

# The Minnesota Star Tribune

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H: 64° L: 54° | LATE, STEADY RAIN

## Hegseth's faith forged in Minnesota

Defense secretary's wartime rhetoric is inspired by how he was raised in Forest Lake, father says.

By MARA KLECKER and WALKER ORENSTEIN  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's biblical rhetoric and prominent religious tattoos have long been decried by some as signals of Christian nationalism and crusader ideology.

But in recent months, as Hegseth became the face of the Trump administration's military campaign against Iran, scrutiny of the Forest Lake native's faith has intensified, with headlines

highlighting his proselytizing, his monthly Pentagon prayer services and his use of biblical language to defend U.S. military actions.

Though Hegseth's faith is now centered in the teachings of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, a conservative, traditionalist network often criticized for its views on gender and authority, its roots

run back to Minnesota.

While Hegseth didn't respond to requests for comment, his father said many of his son's outspoken convictions today represent a commitment to the Christian family values he tried to instill in his children with the help of a then-small church that has since grown to be Minnesota's largest.

"If you're going to take a

platform with your faith, people are gonna examine you like crazy," Brian Hegseth said in his first interview with the Minnesota Star Tribune since his son was nominated for the job in the Trump administration in 2024. "But they don't want the whole story. They just want the sensational, they want the hypocrite."

SEE HEGSETH ON A2 »



Pete Hegseth

## They rely on state programs caught up in fraud crackdown



By JESSIE VAN BERKEL, ELEANOR HILDEBRANDT and BILL LUKITSCH • The Minnesota Star Tribune

For months, fraud in Minnesota's social services programs made headlines nationwide. But the fallout from that scrutiny is also affecting about 200,000 Minnesotans who rely on the programs at the center of the firestorm.

Those who need support – including people with autism, cerebral palsy, addiction and mental illness – have unwittingly found themselves in a precarious situation.

Unscrupulous providers have exploited the state's lax oversight of their much-needed services. Federal authorities have threatened to cut critical Medicaid funding as Minnesota scrambles to better protect taxpayer dollars in programs where spending has exploded in recent years. Many fear hardworking providers will be caught up in the crackdown.

Inside are stories of some Minnesotans who depend on the programs at the center of the state's fraud scandal. **A10**

Photos by RENÉE JONES SCHNEIDER and ANTHONY SOUFFLÉ • The Minnesota Star Tribune

## Arrests by ICE across U.S. drop 12%

Decline follows killings in Minneapolis and leadership shake-up.

By AARON KESSLER and TIM SULLIVAN • The Associated Press

At the peak of the crackdown, carloads of masked immigration officers were a common sight in the streets of Minneapolis, while thousands of people were being arrested every week in Texas, Florida and California.

"Turn and burn," top Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino called the strategy, with relentless displays of force and teams of agents descending on restaurant kitchens, bus stops and Home Depot parking lots.

In December, arrests by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents peaked at nearly 40,000 nationwide and were nearly as high the next month, according to data provided to UC Berkeley's Deportation Data Project and analyzed by the Associated Press.

In late January, the killings in Minneapolis of two American citizens by immigration officers and growing concerns over the government's heavy-handed tactics led to a shake-up of top immigration officials. In the weeks that followed, ICE arrests across the country dropped on average by nearly 12%.

Polling has found the general public felt the immigration enforcement operation in Minnesota went too far, a factor that may have contributed to the abrupt firing of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in early March.

Bovino, who swaggered through raid scenes in tactical gear and was the public face of the Trump administration crackdown, was pushed aside following the killings in Minneapolis of Renee Good and Alex Pretti.

SEE ICE ON A9 »

### TRANSFERRING IN MINNESOTA

## Only the champions might be happy with transfer system

Story by MARCUS FULLER and JOE CHRISTENSEN  
Photo by AARON LAVINSKY • The Minnesota Star Tribune

When Minnehaha Academy secured its Class 2A boys basketball state title in March, it was in large part thanks to a standout junior guard who had arrived at the school seven months earlier from Breck.

Another former Breck guard helped lead his new school, Totino-Grace, to a Class 3A title a couple of hours earlier that day at Williams Arena.

And in that night's Class 4A big-school showdown, the all-around play of a relative newcomer was a highlight of Chaska's first state title in 22 years. "We don't win without him," Hawks coach Nick Hayes said of his hustling sophomore forward.

Transfer students make up just 1% of Minnesota's high school athletes, but their impact on top teams is far greater – and increasingly visible on championship stages.

Their movement between schools is reshaping competition and fueling a growing debate over fairness and oversight.

The leaders involved – with the Minnesota State High School Athletic Association –

SEE TRANSFER ON A6 »



The Class 4A state title game between Wayzata and Cretin-Derham Hall featured several transfer players.

**The era of transfers is here**  
For many, it's a job at story lines they love. Chip Scoggins writes. **C1**

**What's it like to wait to play?**  
We visit a player who has to sit out a full year after transferring. **C3**

**How to complete the process**  
The many steps to a student athlete's transfer explained. **C4**

**'It's all right to look around'**  
Athletes who have made a move share their reasons. **C5**