



Iowa schools make progress in language arts

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Telepharmacy fined \$25k after selling fake Ozempic

Lee Rood
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Iowa’s Board of Pharmacy has fined an Iowa.-based telepharmacy \$25,000 and put the pharmacy license of founder and CEO Todd Thompson on probationary status for five years after allegations that the company sold a fake

version of the popular Ozempic weight-loss drug to another firm. The pharmacy board also required the company, SmartScripts of Washington, located about 30 miles south of Iowa City where Thompson lives and has an office, to provide regular reports so it can be monitored. Reached Friday, Aug. 22, Thompson said he didn’t know the Ozempic was

fake when he sold it and that none of the counterfeit drug made it to patients. He said SmartScripts still exists as a company but is not doing business. When asked if he was filing for bankruptcy after a series of legal battles, Thompson said he couldn’t comment.

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SmartScripts is pictured at 2101 ACT Circle on July 16, 2024, in Iowa City. JULIA HANSEN/IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN



Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) speaks to a crowd on immigration issues on Aug. 22 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in West Liberty. CODY SCANLAN/THE REGISTER

In Iowa, Bernie Sanders calls Trump a ‘demagogue’

F. Amanda Tugade
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

WEST LIBERTY — Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders called President Donald Trump a “demagogue,” pushing the nation into an “authoritarian” direction while preying on immigrants, during a forum Aug. 22 at a church in West Liberty. “We have a president right now who is a demagogue, and what a demagogue wants is more power for himself,” Sanders told more than 50 people who gathered at the event held at St. Joseph Catholic Church by immigration rights advocacy group Escucha Mi Voz Iowa. “And the way that demagogues have always done it throughout history, in

Europe, all over the world, is they pick on a group of people who are a minority, who are politically powerless.” “In this case,” he said, “it’s the undocumented.” Sanders stopped in West Liberty Friday late afternoon ahead his stop in Davenport for his national “Fight Oligarchy” tour. The longtime independent senator came to Iowa in February, at the tour’s start, calling on guests at an Iowa City event to “stand up and fight back.” At the event, local Latino families opened up to Sanders, activists and other community members about their loved ones in detention centers and facing deportation. In Spanish, they voiced their pain and gave gratitude to Escucha Mi Voz, who has continued to rally behind them and calling the attention of

state and local leaders. Among the speakers was Francisco Pedro Diego, whose 20-year-old grandson, Pascual Pedro was deported to Guatemala over the Fourth of July holiday. Through a translator, Diego said Pedro fled from Guatemala at 13 with this father, hoping to seek refuge in the U.S. At the time, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials issued them an expedited removal, but only Pedro’s father was deported. Pedro was issued an order of supervision, which allowed him and others alike to temporarily live in the U.S. with strict conditions while waiting final deportation orders.

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Iowa sees promise in probation experiment

William Morris
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Millions of Americans are serving some form of criminal probation at any given time. But what that looks like, and how it is administered, in many places, boils down mostly to the way things have always been done. A new study, conducted by the Iowa Department of Corrections, is challenging some of the assumptions – and suggests that easy and inexpensive tweaks to probation could significantly reduce repeat crime and incarceration. “These are just kind of standard practices that have happened and lived in perpetuity, and no one’s really been this critical,” said Shannon Magnuson, a researcher with the nonprofit Justice System Partners, which partnered with the DOC on the study. “And so Iowa did something really bold and courageous by saying, ‘You know, what? We understand the pipeline of people returning back to prison because of technical violations, and we’re willing to try something completely new.’” The project involved tweaks to the standard terms of probation – rules applied to all probationers such as requiring they maintain housing and employment and abstain from drugs and alcohol. Starting in 2021, the department changed many of those rules in two judicial districts covering 27 counties, including the Des Moines metro – removing rules in one district and, in the other, making them goals to be achieved with the help of probation officers. If found that, as far out as 18 months after sentencing, some of those changes appeared to have significantly reduced probation violations and revocations without leading to any increase in new criminal behavior. The pilot project has kept a low profile, with several experienced defense attorneys in Polk County telling the Des Moines Register they hadn’t been aware of the changes. But supporters, including Polk County Attorney Kimberly Graham, say the results show it’s

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