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# JOURNAL SENTINEL

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## Close of filing deadline launches battle for state Legislature control

14 Republican lawmakers decide to leave in 2026, but Evers is only Democrat who files paperwork to retire

**Molly Beck**

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

MADISON – Wisconsin voters will have the opportunity to reshape the state Legislature in November, when partisan control is up for grabs as well as leadership positions that decide which bills get to the floor.

As of June 1, the deadline to file paperwork to run or retire, 14 Republican

lawmakers decided to leave the Legislature in 2026, according to the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

No Democratic lawmakers filed paperwork to retire from public office altogether. Of those who did, all are seeking a higher office.

Overall, the only Democratic officeholder who filed paperwork to retire this year was Gov. Tony Evers.

Among the GOP lawmakers leaving their seats are the Legislature's two

most-powerful leaders: Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu.

The retirements come at a time when Democrats are within striking distance of winning a majority of seats in the state Senate for the first time in more than a decade, and recently redrawn electoral maps make the Assembly more within reach for Democrats than it has been in the same time period.

"Incumbents who are in tough races themselves or who think their majority is in trouble tend not to want to hang

See **LEGISLATURE**, Page 11A



**Yessenia Ruano is seen with her 10-year-old daughter Paola in their room in her mother-in-law's home on Oct. 29, 2025, in Tamanique, El Salvador. Ruano's family stayed at the home when they returned to El Salvador.** JOVANNY HERNANDEZ/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

## Former teacher's aide can come back

Judge: Deportation to El Salvador 'unlawful'

**Sophie Carson and La Risa R. Lynch**

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

A federal judge in California has ruled a Milwaukee teacher's aide can return to the U.S. to await an initial decision in her application for a trafficking victims' visa, and immigration authorities cannot deport her during that time.

That judge, Andre Birotte, said it was "likely unlawful" that the Trump administration forced Yessenia Ruano to carry out her own deportation to El Salvador without taking an initial look at her T visa application and determining whether it met the basic requirements of the visa.

In a voice message, Ruano said she is now hoping for an order that would allow her husband to return to the U.S. with her because she does not want to leave him behind in El Salvador. The couple has twin 10-year-old daughters, Paola and Elizabeth, who were born in the U.S. and are U.S. citizens. In Milwaukee, Ruano was an aide at a bilingual public school and her husband was a line lead at a pizza factory.

"I'm happy with the decision from the judge, and I'm sincerely grateful for the help of everyone who made this achievement possible," Ruano said.

The ruling was part of a federal lawsuit brought by eight individuals and two immigrant rights groups, arguing a policy change by President Donald Trump's administration should be reversed. The 2025 policy change stripped deportation protections for people with pending applications for visas intended for crime, abuse and trafficking victims.

The plaintiffs argued the Trump administration policy was "contrary to protections afforded them by Congress and

See **DEPORTATION**, Page 11A



## Leader feels uncertain with refugee resettlement gutted

Federal, state funding slashed as agencies lay off staff

**Sophie Carson** Milwaukee Journal Sentinel | USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

A decade ago, Sheila Badwan was working in health care administration when a friend connected her with a few local Syrian refugee families that needed help. ● Seeing the Milwaukee home where one family of 13 had been placed, she was horrified. ● Badwan changed careers and threw herself into helping refugees successfully acclimate to life in Milwaukee. ● In 2016 she became the executive director of Hanan Relief Group, which had been started by her college friend in North Carolina. Badwan brought the nonprofit to Milwaukee, and by 2022 it became a refugee resettlement agency.

See **BADWAN**, Page 11A

**Sheila Badwan, a founder of Hanan Relief Group, is seen on May 29. She recently left the job after 10 years, largely because refugee resettlement has been gutted by the Trump administration and federal and state funding for the work has dried up. Badwan is the board president for the Wisconsin Muslim Civic Alliance in Franklin.**

ANGELA PETERSON / MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL



**People gather at the site of an Israeli strike that hit near a hospital in Tyre, southern Lebanon, on June 1.**

KAWNAT HAJU/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

## Iran stops talks over Israeli attacks on Lebanon

**Christopher Cann**

USA TODAY

Iran halted indirect talks with the United States over Israel's intensifying attacks on Lebanon, according to Iranian media reports, signaling a possible breakdown in diplomatic efforts to end the 3-month-old war.

The Iranian semi-official Tasnim

news agency said on June 1 that Tehran's negotiating team would stop communicating with Washington through mediators over Israel's military campaign against Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The White House did not immediately comment on reports of a breakdown in talks, and Iranian officials also did not publicly confirm that negotiations

had been halted.

The development comes as a ceasefire between the two countries was being tested by fresh strikes over the weekend. U.S. Central Command said it carried out "self-defense" airstrikes on Iranian radar and drone sites after Tehran shot down an American drone. Iran

See **IRAN**, Page 11A

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