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GOVERNOR'S DAY AT THE ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Dems focus on U.S. Senate race

Tom Ackerman
Springfield State Journal-Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

SPRINGFIELD – It was Governor's Day at the Illinois State Fair, but the focus this year wasn't on the governor. Outgoing U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, D-Illinois, received thanks and standing ovations throughout the day on Aug. 19.

"I'm sad that Dick Durbin is leaving, but I'm also really anxious to get Juliana Stratton there with me," said U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Illinois,

adding that Illinois would be the first state to send women of color to the U.S. Senate in the nation's history.

Stratton said she is proud to serve in her current role, but she was "especially proud" to be present as the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate.

Stratton is also proud to be an Illinois Democrat, she said, going on to describe several beliefs of the party and prides of the party, like "telling ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to get out of our

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REPUBLICAN'S DAY AT THE ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Bailey targets taxes, spending

Tom Ackerman
Springfield State Journal-Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

SPRINGFIELD – Where did all the money go?

That's what Republican nominee for Illinois governor Darren Bailey posed to a crowd of supporters at Republican's Day at the Illinois State Fair.

"The latest state budget spends nearly \$56 billion, yet families still carry the highest property tax burden in the country, only 38% of students are proficient in math, families continue to

move across the border just to escape the financial burden that we have here in Illinois – where did all the money go?," he asked the crowd of a few hundred on Aug. 20 in Springfield.

The southern Illinois Republican clamored for political accountability, unity in the party, and touched on themes of faith, all of which were heard throughout the day at Republican events.

Bailey warned the crowd that Illinois Speaker of the House Chris Welch had

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STATE FAIR COMES TO A CLOSE

Fairgoers get a bird's eye view of the fairgrounds on the Sky Glider at the Illinois State Fair on Wednesday, Aug. 19, in Springfield.

THOMAS J. TURNEY/
THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Increased cost of school supplies in hits parents

Christopher Cann, Clayton Park and Erick Trevino
USA TODAY NETWORK

Brandi McGrath usually buys quality, long-lasting school supplies for her 9-year-old son and his teachers. But sharp increases in the cost of folders, pencils and other products have forced her to cut back and search for cheaper alternatives.

"It's insane how expensive things have gotten," said McGrath, 48, of Salt Lake City. "I'm looking for every sale I can."

In Daytona Beach, Florida, Karin Kaiser was similarly struck by the cost of back-to-school shopping this year.

"It is crazy," she said, estimating that she and her husband spent over \$100 on just notebooks and loose-leaf paper for their two daughters. "That's not count-

ing what we had to pay for back-to-school clothes, shoes, haircuts."

The cost of a typical school supply list – including notebooks, paper, pencils and glue sticks – is nearly \$175, almost 8% higher than in 2025, according to an analysis by the Groundwork Collaborative and The Century Foundation, two progressive think tanks.

Some essential items such as lunch boxes, notebooks and tissues cost 20%

or more than they did a year ago, the analysis found, pointing in part to the effects of President Donald Trump's tariff agenda, which the Federal Reserve said raised the cost of many products manufactured overseas for American consumers.

Over the same period, the cost of electronics such as headphones rose

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