

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

How primaries can exclude voters

This Super Tuesday's reduced impact puts US quirks on display

By Gary Fields
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As an independent, Christian Miller can't vote in Pennsylvania's closed presidential primary in April. He said it wouldn't matter even if he could. "You're not really voting for

■ Nikki Haley wins the Republican primary in the District of Columbia, notching her first victory of the 2024 campaign. **Nation & World**

anything," said Miller, who left the Democratic Party in 2022. "Every election I've ever seen, the candidates have been decided by the time they get to Pennsylvania."

Pennsylvania is a crucial swing state and the country's fifth most populous. And yet holding a primary so much later than other states means its voters often have

little say in choosing the presidential contenders. It's the same for voters in much of the rest of the country.

That dynamic is even more pronounced this year, with the front-runners for both major parties in overwhelming position to become the presumptive nominees on or not long after Super Tuesday, when 16 states hold contests. It's traditionally the biggest day on the election calendar.

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Supporters of presidential candidates stand outside a polling place Jan. 23 in Windham, N.H. **MICHAEL DWYER/AP**



Michael Burns adjusts the jacket of his mother, Carla Johnson, a formerly homeless volunteer with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, before they canvass the North Lawndale neighborhood on Feb. 17. The coalition is urging residents to vote in favor of the Bring Chicago Home referendum proposal in the primary. **VINCENT ALBAN/TRIBUNE**

Messaging battle carries on

Despite legal limbo, Bring Chicago Home's champions, foes continue efforts as primary nears

By Alice Yin and A.D. Quig
Chicago Tribune

Inside a balmy church in Lawndale, Bring Chicago Home volunteer Michael Burns dutifully adjusted his mother's sweater hood while she loaded a mobile canvassing app on her phone.

The pair was heading out to try to drum up support for the now-imperiled ballot referendum.

Burns has had to sleep on the Red Line during the winter, and he worried

his 67-year-old mother, Carla Johnson, would catch the bitter February cold.

"I'm homeless myself," Burns, 35, said. "When it was too cold ... I just ride the train, but that gets boring because you'll fall asleep. And it's like right when you fall asleep, it's time to get off the train."

On that Saturday, Burns quietly trailed behind his mother, the pair tip-toeing across parking lots and creaky porch stairs to door-knock for the referendum.

"I want him to see that there's other young people that are out here helping too," Johnson said, adding that she has also experienced housing insecurity.

Stories like those are at the heart of a longtime drive by a coalition of Chicago homeless advocates who believe raising the real estate transfer tax on higher-end sales is the best way to secure steady funding for housing and social services.

After years of false starts and stops, the movement found new momentum

when the election of Mayor Brandon Johnson sealed the placement of the question on the March primary ballot — only for a Cook County judge to disqualify the referendum more than a week ago.

The court order, now being appealed less than a month before Election Day, stems from a lawsuit by real estate interests and means no votes will be counted.

Judge Kathleen Burke's ruling is

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Eclipse chasers zero in on southern Illinois

For 2nd time in 7 years, area is a destination for solar eclipse viewing

By Adriana Pérez
Chicago Tribune

In 1999, Michelle Nichols saw her first total solar eclipse on a cruise in the Black Sea. It would be many years before she witnessed another one during a visit to southern Illinois in 2017.

"It seemed so far in the future," she said.

Now, Nichols, an astronomer, educator and the director of public observing at the Adler Planetarium, is planning to return to Carbondale, where the moon will completely block out the sun for more than four minutes on April 8. It is the second time in seven years that southern Illinois has been in the path of totality, or the moon's shadow.

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Students from Muchin College Prep react as the solar eclipse emerges from behind clouds on Aug. 21, 2017, in Millennium Park in Chicago. **ALEXANDRA WIMLEY/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

A warm, sunny day for a polar plunge

On an unseasonably mild day, more than 5,000 people sprinted into the frigid waters of Lake Michigan for the 24th annual Chicago Polar Plunge, raising funds for Special Olympics athletes and programs. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

TODAY'S WEATHER

High **75**
Low **42**



Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 14

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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