LAKE COUNTY
NEWS-SUN

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Round Lake woman granted bond

Siemionkowicz spent 'unreasonably prolonged' 15-month stay in ICE detention facility

By Allison Kiehl
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A federal judge Friday ordered the release of a Round Lake mother and green card holder who has been in ICE custody for more than a year, ruling that her time spent in detention "had become unreasonably prolonged and violated her due process rights."

U.S. District Judge Angelica Powers of the Memphis Immigration Court in Memphis, Tennessee, released Beata Siemionkowicz on bond, allowing the 57-year-old Polish citizen to return to the Chicago area and reunite with her daughters, Gabi, 22, and Claudia, 26.

If the Department of Homeland Security does not appeal Powers' decision, Siemionkowicz is allowed to leave Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Campbell County Detention Center in Kentucky, where she has been housed since August 2025.

"I'm a bit surprised, just given how immigration court can feel rigged against the immigrant in this administration," said Hirsh Joshi, an attorney with ACLU of Illinois, which is representing her. "But I'm not surprised that Beata found a sympathetic ear, and that the circumstances surrounding her arrests were taken into account in her favor."

A spokesperson from the Department of Homeland Security did not immediately return a request for comment.

Siemionkowicz's release from ICE custody would not be an end to her immigration battle. The green card holder still faces deportation to Poland, as ordered on Dec. 9, 2025. But bond allows Siemionkowicz to fight her immigration legal battle from outside the walls of a detention center and at home with her family.

Siemionkowicz entered the United States legally in 1995, moving to Illinois from her hometown of Bialystok, Poland, according to court records. She has been a permanent resident with a green card since 2003 and, as a divorced, single mom of two, built her life in

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Family photos show Beata Siemionkowicz with her daughters, Gabi and Claudia, on July 16. Siemionkowicz, a U.S. green card holder from Poland, has been in ICE custody since being detained in Claudia's Des Plaines backyard while gardening. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**



U.S. Sen.-elect and Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton greets Sen. Tammy Duckworth alongside Gov. JB Pritzker as they celebrate election victories and unveil an agenda for the years ahead, Nov. 4, at the Columbus Park Refectory in Chicago's Austin neighborhood. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Blue blood, new blood

State congressional Democrats, with six new faces, vow to balance Trump oversight with results

By Olivia Olander and Dan Petrella
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Judging only by the maps of congressional election results, it would appear last week's Democratic wave bypassed Illinois as it swept across the country, turning new and unfamiliar places blue from South Carolina to northern Nevada.

After Tuesday's transformative midterm elections, the partisan makeup of Illinois' delegation is unchanged: Both U.S. senators and 14 of 17 House members will be Democrats.

When the new Congress convenes in January, however, six of those seats — one in the Senate and five in the House — will have new occupants. The turnover marks a generational, if not ideological, shift in the state's Democratic representation in Washington as the party assumes its largest congressional majorities since before the tea party "shellacking" of 2010.

With two years remaining in President Donald Trump's term, there's a broad consensus among Illinois' congressional Democrats, from the political center to the left flank, that their newly empowered and emboldened party must balance two responsibilities: It has to serve as a check on the administration while also addressing the economic anxieties and corruption concerns that fueled a stunning midterm rebuke of Republicans.

"Americans sent a very, very clear message: They are sick of Donald Trump's bull---- ... promising one thing in the morning but going back on his word by the afternoon," Sen. Tammy Duckworth said Wednesday, a day after Democrats gained at least 41 House seats and at least seven in the Senate. "And they are done with him putting self-interest over our national interest."

Duckworth wasn't on the ballot, but the two-term Hoffman Estates Democrat will become the state's senior senator next year with the retirement of five-term Sen. Dick Durbin, the No. 2 Democrat in the upper chamber.

Joining Durbin in retirement will be 15-term Rep. Danny Davis of Chicago, 14-term Rep. Jan Schakowsky of Evanston and four-term Rep. Jesús "Chuy" García, also of Chicago. Two more are leaving after losing the March primary

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Runway taxi times at O'Hare airport among worst

By Talia Soglin
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Chicago can look tantalizing from the window of an airplane on its descent into O'Hare International Airport.

But much to the chagrin of air travelers who might glimpse the city's skyline rising over Lake Michigan on their way in, touching down at O'Hare isn't exactly the same as arriving. That's because taxi times at the airport are longer, on average, than those at almost every other major airport in the country.

"It's kind of like driving up into your garage, or driving up into your driveway at home, and then they don't let you out of the car," said Dennis Tajer, an O'Hare-based American Airlines pilot and spokesperson for its pilots union.

From January through the end of August this year — the most recent month for which Federal Aviation Administration data is available — planes landing at O'Hare averaged 20 minutes to taxi to their gates once their wheels hit the ground. No other major U.S. airport reported in-coming taxi times that long. The next-longest taxi-in times were at Charlotte Douglas International in North Carolina, where planes averaged just under 14 minutes to reach their gates.

O'Hare also has some of the longest taxi-out times in the country, with planes taking an average of more than 28 minutes to leave the ground once they push back from their gates. So far this year, only New York's John F. Kennedy International has a longer average taxi-out time, just under 29 minutes.

Across town at Chicago's Midway International Airport, things are comparatively speedy. Planes take an average of just over 15 minutes to take off after they push back from the gate at the Southwest Side airport. And Midway's taxi-in times are, so far this year, among the shortest at the nation's large airports — just under five minutes on average.

Airlines build expected taxi times into their schedules, so

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LAW & ORDER COLUMN

State grand jury indicts two in meth sales

By Clifford Ward
FOR THE LAKE COUNTY NEWS-SUN

Two people have been arrested for selling methamphetamine in Lake and Cook counties following an investigation, the Lake County Sheriff's Office said Thursday.

Matthew Fornalewski, 35, of the 8000 block of Lockwood Avenue, Skokie, and Yasmine Zarate, 20, of the 3800 block of North Sawyer Avenue, Chicago, were indicted by a statewide grand jury last month, the Sheriff's Office said.

The sheriff's Special Investigations Group began looking into the pair earlier this year and bought more than 500 pills containing meth from Fornalewski and Zarate over several months. The two were selling the pills in both Lake and Cook counties, police said.

Since the sales took place in two jurisdictions, the case was presented to the Illinois Attorney General's Office, which took the case to a statewide grand jury. The jury issued indictments for unlawful delivery of methamphetamine and narcotics trafficking.

The Sheriff's Office worked in conjunction with federal drug agents to investigate the case, police said.

"This investigation demonstrates the importance of strong partnerships between local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies," Sheriff John Idleburg said. "Through coordinated investigative efforts, our detectives and partners identified and disrupted individuals allegedly distributing methamphetamine throughout Lake and Cook counties."

CANDY TAMPERING

Waukegan police issued an update on their investigation into candy tampering that took place on Halloween.

Police said they responded to the 3000 block of Grandville for a 9-year-old girl who reported finding foreign metal objects inside her candy.

The child had previously seen a video that suggested using a magnet to detect metal in candy. The girl placed a magnet in her bag of candy and found the objects, police said. They included a bobby pin, copper wire, plastic, and a gold nail.

Police said they were unable to determine where the child received the candy. The mother told police that the child had been trick-or-treating near Flossmoor, Leith Avenue and Ridgeland Avenue.

There are no suspects, and police said they have received no additional tampering reports.

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