



UT will see WR competition play out in Neyland Stadium

SPORTS, 1B

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Tennessee civil rights office at one year in

Division falls under attorney general's office

Evan Mealins
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

The Tennessee attorney general's office is using more lawyers to prioritize closing civil rights cases quicker than the commission that previously admin-

istered Tennessee's anti-discrimination laws, Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti told a group of lawmakers during an Aug. 19 hearing. Skrmetti said the Civil Rights Enforcement Division, or CRED, which is housed in the attorney general's office, has outperformed the defunct Tennessee Human Rights Commission in its first year of operation. Differences in THRC and CRED's structures and processes make apples-to-apples compari-

"We've got an attorney-driven organization that is designed to enforce the laws."

Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti

sons difficult. "We've got an attorney-driven organization that is designed to enforce the laws. It was a much more process driven operation with the Human

Rights Commission," Skrmetti said. "I think there are going to be big differences in what you see on the back end, because they're designed very differently." Republicans in the General Assembly last session dissolved the THRC, effective June 30, 2025, after 62 years in operation. Supporters said shifting the duties to the attorney general's office

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Prosecutor Will Ayers speaks during a hearing for Christa Gail Pike, pictured on the screen at top right, in Knox County Criminal Court in Knoxville on Aug. 11. Pike is set to be executed Sept. 30 for the 1995 murder of Colleen Slemmer, in which Pike saved a piece of Slemmer's skull as a souvenir. PHOTOS BY BRIANNA PACIORKA/NEWS SENTINEL

Christa Pike did not prevail after hearing

She failed to show that lethal injection would cause her needless suffering

Keith Sharon
Nashville Tennessean
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Most of the challenges argued by Christa Pike's legal team during a hearing in Knoxville have been dismissed. Senior Judge Mark Ward, a special master appointed by the Tennessee Supreme Court, presided during the three-day hearing that ended just before noon on Aug. 13. In a report filed Aug. 20, Ward found that Pike failed to show that lethal injection, the scheduled method

of execution, would cause her needless suffering. Attorneys for the state and for Pike will be able to lodge challenges until Aug. 28. The state plans to execute Pike Sept. 30. Journalists from The Tennessean, the Knoxville News Sentinel and other media outlets were in the courtroom at Knoxville Criminal Court, but Pike was not. Her image was streamed from the Debra K. Johnson Rehabilitation Center,

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Luke Ihnen, attorney for Christa Gail Pike, speaks during the hearing for Pike.

Bonnaroo won't return next year

Audrey Gibbs
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Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival will not return in 2027, organizers have announced. The Manchester, Tennessee, festival shared it will be taking a year off following their successful 2026 festival, and 2025 mid-festival cancellation. In a social media post, festival organizers said the Farm, particularly its main venue, needed a year off after back-to-back years of storms. "This wasn't an easy decision, and not one we take lightly, but in our hearts, we know this break will only make Bonnaroo better," the post read. "We hope you'll continue radiating positivity in your community throughout the year and thank you for loving this festival as much as we do." The announcement comes after days of rumors among fans and industry observers, who were curious about the future of Tennessee's largest music festival — fueled in part by the absence of a date announcement. Bonnaroo's decision follows a turbulent period for the festival. In 2021, organizers called off Bonnaroo before the festival began due to remnant rainfall from Hurricane Ida swamping the grounds. Bonnaroo was canceled again mid-event in 2025 when heavy rainfall flooded The Farm, making conditions unsafe for attendees.

Bonnaroo 2026 largely proceeded as planned, featuring headlining performances from Skrillex, The Strokes, RÜFÜS DU SOL and Noah Kahan. Organizers invested millions in infrastructure improvements before Bonnaroo returned this year, though attendees still encountered muddy conditions, a weather evacuation and a temporary power outage. Organizers cited those improvements when announcing the 2027 cancellation and

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