

# ICE arrests could hit military sign-ups



Jay Janner/Austin American-Statesman

Lorena and her son Franco Gonzalez listen as immigration advocates plead in a call for U.S. Rep. Greg Cesar's help.

## Del Valle family rethinking whether to send second son into armed forces after father's detainment

By Emiliano Tahui Gómez  
STAFF WRITER

DEL VALLE — The plan all made sense in Franco Gonzalez's head. He was to graduate from Del Valle High School on a Thursday in late May and sign up for the Air Force two weeks later. But a week after his graduation, while wandering a beach in Oregon with his girlfriend's family, the 18-year-old got a call from his mother. On a check-in visit to Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in San Antonio, his father had been detained. The surprise left Gonzalez in a soft shock. He had always reasoned that his father, Eric Gonzalez Mendez, a 47-year-old immigrant who had entered the U.S. without authorization, could be suddenly deported. But his father had secured an exception from deportation to his native

*"What sort of person (who) is a bad person has two sons in the military?"*

*Franco Gonzalez, who had planned to enter the Air Force before his father's arrest by ICE*

Mexico through a protection for survivors of torture, according to the Gonzalez family. He had spent the past 11 years checking in with ICE, and his next hearing for his asylum case wasn't for another two years, according to documents the family showed the American-Statesman. The family's concern over Gonzalez Mendez's future has been exacerbated by the recent Supreme Court decision allowing the federal government to remove immigrants who lack au-

thorization to remain in the U.S. to countries other than their home country. The practice is known as "third-country" deportations. The decision, the family fears, may allow the federal government to deport the father of two to a country besides Mexico to circumvent potential protections under an international accord. It has also produced a tension over American identity. Gonzalez has halted his enrollment in the Air Force to help his mother at home, though he expects to join after his father's immigration status is resolved. Yet his mother, Lorena, whose last name the Statesman is withholding due to her ongoing immigration case and her fear of government retaliation, said she found herself increasingly opposed to this decision. With her eldest son already

*Arrest continues on A2*

# Proposed budget includes small tax increase

\$6.3 billion spending plan would trim overtime for Austin police, firefighters

By Alex Driggars  
STAFF WRITER

After months of anticipation amid a historic financial crunch, Austin City Manager T.C. Broadnax has released his proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. The \$6.3 billion spending plan is balanced but relies on a modest tax increase and notable cuts to things such as overtime pay for police and firefighters, though it also includes raises for most city employees. Questions still loom over whether city leaders will call a special tax election so they may avoid some cuts or fund major community priorities. "Balancing the budget with a shortfall in revenue while investing in key areas was made possible by a close and critical look at all spending, making reductions to realize savings where appropriate and in a way that does not impact important services," the city manager wrote in a cover letter for his proposed budget. Austin officials have for months expected to face a deficit of about \$33 million, prompting conversations about spending cuts and debates over whether to ask voters for help in an election this fall. A convergence of political and economic factors have forced leaders to rethink how they might fund city services moving forward. Despite the crunch, the price tag of Broadnax's proposed budget would

*Budget continues on A8*

# Questions remain in rally attack on Trump

By Rebecca Santana  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — In many ways, the assassination attempt against Donald Trump at a Pennsylvania campaign stop was a perfect storm of failings coming together that allowed 20-year-old Michael Thomas Crooks to climb on top of a nearby building and take eight shots at the once and future president. One attendee was killed, two others were wounded and a bullet grazed Trump's ear before a Secret Service countersniper opened fire on Crooks and killed him. That day jolted an already chaotic race for the White House and solidified Trump's iconic status in the Republican Party and beyond. It also became a turning point for the agency tasked with protecting the president. As more details emerged about what went wrong, questions multiplied: What happened to the Secret Service's planning? Why was a rooftop with a clear line of sight to Trump left unguarded? What motivated the shooter? Another incident in September in which a gunman camped in the shrubbery outside one of Trump's golf courses before being spotted and shot at by a Secret Service agent also raised questions about the agency's performance. A year after Butler, multiple investigations have detailed the breakdowns that day. Under a new leader hired by Trump, the agency has been pushing to address those problems, but key questions remain. "This was a wake-up call for the Secret Service," said retired supervisory agent Bobby McDonald, who's now a criminal justice lecturer at the University of New Haven. A Senate committee and federal audit

*Secret Service continues on A5*

# Were alerts on cellphones ignored as Hill Country flood disaster neared?

By Richard Webner  
STAFF WRITER

In the early morning hours of July 4, Jerry Bundick and his wife, Felicia, were kept awake in their RV, parked in the Blue Oak RV Park along the Guadalupe River 5 miles west of Kerrville, by their phones chiming with alerts from the National Weather Service warning of "life threatening flooding." A couple of hours later, as the river surged more than 30 feet, they abandoned the RV, racing to higher ground in their pickup with only their dog, their wallets and the clothes they had on. But at the time — despite lightning so intense that it made their RV's skylight flash like a "strobe light," Bundick said — they pretty much wrote off the alerts. He recalled reading them and thinking they were aimed at people driving. The first flash flood warning the weather service sent for Kerr County, at 1:14 a.m., described flooding "of creeks and streams, urban areas, highways, streets

*Alerts continues on A6*



Christopher Lee/San Antonio Express-News

The Blue Oak RV Park along the Guadalupe River west of Kerrville sits destroyed last week after the deadly Fourth of July flood in the Hill Country.

