



## Aces, Liberty top list as WNBA title contenders

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# The DAILY LEADER

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MAKERS MADNESS CONTEST

## The standard of cool



NASA's Artemis II mission to fly by the moon, comprising of the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket with the Orion crew capsule, lifts off April 1 from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. STEVE NESIUS/REUTERS

### This Illinois manufacturer built NASA tech leading to contest victory

**Janis Reeser**  
Springfield State Journal-Register  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The NASA Standard Initiator, a device manufactured by Chemring Energetic Devices in Downers Grove, has been named the winner of the 2026 "Makers Madness" contest, earning the title of The Coolest Thing Made in Illinois, according to a community announcement.

The electrically activated pyrotechnic

device played a critical role in the recent launch of the Artemis II/Orion mission.

#### A celebration of Illinois manufacturing

The bracket-style competition, hosted by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and sponsored by Comcast Business, celebrates the work of manufacturers across Illinois. Manufacturing is the largest contributor of any industry to the state's Gross Domestic Product, sup-

porting nearly a third of all jobs in Illinois and contributing more than \$580 billion to the state's economy each year.

With nearly 167,000 votes cast throughout the eight-week competition, the NASA Standard Initiator was awarded the title of The Coolest Thing Made in Illinois, which was announced by Gov. JB Pritzker during a ceremony at the Governor's Mansion.

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## More U.S. residents carrying passports

Critics: Court ruling has resulted in racial profiling

**Daniel Gonzalez**  
Arizona Republic  
USA TODAY NETWORK

PHOENIX – Growing numbers of Americans are choosing to carry documents proving their U.S. citizenship in case they are stopped and questioned by federal immigration authorities amid the Trump administration's aggressive mass-deportation campaign.

Many of those who have started carrying documents such as U.S. passports or birth certificates say they are afraid of being targeted by immigration authorities based on their skin color, how they look, speaking Spanish or where they work. They say they want to protect themselves from being wrongly arrested, detained or deported even though they are Americans.

The surge in Americans feeling compelled to carry citizenship documents comes after the Supreme Court in September gave the green light to federal immigration enforcement authorities to use factors such as a person's race or ethnicity, speaking Spanish or English with an accent, their type of work and presence in a particular location to stop and question them.

The Supreme Court's 6-3 ruling, critics say, has resulted in rampant and widespread racial profiling by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"This basically just opens the door for people who look Latino or sound Latino" to be targeted, said Wendy Cervantes, director for immigration and immigrant families at the Center for Law and Social Policy, an advocacy group. "I think it's predominantly Latino immigrants, but we know this has

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## Chair from night of Lincoln assassination heads to museum

**Janis Reeser**  
Springfield State Journal-Register  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A chair used in Ford's Theatre on the night of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination is coming to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Mu-

seum in Springfield.

The chair will be part of a special exhibit titled "The Second American Revolution," scheduled to open this summer, according to a community announcement. The exhibit is part of Illinois' commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and

will explore how the Civil War and the emancipation of millions of enslaved people transformed America.

#### A tangible link to a pivotal moment

Christina Shutt, executive director of

the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, said that the chair offers a direct connection to a historic event.

"The chair is a tangible link to an event that for most people is a few lines

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