

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

State, county commit migrant funds

Mayor cites differences on response for city's failure to pitch in

By **Jeremy Gorner, A.D. Quig and Alice Yin**
Chicago Tribune

Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle on Thursday pledged to seek more than \$250 million in additional funding for Chicago's migrant response, about \$70 million short of what officials estimate will be needed this year.

The announcement from Pritzker's office did not mention any contributions from the city of Chicago, and Mayor Brandon Johnson spent a post-City Council news conference denying there was a rift between him and other levels of government, while also defending the city's reluctance thus far to fill in the \$70 million gap.

State, county and city officials project \$321 million is needed to keep the migrant operation — including the city's costly shelter system — afloat through the end of 2024, according to the governor's office.

The mayor told reporters his administration remains in talks with Pritzker and Preckwinkle's teams but hinted at differences on how to respond to the crisis

Turn to Migrants, Page 4



Veronica Vasques, 23, holds her daughter, Yanis Vasques, 3, both from Venezuela, while she sells food outside a migrant shelter on the Lower West Side in Chicago on Thursday. **ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Trump's hush-money trial date set for March 25

Judge declines demands of ex-president's team to delay for campaign's sake

By **Michael R. Sisak, Jennifer Peltz and Jake Offenhartz**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Donald Trump's hush-money trial will go ahead as scheduled with jury selection starting March 25, a New York judge ruled Thursday, turning aside demands for delay from the former president's defense lawyers who argued it would interfere with his campaign to retake the White House.

The decision means that the first of Trump's four criminal prosecutions to proceed to trial is a case centered on years-old accusations that he sought to bury stories about extramarital affairs that arose during his 2016 presidential run. Other cases charge him with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election and illegally hoarding classified documents at his Florida estate.

In leaving the trial date intact, Judge Juan Manuel Merchan pointed to the recent delay in the separate prosecution in Washington related to efforts to undo the election. That case, originally set for trial March 4, has been effectively frozen pending the outcome of Trump's appeal on the legally untested question of whether a former president enjoys immunity from prosecution for actions taken while in office.

Noting that he had resisted defense lawyer urgings from months ago to postpone the trial, Merchan said: "I'm glad I took that position because here we are — the D.C. case did not go forward."

He said he decided to stick with the trial date after speaking last week with the judge in the Washington trial, Tanya Chutkan.

The hush-money trial is expected to last six weeks, Merchan said.

Turn to Trump, Page 5



Ald. Andre Vasquez, 40th, left, speaks with John Catanzara, president of the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police, after the Chicago City Council voted down a police union arbitration deal during Thursday's meeting at City Hall. **EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Aldermen again vote down police union arbitration deal

Move sets up court battle over future of misconduct hearings

By **Jake Sheridan**
Chicago Tribune

The Chicago City Council voted again Thursday to reject a police union contract provision that would allow the most serious misconduct cases to be heard behind closed doors.

Aldermen sided with Mayor Brandon Johnson 32-18, opting to turn down the measure after deferring a vote twice in the last

month. The decision sets the city and its rank-and-file police union up for a court battle to determine the future of police misconduct hearings.

After the latest vote, Johnson said the result showed the council is acting in residents' best interests.

"Today was just affirmation that there is a commitment to a transparent process to ensure there is a real, serious effort to make sure whatever breakdown exists between residents of the city of Chicago and law enforcement, that we work to heal that," he said at a City Hall news conference.

The vote puts the fate of serious police misconduct hearings for now in the hands of the Cook County judge hearing an ongoing case between the city and the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police sparked by an FOP lawsuit.

Attorneys representing the city and the FOP are scheduled to appear before Judge Michael Mullen on Feb. 26.

In December, the council voted 33-17 at Johnson's behest to vote down the provision as aldermen approved an economic package giving many police a 20% raise over four years. Allies of the

mayor have since tabled scheduled votes on the issue in two recent meetings.

The back-and-forth began when arbitrator Edwin Benn last year awarded officers accused of misconduct the option to remove their cases from the Chicago's Police Board docket and instead have them decided privately by an outside third party. Benn determined CPD officers have that right as members of a public-sector labor union and warned efforts to overturn his decision in court will fail.

Turn to Vote, Page 5

INSIDE

Bedard returns ahead of schedule

Connor Bedard makes a surprise return for the Blackhawks after missing nearly six weeks with a broken jaw. **Chicago Sports**

Beautiful story roots Bob Dylan in 1930s

"Girl From the North Country" gorgeously situates music of Bob Dylan in a rich place — Duluth, Minnesota — and time. **A+E**

SAIC names new president

Jiseon Lee Isbara becomes the second woman and first woman of color to fill the post. **Chicagoland, Page 3**



The Blackhawks' Connor Bedard enters the rink before Thursday's game against the Penguins. **VINCENT ALBAN/TRIBUNE**

Girls flag football is officially a high school sport in Illinois

IHSA says more than 100 schools will sponsor teams this fall

By **Darcel Rockett**
Chicago Tribune

Juliana Zavala, senior manager of elementary sports at Chicago Public League, recalled when Gustavo Silva, Chicago Bears manager of youth football and community programs, reached out to her in 2019 saying he wanted to start girls flag football in Chicago and then for it to expand throughout Illinois.

In three years time, it

happened: Girls flag football is officially an IHSA-sanctioned sport after the IHSA Board of Directors approved the motion during their meeting on Feb. 4.

Zavala got a bit emotional during a news conference Wednesday to announce the news at Halas Hall, sharing thanks to Silva, the Bears organization and Chicago Public Schools sports administration among others for their support. She also thanked the girls who had the courage and vulnerability to try the sport.

"We did it," she said. "Now they're walking the hallways with their head up knowing they don't

have to play powderpuff once a year. Now they have a league of their own. Now they know they walk around those hallways and can say, 'I play football. I also know how to run some plays.' That's really exciting to see."

In 2021, Zavala and Silva had plans to start a pilot program with six to eight CPS high school teams. But interest was stronger than expected, and the program launched with 21 schools. The girls flag football league has since expanded to more than 100 teams across the state, including more than 60 CPS schools and addi-

Turn to Football, Page 5

