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## La. high court halts AG indictment

Move pauses criminal prosecution of Murrill in New Orleans

BY JAMES FINN  
 Staff writer

The Louisiana Supreme Court issued a stay early Friday on Attorney General Liz Murrill's indictment by a New Orleans grand jury, pausing the criminal prosecution of Louisiana's top lawyer and excoriating what one justice termed a "quagmire" of irregularities

surrounding the case.

Murrill, a Republican, was charged Thursday with 16 felony counts of malfeasance in office and intimidation over letters she sent in May to several New Orleans officials, warning that they had put their positions in jeopardy by opposing a new state law consolidating the city's criminal and district clerks of court.

Murrill filed an emergency motion Thursday evening asking the state Supreme Court to review the indictment, which was returned in a closed courtroom at New Orleans' Criminal District Court earlier that afternoon. Her attorneys' filing asked the state's high court to either quash the indictment or stay the proceedings.

In a remarkable move that one

dissenting justice and legal observers said would hardly ever befall a typical defendant, the Supreme Court issued its stay Friday morning after weighing what the order described as a laundry list of issues with the indictment. The three-page order points to alleged conflicts of interest in the

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AG Liz Murrill was charged Thursday with 16 felony counts.

STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN BALLANCE

## A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER



STAFF PHOTOS BY SOPHIA GERMER

People gather in the Concert Meadow for the annual Uncle Sam Jam at Lafreniere Park in Metairie on Friday.

## Celebrations across N.O. honor nation's semiquincentennial

BY JENNA ROSS  
 Staff writer

The trio of teenagers arrived at Lafreniere Park for the annual Uncle Sam Jam festival in red, white and blue T-shirts and glitter and sunglasses they'd bedazzled at the sleepover the night before.

Part of their patriotism was for fun — Kaylyn Gross, Jaylyn Pomar and Alisa'lyn Serna posed for picture after picture.

But when they listened to the national anthem, they thought of their relatives who had served in the military, who had done basic training, and who, in one case, had just enlisted in the Marines.

Gross' mother Lilliann Gross thought of her son.

"I'm proud of my boy," she said, her eyes welling with tears, noting that after completing basic training and graduating from high school, he's headed to LSU to study engineering and be a part of



Kaylyn Gross, 13, Jaylyn Pomar, 13, and Alisa'lyn Serna, 14, play with Silly String during the annual Uncle Sam Jam at Lafreniere Park in Metairie on Friday.

the ROTC program.

Many folks at this free festival Friday in Metairie teared up during the national anthem just after 4 p.m. The event kicked off a weekend of festivities marking not only July Fourth but America's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

"Wow, amazing, right?" said Arita Bohannon, Jefferson Parish Council

member, onstage after the anthem. "It hits a little different when you're celebrating the 250th year."

Across the metro area Friday, locals celebrated the long holiday weekend in a variety of ways, while trying as best they could to beat the heat. They also had a range of opinions on where their country is at 250.

Earlier Friday, as the temperature climbed to 90 degrees, families

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## Investor takes over Mid-City church

Nonprofit to stay at Sacred Heart of Jesus site

BY STEPHANIE RIEGEL and RICH COLLINS  
 Staff writers

In 2023, the Archdiocese of New Orleans put the former Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church and the entire city block where it has stood for a more than a century up for sale, raising questions about the future of the Mid-City property.

Some of the answers are now coming into focus.

Earlier this year, Harahan businessman and real estate investor Danny McKearan quietly took control of the 2.25-acre site in a complex transaction that could eventually bring the property back to life and help revitalize a mostly ignored stretch of Canal Street.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. But the asking price three years ago for the property — bounded by Canal, South

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## Audit finds La. ranks last in participation in WIC program

State leaves federal funding unspent, records show

BY MEGHAN FRIEDMANN  
 Staff writer

Louisiana, which struggles with a high infant mortality rate and is one of the lowest-ranked states when it comes to women's health, could better tap federal resources to aid pregnant women by making the WIC program more accessible, a state audit has found.

The state's participation rate in the WIC program, which provides routine testing, nutrition counseling and money for healthy foods to low-income pregnant women and their babies, was ranked the lowest in the nation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture,

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