



College football coaches who are on the hot seat

SPORTS, 1B

Rockford Register Star

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Detainee's mother is Schumer's SOTU guest



Eric Garner's mother Gwen Carr, left, speaks alongside Raiza Contreras, middle, on July 17 during a protest in New York City. Contreras' son Dylan, a 21-year-old Bronx student, was detained while attending his regular immigration court hearing. EDUARDO CUEVAS/USA TODAY

Son held over 250 miles from family's NY home

Eduardo Cuevas
USA TODAY

NEW YORK — A Bronx mother whose eldest son was one of the first New York City students detained by federal immigration agents is Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's personal guest to President Donald Trump's State of the Union, USA TODAY has exclusively learned.

As Trump is set to tout his achievements at his Feb. 24 address to Congress, including his administration's

aggressive approach to immigration enforcement in the last year, Raiza Contreras is trying to show its effects on her three children and other migrant families, she said in an interview.

"It's an opportunity to at least bring attention to the case and many other injustices happening," Contreras, a 41-year-old who immigrated from Venezuela, told USA TODAY in Spanish. "Because it's not just me."

Her son Dylan, 21, was detained when he attended a routine immigra-

tion court hearing in May. Dylan, who his lawyers said has no criminal history and entered the country through a Biden-era program in 2024, is held in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Pennsylvania.

Contreras — who works as a carpenter's assistant, in food delivery and recently as a caregiver for older people — is traveling for the first time to the nation's capital.

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Company shuttered plant in Illinois

First Brands lays off workers amid federal investigation

Mike Kramer
Peoria Journal Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

A global supplier of automotive parts closed a plant in Illinois and laid off hundreds of workers here, just days after former executives were arrested on multiple charges.

Patrick James, founder of First Brands and former CEO, was arrested Jan. 29. His brother Edward James, a former senior executive with the company, was also arrested.

The brothers face charges of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and multiple counts of wire fraud and bank fraud. The charges are in connection with various schemes to defraud lenders regarding the liabilities and financial condition of First Brands, according to the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

The arrests occurred after former First Brands senior executive Peter Andrew Brumbergs pleaded guilty to his role in the scheme before U.S. District Judge Analisa Torres Jan. 26.

"The James brothers obtained billions for First Brands—and millions for themselves—by presenting their lenders with the impression of a successful, growing international business," Clayton said. "The indictment and the guilty plea unsealed today describe a very different reality: a business run through fraud, fake documents, and false financials."

On Feb. 3, First Brands reported the McHenry plant closure to the state that

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Poll: 60% of Americans disapprove of Trump

Numbers lowest on issues such as inflation, tariffs

Kathryn Palmer
USA TODAY

Ahead of President Donald Trump's first State of the Union address of his second term, a new poll shows a majority of Americans disapprove of the president's job performance, especially on inflation, tariffs and foreign policy.

In a Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll released on Feb. 22 — two days before Trump's highly anticipated address to Congress — 60% of Americans said they disapprove of the way he is handling his role. Of that number, 47% indicated a strong disapproval. Another 39% said they approve of the president's performance.

Though the majority express negative opinions about the president, it still doesn't appear to translate into an automatic boon for the Democrats.

The pollster said the last time Trump's disapproval touched 60% was shortly after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

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Passport to IL spotlights sites for America's 250th

Nida Tazeen
Rockford Register Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Illinois is commemorating the nation's 250th anniversary with a new initiative that highlights the state's rich history and cultural heritage.

The Illinois America 250 Commission has launched the first Passport to Illinois, a limited-edition booklet that encourages residents and visitors to explore 56 historic sites, museums and monuments across the state, according to a community announcement.

The passport is available for free at public libraries, highway visitor centers, staffed passport sites and other locations throughout Illinois, while supplies last. A digital version can also be downloaded from the Illinois Amer-



Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was probably the happiest living in this house in Galena.

LARRY JOHNSTON/USA TODAY NETWORK

ica 250 website.

"We're launching the passport just in time for families planning their spring break and summer vacations.

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