

# Chicago Tribune



QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-TRIBUNE

MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2026

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

## Calls grow for agents to leave Minn.

Latest fatal shooting stirs opposition in state and across nation

By Sarah Raza, Jack Brook and Steve Karnowski  
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Local leaders and Democrats across the country demanded federal immigration officers leave Minnesota

after a Border Patrol agent fatally shot a man in Minneapolis and set off clashes with protesters in a city already shaken by another shooting death weeks earlier.

And in dueling news conferences, federal and state officials offered starkly different messages Sunday about the immigration crackdown that has swept across Minneapolis and surrounding cities, with both claiming the moral high ground after another

shooting by U.S. agents.

“Which side do you want to be on?” Gov. Tim Walz asked the public. “The side of an all-powerful federal government that could kill, injure, menace and kidnap its citizens off the streets, or on the side of a nurse at the VA hospital who died bearing witness to such government,” a reference to the shooting of Alex Pretti on Saturday in Minneapolis.

At the same time, in a federal

building about 20 miles away, senior Border Patrol official Gregory Bovino, the public face of the crackdown, turned blame for the shooting to Pretti.

“When someone makes the choice to come into an active law enforcement scene, interfere, obstruct, delay or assault law enforcement officer and — and they bring a weapon to do that. That is a choice that that individual made,” he said.

■ Shooting witnesses dispute what happened. **Nation & World**

The latest shooting also has sparked a legal fight over control of the investigation amid the immigration surge that has swept across Minneapolis and surrounding cities.

Video taken by bystanders and

Turn to Minnesota, Page 6



Kristen Boyer and her 3-year-old son, George, watch Amelia Gray, a 9-year-old polar bear, swim at Brookfield Zoo on Jan. 8. STACEY WESCOTT/TRIBUNE

## A top predator in crisis

Brookfield Zoo plays a key role in an effort to protect polar bears as Trump opens Arctic refuge to oil drilling

By Adriana Pérez | Chicago Tribune

Shortly after her arrival last fall, Amelia Gray met Hudson, and the pair hit it off immediately. They touched their noses together in greeting and chuffed — a soft, breathy, snorting sound that signals affection or reassurance. Amelia Gray rolled on her back, gently pawing at her counterpart. Later that same day, they played in the pool together.

The connection has fueled hopes at Brookfield Zoo Chicago that the two polar bears will soon breed, offering scientists a glimpse into how mothers care for newborns inside their maternal dens — and, in the Arctic wilderness, where climate change already threatens their survival.

The usual challenges to studying polar bears in their natural habitat — a harsh climate, a vast, isolated territory and the dangers the massive predators pose to humans — have been further complicated after President Donald Trump in

■ Bitter cold returns to Chicago. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

■ Storm cuts power to many across nation. **Nation & World**

October announced plans to open 1.6 million pristine acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain in northeastern Alaska to leasing for oil and gas drilling.

The Trump administration's move has rekindled a sense of urgency among conservationists,

Turn to Bears, Page 4

## New law protecting officials criticized

Statute allows their personal information to be kept secret

By Jack O'Connor  
Chicago Tribune

SPRINGFIELD — Amid growing national fears about politically motivated violence and threats, Illinois lawmakers moved swiftly last fall to pass a sweeping statute allowing public officials to shield their personal information from public view.

But the new law — signed last month by Gov. JB Pritzker — also erects a barrier between citizens and records long considered essential to democratic accountability, including marital status and basic information about whether lawmakers, county clerks and other officials actually live in the districts and communities they serve.

Passed by the Senate in the waning hours of the Illinois General Assembly's fall session — as lawmakers pushed through higher-profile measures such as a Chicago-area transit overhaul — the measure has begun raising free-speech and public accountability concerns. While the law's stated purpose was to protect public officials from real-world threats, critics argue its reach is overly broad and extends well beyond safeguarding elected officials and their families from potential harm.

Transparency and press advocates say the statute threatens democratic oversight by creating a new legal mechanism that can shield information from public view, limit voters' ability to scrutinize those in power and weaken the public's right to know.

“This is basically a sledgehammer that will allow lawmakers to censor information about them from the internet, even information that poses no legitimate security concern and actually really matters for

Turn to Statute, Page 6

## ‘Our kids actually want to come to school’

Can schools solve chronic absenteeism? Ask these principals

By Kate Armanini  
Chicago Tribune

Even in the freezing air, Romian Crockett stood outside Chalmers STEAM Elementary with a boom-box blaring '90s music. Swaying to the beat, the principal hugged or high-fived each student who walked through the door. He knows all 218 by name.

“Terrence, good morning,” Crockett told a young boy bundled in layers.

“Wow, I got all of them today,” he said, as four students tumbled out of a carpool.

Crockett notices who isn't there, too. “Yo, where's your sister?” he asked a boy with a navy backpack. (She was down the block with her dad.)

By the time the last stragglers walk in at 9 a.m., Crockett already knows that just a handful will be marked absent.

Attendance at Chalmers rebounded after the pandemic, even as other schools strug-



gled across Chicago and Illinois. During the 2021-22 school year, nearly half of Chalmers students were chronically absent, missing at least two days of class per month. Last year, that figure had

fallen to fewer than 1 in 6 students, or about 17%.

It's a rare bright spot for CPS: The districtwide chronic absen-

Turn to Absenteeism, Page 2

Chalmers STEAM Elementary School Principal Romian Crockett greets arriving students on Thursday in Chicago. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

### INSIDE

#### Trump firings test Supreme Court

The Supreme Court for the past year has repeatedly allowed President Donald Trump to fire heads of independent agencies, but it appears to be drawing a line with the Federal Reserve. The court has signaled that it sees the Fed in a different light. **Nation & World**

#### Patriots, Seahawks go to Super Bowl

Drake Maye scored the Patriots' only touchdown Sunday against the Broncos in the AFC championship, propelling his team to its 12th Super Bowl. The Patriots will play the Seahawks, who held off the Rams 31-27 in the NFC title game Sunday night. **Chicago Sports**