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Court throws out Trump fraud penalty

JENNIFER PELTZ AND
MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A New York appeals court on Thursday threw out the massive financial penalty a state judge imposed on President Donald Trump, while narrowly upholding a finding he engaged in fraud by exaggerating his wealth for decades.

The ruling spares Trump from a potential half-billion-dollar fine but bans him and his two eldest sons from serving in corporate leadership for a few years.

Trump, in a social media post, claimed “total victory.”

“I greatly respect the fact that

the Court had the Courage to throw out this unlawful and disgraceful Decision that was hurting Business all throughout New York State,” he wrote.

The decision came seven months after the Republican returned to the White House. A sharply divided panel of five judges in New York’s mid-level Appellate Division couldn’t agree on many issues raised in Trump’s appeal, but a majority said the monetary penalty was “excessive.”

After finding Trump flagrantly padded financial statements that went to lenders and insurers, Judge Arthur Engoron ordered him last year to pay \$355 million in pen-

alties. With interest, the sum has topped \$515 million. Additional penalties levied on some other Trump Organization executives, including Trump’s sons Eric and Donald Jr. — bring the total to \$527 million, with interest.

An ‘excessive’ fine

“While the injunctive relief ordered by the court is well crafted to curb defendants’ business culture, the court’s disgorgement order, which directs that defendants pay nearly half a billion dollars to the State of New York, is an excessive fine that violates the Eighth



SHANNON STAPLETON, POOL

Former President Donald Trump attends the closing arguments in the Trump Organization civil fraud trial Jan. 11, 2024, at New York State Supreme Court.

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Iowa Dems gauge interest in caucuses

MAYA MARCHEL HOFF
Lee-Gazette Des Moines Bureau

DES MOINES — The Iowa Democratic Party is launching a survey asking Iowa Democrats whether the party should buck the national party’s Democratic presidential nominating calendar and return to holding caucuses ahead of the 2028 election.

On Thursday, Democratic party leaders in the state announced they are requesting input from Iowans on how it should chart forward after they were stripped of their first-in-the-nation status in 2023 by the Democratic National Committee.

In June, Iowa Democrats saw another setback in national party influence when longtime member Scott Brennan lost his seat on the DNC’s Rules and Bylaws Committee, which oversees the 2028 presidential nominating process. He was Iowa’s sole representative on the panel.

An Iowan has served on the committee for at least the last four presidential election cycles, according to Brennan.

New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina — other states that have traditionally made up the early voting window — gained additional seats on the committee.

National Democrats reshaped their presidential nominating calendar ahead of the 2024 election, removing Iowa and New Hampshire from their leadoff spot in favor of a calendar that benefited then-President Joe Biden. South Carolina was promoted to the head of the pack.

After struggling in Iowa and New Hampshire in 2020, Biden won the South Carolina primary, setting him on the path to the Democratic nomination and the presidency.

During a virtual press conference Thursday, Iowa Democratic Party Chair Rita Hart stressed that taking away their first-in-the-nation status hurt both the strength of the state and national parties.

“It didn’t work for Iowa Democrats, and it did not work for national Democrats,” Hart said. “It was a big mistake in the Biden calendar to know that Iowa Republicans are going first here in this state, and that as Democrats ... we sat and watched all this attention and the millions of dollars being spent in the state without ... those kinds of resources to push back on the Republican agenda, and that did not help us here in Iowa, and it did not help us long term.”

The “Family Conversation Survey” will take input from Iowa Democrats on how the party should approach the next caucuses and take the results into consideration during a State Central Committee meeting at the end of the year. The survey opened Thursday and will close Nov. 15. It is intended for Iowans who have participated or plan to participate in Iowa Democratic caucuses and will ask for respondents’ phone numbers, zip codes and email addresses.

“This survey has been designed to help us get a better understanding of the values that Iowa Democrats want to direct our 2028 process,” Hart said. “It’s not designed to result in a definitive or a

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MISSOURI RIVER HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT



CAITLIN YAMADA, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Dustin Cooper (center), executive director of the Siouxland Sports Academy, is shown Thursday after receiving a \$500,000 grant from Missouri River Historical Development to help construct the proposed youth sports complex.

‘TODAY FEELS LIKE A MILESTONE’

Three area groups get \$1.2M million from MRHD for economic development

CAITLIN YAMADA
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SIOUX CITY — Missouri River Historical Development handed out grants totaling \$1.2 million to three local organizations that organizers say will spur economic development in the tri-state region.

MRHD leaders presented grants to the proposed Siouxland Sports Academy, the Movable Area Childcare Center and Agape Community Services at a ceremony Thursday at

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sioux City.

MRHD, a nonprofit group that holds the Hard Rock’s state license, collects a portion of the casino revenues for distribution to local charities and civic groups and local governments.

MRHD President Sarah Kleber said the nonprofit board originally planned to award \$1 million in large economic development grants, but after receiving seven large appli-

cations, they chose to increase the amount.

The Movable Community Development Association received \$450,000 for the Movable Area Childcare Center. The funding will be used to renovate an underutilized classroom wing in the Movable Methodist Church. The childcare center will create 60-plus spaces for kids ages 0 to 12.

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EDMUND PENDLETON TRIAL | DAY 2

Friends describe ‘tense’ mood between shooting victim, boyfriend

NICK HYTREK
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SIOUX CITY — As Kristie and Tracy Williams were preparing to leave her home, Danielle Dolan approached the passenger window of the car and stuck her head inside.

“I don’t think she wanted us to leave. She said, ‘You’ve got to get me out of here’ or ‘I’ve got to get out of here,’” Kristie Williams testified.

Dolan had just turned down Tracy Williams’ invitation to join them for the night at the Hard Rock Hotel & Ca-



Pendleton

sino, so she and Kristie, her daughter, left her at the house with her boyfriend, Edmund Pendleton.

“I gave her a hug and said I’d see her tomorrow,” Tracy Williams said.

Hours later, Dolan died of a gunshot wound to the back of her head.

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TIM HYNDS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Edmund Pendleton listens to an opening statement during the first day of his trial Wednesday in Woodbury County District Court. Evidence and witness testimony continued Thursday in his trial for first-degree murder in connection with the Aug. 25 shooting death of Danielle Dolan in a home at 1319 W. 19th St.