

# The Minnesota Star Tribune

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2026 PULITZER PRIZE



FOR BREAKING NEWS

H: 80° L: 64° | SCATTERED THUNDERSTORMS

## Mass hearings now fast-tracking deportations

Immigration court scheduled proceedings for 100 people in a day.

By SUSAN DU  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

The normally staid Fort Snelling Immigration Court suddenly roared to life on Monday morning. The typically empty lobby was abuzz with dozens of

mostly Latino families. People lined the hallways outside full courtrooms, confused about when they'd be called. Non-profit court observers couldn't get into hearings that by law are open to the public. A silent security guard flanked the closed doors.

The paper schedule tacked to the clerk's bulletin board showed why: 73 people were scheduled for initial hearings

during a single 8:30-9 a.m. block in Judge Kalin Ivany's courtroom. Another 27 were scheduled for her afternoon 30-minute block.

The mass hearings – which have been reported in other immigration courts in recent weeks, including Chicago and Boston – have now arrived at Fort Snelling. Immigration attorneys are raising concerns about due process amid the

Trump administration's ongoing goal of dealing with the nation's backlog of 3.3 million immigration cases by issuing removal orders as quickly as possible.

"Any sense of justice has really kind of just disappeared from our immigration courts," said Matthew Woodward, vice president of the Minnesota Bar Association's immigration law section.

Woodward appeared in court remotely on Monday to represent a client, and said he was shocked to find so many people waiting to be heard. Typically, when someone that the government wants to deport has a lawyer, the initial hearing – also called a master calendar hearing – would be canceled so they could do most of the work of responding on paper. Then another deadline would

be given to file applications for relief from deportation. Woodward believes that everyone is now being called to appear in person for hearings called "mega masters."

The Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR), the U.S. Justice Department agency that manages immigration courts, did not respond to the Minnesota Star Tribune's questions

SEE IMMIGRATION ON A8 »

NEWS ANALYSIS

### GOPers test Trump's power with their own

Vote on war powers, resistance to fund show growing opposition.

By KATIE ROGERS  
The New York Times

WASHINGTON - On a tour through Asia last fall, President Donald Trump took a moment on the world stage to celebrate a legislative victory at home: After months of iron-fisted pressure, he had compelled Republicans to pass legislation that cut taxes and slashed into the country's social safety net.

"I said, 'Put it all into one bill, and if we get it done, we're done for four years,'" Trump said during an October speech in Tokyo. "We don't need anything more from Congress in terms of that."

Ever since, Trump has been intent on testing that theory, daring lawmakers to defy him and doing his best to vanquish them from office if they do. But after a retributive romp through primary season, Trump's style of governing – unilateral, and often impatient – has collided with restive Republicans who seem to be exacting some political vengeance of their own.

On Wednesday evening, four House Republicans sided with Democrats to demand Trump withdraw U.S. forces from the conflict with Iran or win approval from Congress, rebuking a president who has repeatedly said he does not need congressional authorization to continue the conflict.

That came on the heels of another high-profile setback: a Republican revolt against a \$1.8 billion fund to reward Trump supporters who claim political persecution by Democrats. Many Republican senators had

SEE TRUMP ON A8 »

## State cuts off thousands in race to hinder fraud



LEILA NAVIDI • The Minnesota Star Tribune

DHS Deputy Commissioner Shireen Gandhi, seen March 10, said her agency is under "tremendous pressure" from the federal government.

### Medicaid providers suddenly disenrolled as officials raced to keep funds.

By JESSIE VAN BERKEL  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

Minnesota just cut ties – at least temporarily – with nearly two-thirds of the Medicaid service providers the state was reviewing in its quest to protect programs against fraud and keep federal funds flowing after the Trump administration threatened to hold back money.

The decision to disenroll 3,411 businesses and nonprof-

its from those programs set off an uproar this week among providers, who said the state bungled its process to revalidate organizations and will interrupt clients' treatment and lives. Only a small number of those were referred for further fraud investigations, and all can appeal.

State workers had spent the past four months sprinting toward a May 31 deadline to check the validity of 5,583 providers enrolled to offer ser-

vice through state programs designated as susceptible to fraud. Thousands of Minnesotans rely on those programs that include autism therapy, mental health care and a range of services that allow people with disabilities to live more independently.

