

Trump renews Blanche push

EMILY R. CONDON
USA TODAY

In the latest public spat between President Donald Trump and two Republican senators, the president offered a new threat: approve Todd Blanche as attorney general or the anti-weaponization fund returns.

“It will immediately be back on the table, and I will get it done,” Trump wrote in an Aug. 1 Truth Social post which says Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, who is also Trump’s former personal lawyer, would stay in his “acting” rank and bring back the fund if not confirmed.

Sens. Thom Tillis and John Cornyn are stalling the confirmation amid questions

about Trump’s “anti-weaponization fund,” the \$1.776 billion Department of Justice fund that would offer taxpayer dollars to individuals who say they are victims of political backlash and legal challenges. Blanche helped settle a lawsuit between Trump and his own Internal Revenue Service which created the it, and on Friday, July 31, the president appealed a ruling that blocked access to the fund.

Trump said in his new post that the fund “takes care of those who have been so badly treated by the Crooked Joe Biden (and Obama!) Administration,” but Tillis responded in a post that it is a “payout pot for punks.” Critics of the fund see it as a way for Trump’s political allies and those

pardoned for the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol to cash in on taxpayer dollars.

“It’s unfortunate that Todd Blanche, who I consider qualified for the job, will not be confirmed because of this reversal,” Tillis wrote. “Hopefully, we can resolve this by Tuesday.”

On Tuesday, Aug. 4, the Senate Judiciary Committee, which Tillis and Cornyn are members of, will meet to potentially move Blanche’s nomination as attorney general for confirmation before the entire Senate. Earlier this week, Senate Judiciary Chair Chuck Grassley cancelled a Thursday, July 30 meeting

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Prisons chief seeks takeover delay

HOWARD FISCHER
Capitol Media Services

PHOENIX — The head of the state prison system wants a federal judge to give him a little more time to fix problems in its health care system before seizing control.

In a new court filing, Ryan Thornell acknowledges that it has been nearly 14 years since inmates filed suit alleging unconstitutional neglect in the physical and mental health care provided at the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry.

After a series of court orders and fines did not work, Judge Roslyn Silver issued a 200-page order in 2022 finding that the care provided “is plainly grossly inadequate” and that state officials were acting “with deliberate indifference” to the substantial risk of harm to inmates. And that resulted in an April 2023 injunction directing the state to remedy the problems.

But attorney Mary O’Grady, hired by the state to defend Thornell, told the judge she should recognize all that has been done since 2023, including spending more on inmate health care. So now she wants Silver to delay the order she just issued appointing a receiver to actually take over and run the health care system for the next five years — a receiver who was given virtually unlimited rights to make changes to not just staffing but how the money is spent.

That claim of things getting better, however, is drawing derision from Sophie Hart, an attorney for the Prison Law Office, which, along with the American Civil Liberties Union, is representing inmates. She told Silver that the state and Thornell — the hand-picked selection of Gov. Katie Hobbs to run the system when she took office in 2023 — “oversell their post-2023 ‘progress.’ ”

“Defendants’ own data demonstrate either that defendants still have not allocated sufficient resources, or that those resources are not being managed in such a way to comply with the requirements of the (2023) injunction,” Hart said. “The evidence of harm was



Thornell

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TUCSON TRAFFIC: BUSY UNDERPASS REOPENS



KELLY PRESNELL, ARIZONA DAILY STAR

West Grant Road at Interstate 10 reopened early Saturday morning, providing some relief to commuters after a months-long closure due to ongoing construction. Once complete, the number of traffic lanes will be expanded, signals will be updated along with crosswalks, sidewalks and improved stormwater drainage.

U.S. military bases delay cleanup of toxic ‘forever chemicals’

AUSTIN FAST, USA TODAY

Director Casey Sixkiller of the Washington Department of Ecology met with neighbors frustrated by lack of progress on cleaning up PFAS contamination around the Army’s Yakima Training Center on Aug. 25, 2025 in East Selah, Washington.

PFAS cleanup timelines at over 500 military sites have quietly shifted back since the Pentagon first announced them in 2021. Larger spikes indicate longer delays.

It’s been almost five years since Brandi and Brad Hyatt found out the well at their home next to an Army base in Washington is contaminated with

“forever chemicals.”

They started using bottled water for everything from making coffee to rinsing off toothbrushes. The couple even carted their two small children across town to bathe at a gym so they couldn’t accidentally swallow contaminated bathwater.

The Army installed a filter last year, but the well remains contaminated. The kids will be long grown by the time the military provides a permanent fix, now delayed until after 2042.

Hundreds of military bases have been putting off cleanup of toxic PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, for years,

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Thousands arrested after child migrant agency tips

KRISTINA COOKE
Reuters

Aurora’s 6-year-old daughter arrived at the U.S. border alone and spent more than half a year in a child migrant shelter while her mother, who was already in the country, worked to get her out.

The two were finally reunited in late March.

“We were overjoyed,” said Aurora, 24, who, like others in this story, spoke on the condition they be identified only by their first names.

Days later, however, mother and daughter were detained by Immigration

and Customs Enforcement and sent to a family detention center in Texas, records show.

They are among more than 12,000 people arrested by U.S. immigration authorities following tips from the Office of Refugee Resettlement during President Donald Trump’s second term, according to internal government data reviewed exclusively by Reuters.

ORR was created in 1980 to resettle refugees fleeing war and persecution. Since the early 2000s, the agency has

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