connect with family and friends in other cities and states and a change to the rental assistance program that allows migrants to find their own apartments without the assistance of a case manager, according to officials.

“There were good things and bad things about the shelter,” said Angelica Beltran, 44, from Mara-

caibo, Venezuela who has settled in Englewood. “But I didn’t want to stay.”

Officials are trying to scale back the number of migrants living in the nearly two dozen makeshift shelters in abandoned buildings, in turn easing the financial burden for the city and state of caring for migrants.

But as the number of migrants in the city’s remaining 23 shelters has shrunk to approximately 12,000 — down from a peak of

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## Over 100 killed in aid convoy chaos

Palestinians report Israelis fired shots, sparked stampede

By Wafaa Shurafa,  
Kareem Chehayeb  
and Melanie Lidman  
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli troops fired on a crowd of Palestinians racing to pull food off an aid convoy in Gaza City on Thursday, witnesses said. More than 100 people were killed in the chaos, bringing the death toll since the start of the Israel-Hamas war to more than 30,000, according to health officials.

Israel said many of the dead were trampled in a chaotic stampede for the food aid and that its troops fired only when they felt endangered by the crowd.

The violence was quickly condemned by Arab coun-



People mourn following an early morning incident when Israeli forces opened fire on crowds rushing at an aid distribution point in Gaza City, Gaza Strip, on Thursday. **GETTY-APF**

tries, and President Joe Biden expressed concern it would add to the difficulty of negotiating a cease-fire in the nearly five-month conflict.

The Gaza City area was among the first targets of Israel’s air, sea and ground offensive, launched in response to Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack into Israel.

While many Palestinians fled the invasion in the north of the enclave, a few hundred thousand are believed to remain in the largely devastated and isolated region. Several deliveries of aid reached the area this week, offi-

cials said.

The deadly chaos in Gaza City will likely fuel criticism of Israel when it comes to allowing aid in.

Aid groups say it has become nearly impossible to deliver supplies in most of Gaza because of the difficulty of coordinating with the Israeli military, ongoing hostilities and the breakdown of public order, with crowds of desperate people overwhelming aid convoys. The U.N. says a quarter of Gaza’s 2.3 million Palestinians face starvation; around 80%

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## Pritzker takes abortion rights push nationwide

Backs ballot measures, but little on horizon in Ill.

By Dan Petrella  
Chicago Tribune

Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker is expending political and financial capital around the country — from Ohio to Nevada — on ballot measures to enshrine abortion protections in state constitutions. But similar efforts in Illinois remain in limbo.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court nearly two years ago struck down the federal right to abortion, reproductive health care has

proved a potent political issue for Democrats, credited with helping prevent a predicted “red wave” nationally in 2022 and, in Illinois, cemented the party’s dominance in the statehouse.

Abortion rights also has become a platform issue for Pritzker. The second-term governor and billionaire Hyatt Hotels heir has increasingly looked to raise his national profile as he eyes a potential future White

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Williams

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#### Caleb Williams confidential

Buzz from NFL scouting combine on what the Bears must consider with No. 1 draft pick. **Chicago Sports**

#### Business district to get help

Mayor announces measures for city to provide support for restaurants and stores in Loop. **Business**

TODAY’S  
WEATHER



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Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 12

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