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Abrego Garcia out of detention

Judge blocks authorities’ effort to have migrant returned to ICE custody

Michael Collins
and Natalie Neysa Alund
USA TODAY

In a whiplash series of events, a federal judge on Dec. 12 blocked an effort to have Kilmar Abrego Garcia returned to

custody a day after his release from Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention.

On Dec. 11, District Judge Paula Xinis ordered the immediate release of Abrego Garcia, the Salvadoran migrant at the center of a case that has spotlighted President Donald Trump’s hard-line immigration policies.

Xinis said the Trump administration had no legal basis to expel him from the country and misled her at a November

hearing.

Abrego Garcia left the detention facility in Pennsylvania at 4:45 p.m. ET Dec. 11, said his attorney, Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg. He was en route to his family in Maryland.

However, an immigration judge then filed a new order saying Abrego Garcia must report back to ICE custody by 8 a.m. Dec. 12.

Abrego Garcia’s lawyers asked the judge to issue a temporary restraining

order to block the new detention order. Xinis did so, preventing immigration authorities from re-detaining Abrego Garcia.

It was the latest turn in a labyrinthine series of events for Abrego Garcia, a sheet metal worker who entered the United States illegally in 2012. He was living with his wife and three children in Beltsville, Maryland, when he was

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Abortion issues back on agenda in Florida

Lawmakers to consider fetal personhood bill

Ana Goñi-Lessan
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

This year, state lawmakers are pushing bills that will reignite the abortion debate for Florida’s 2026 legislative session.

Florida’s six-week abortion ban, which critics call a near-total prohibition on the procedure, isn’t the finish line for anti-abortion advocates in the Capitol.

For the third year in a row, Sen. Erin Grall, R-Fort Pierce, has filed a measure (SB 164) to give parents the ability to sue for damages for the wrongful death of an unborn child. The language defines “unborn child” as “a member of the species Homo sapiens, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb.”

And Rep. Shane Abbott, R-Defuniak Springs, has filed legislation (HB 663) allowing a family member to sue someone for providing or attempting to provide an abortion up to two years after the fact.

On the Senate side, President Ben Albritton, R-Wauchula, told reporters at a pre-session press conference that he is a “pro-life guy” and is “open minded” about Grall’s bill.

But the timing of when someone can sue for wrongful death — whether it’s conception, six weeks gestation to align with the state’s abortion ban, or viability — needs to be specific: “That will be for the Senate to figure out and see if they can thread that needle,” he said.

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County weighs options for beloved ‘Flying Bridge’

Earle Kimel | Sarasota Herald-Tribune | USA TODAY NETWORK

Cathleen Nardi is part of a group of people who walk Blackburn Point Road and Casey Key Road daily, enjoying the scenery, as well as the historic Blackburn Point Road Swing Bridge.

Cell phone in hand, Nardi frequently takes pictures of scenes that catch her eye — a picture of sunrise while walking east on the bridge in March 2024 is a particular favorite.

That photo later became a People’s Choice winner in the Old Florida Charm category of Big Waters Land Trust’s annual summer photo contest.

“The things I take pictures of are disappearing,” Nardi said, just prior to a Nov. 12 meeting hosted by Sarasota County to brief residents on The Blackburn Point Bridge Project Development and Environment Study.

Ultimately the Sarasota County Commission will decide whether to adopt a “no-build option,”

which consultant Jim Phillips characterized as ongoing maintenance of the structure, or replace it with a newer, higher bridge.

A life-changing decision for Casey Key

Nardi said she fears a loss of the century-old swing bridge “will impact life as we know it on Casey Key.”

“The people recognized that bridge for what it means for this area,” she added, referencing comments that accompanied their votes on her photograph.

Sarasota County is in the midst of an ongoing study on how to best connect Casey Key to the mainland — while safety concerns point to replacing the iconic structure that was financed with a voter-approved bond issue in 1924.

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The historic Blackburn Point Swing Bridge, located in Osprey, connects the mainland to Casey Key. The bridge can only accommodate one lane of traffic at a time. Cars must stop at both ends waiting their turn to cross. THOMAS BENDER/SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

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