Federal officials, who have zeroed in on fraud in Minnesota's social service programs, said they will withhold up to \$2 billion a year if the state doesn't complete a corrective action

plan around fraud, waste and abuse. The revalidation push is the largest piece of that plan, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) pulled staff from other state agencies to help make it happen.

"The most important goal for us is that Minnesotans deserve to have confidence in the providers that are enrolled in Medicaid," DHS Deputy Commissioner Shireen Gandhi said, adding they have been

SEE REVALIDATE ON A5 »

### Trump wants Blanche as new AG

In acting role, he has aggressively pursued the president's agenda.

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he will nominate Todd Blanche to serve as attorney general, tapping his former personal lawyer who has aggressively pursued the Republican president's agenda while leading the Justice Department in an acting role.

Trump said at a dinner at the White House that he plans to nominate Blanche formally on Thursday, according to a video of the event posted on social media by a White House aide.

"We are going to make him permanent attorney general," Trump said at the event.

Blanche sought quickly to position himself as the favorite for the permanent job after Pam Bondi's firing in April, accelerating investigations into Trump foes and announcing a nearly \$1.8 billion fund meant to compensate the president's allies for alleged political persecution. The proposed fund created a bipartisan firestorm that forced the Justice Department to scrap the idea earlier this week.

Blanche was brought into the Justice Department as deputy attorney general and was elevated after Bondi's ousting over her failed efforts to prosecute Trump's perceived political opponents. Blanche insisted he wasn't auditioning for the permanent post but made clear through splashy moves since taking the reins his intent on proving his loyalty to Trump.

Blanche's actions have outraged Democrats and other

SEE BLANCHE ON A8 »



LEILA NAVIDI • The Minnesota Star Tribune

Twin Cities fans got a taste of international competition when the U.S. women's team played a friendly against China in 2025. The state walked away in 2018 from its bid to host World Cup games this year.

## WHY DON'T WE GET A WORLD CUP GAME?

Minnesota declined to host matches this year. 2031 brings another shot.

By JOSIE ALBERTSON-GROVE  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

When the World Cup starts Thursday, the nearest games to Minnesota will be played in Kansas City, a six-hour drive from Minneapolis.

U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis is big enough for the Super Bowl and Taylor Swift, and has installed the required natural turf to host soccer matches between the likes of AC Milan and Chelsea. And we have our own soccer franchise, Minnesota United (although its home at Allianz Field doesn't hold the minimum 40,000 fans).

Is that not enough for World Cup action? Minnesota actually walked away from the chance to host the 2026 games eight years ago. In 2017, when the United States-Canada-

Mexico bid to host the World Cup was being presented to FIFA, soccer's global governing body, Minneapolis was on the list of potential host cities.

This was big for the Twin Cities, after prior bids to host games fell flat. Boosters had angled for games of the 1994 men's World Cup and 2003 Women's World Cup to be held at the National Sports Center in Blaine.

Sport Minneapolis, part of the city's convention and visitors bureau, was leading the city's bid. But after the 2018 Super Bowl, there was a sense that the wells of local corporate philanthropy needed time to recharge, raising questions about gathering the necessary money in Minneapolis to host an even bigger event, according to Matt Meunier, executive vice president of business development and tourism for Minnesota Sports and Events, a regional group that works on luring big sports events to the Twin Cities. Meunier was

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TOP NEWS

Trump to announce \$700 million in support to coal-fired power plants, coal exports. **A2**

NATION & WORLD

Former national security adviser John Bolton to plead guilty in classified info case. **A2**

STATE & REGION

Family and friends of a slain St. Paul man press police for investigation details. **A4**

SPORTS

Twins pitcher Bailey Ober blames slick baseballs on a rainy day for arm injury. **C1**

BUSINESS

Amid tanking financials, UCare paid its CEO \$1.28 million in total compensation last year. **D1**

VARIETY

Internationally acclaimed artist paints gigantic hands onto the lawn at Boom Island Park. **E1**

HAVE YOU HEARD?

A Roseau, Minn., pilot has retrieved his airplane from Red Lake Nation seven months after the tribe impounded it. **A4**

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