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Voters approve Virginia remap

Passage could help Dems gain seats, take control of US House

By David A. Lieb
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Virginia voters approved a mid-decade redistricting plan this week that could boost Democrats' chances of winning four additional U.S. House seats in November's midterm elections that will decide control of the closely divided Congress.

The constitutional amendment narrowly backed by voters Tuesday night bypasses a bipartisan redistricting commission to allow the use of new districts drawn by Virginia's Democratic-led General Assembly.

But the public vote may not be the final word. The state Supreme Court is considering whether the plan is illegal in a case that could make the referendum results meaningless.

The Virginia redistricting referendum marked a setback for President Donald Trump, who kicked off a national redistricting battle last year by urging Republican officials in Texas to redraw districts. The goal was to help Republicans win more seats in the November elections and hold on to a narrow House majority in the

See VIRGINIA on Page A9

OPERATION MIDWAY BLITZ

At hearing, Martínez recounts shooting

Chicago resident tells Congressional panel she felt 'disposable'

By Madeline Buckley
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Marimar Martínez stood in front of members of Congress and took off her purple blazer, rolling up her sleeves to point to the spot where a bullet pierced her arm. She then pulled up her pant leg to show the scar left by another gunshot.

Martínez, who has become a prominent voice against aggressive immigration enforcement since being shot five times by a Border Patrol agent in Chicago in October, testified on Wednesday in Washington, D.C., before the Committee on Homeland Security during a hearing on oversight of the Department of Homeland Security while it remains shuttered amid clashes over funding.

Though Martínez has previously testified in the nation's capital at a public forum, Wednesday's appearance was

See SHOOTING on Page A5

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

House OKs stadium bill

Lawmakers overwhelmingly pass property tax sweetener aimed at keeping Bears in Illinois

By Jeremy Gorner
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

SPRINGFIELD — The Democratic-run Illinois House on Wednesday passed the latest proposal to help the Chicago Bears build a new stadium in Arlington

Heights as lawmakers now look to the Senate to gather enough support to keep the team from relocating to Indiana.

The bill spearheaded by state Rep. Kam Buckner of Chicago, who has led House Democrats' stadium negotiations, passed

78-32. Only a few Democrats opposed the measure, while some Republicans voted for the plan.

The latest bill altered Buckner's earlier proposal for how special property taxes on the Bears and other developers of so-called megaprojects would be divvied up, a move aimed at sweetening a bill viewed as a favor

See BEARS on Page A3

Stage is set for Bears in draft

The NFL draft is here, as the three-day event begins with the first round Thursday night in Pittsburgh. Find out why the Bears might have their eyes set on a defensive end from Missouri. **Sports**



Jeff Bear walks through the audiobooks section at Northbrook Public Library on Wednesday. JOSH BOLAND/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A boost for bibliophiles?

Proposal would stop publishers from charging libraries more than the public for audiobooks

By Jack O'Connor
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

SPRINGFIELD — Public libraries offer readers the chance to enter into worlds of horror through classics such as Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" or Bram Stoker's "Dracula." But Illinois

librarians say a real horror story haunts them: e-book and audiobook licensing.

Libraries in Illinois pay more and receive less, said Monica Harris, executive director of the Reaching Across Illinois Library System. Some are being charged up to seven times more than

the general public for identical e-books and audiobooks.

Unlike physical books, e-books and audiobooks are not owned by libraries but instead are temporarily licensed to them. After a set time or number of checkouts, libraries must repurchase the item or lose access to it — a repetitive and costly cycle that eats away at budgets.

"More and more taxpayer-funded library budgets are

being eaten up by this licensing at unreasonably high prices," Harris said. "The hold list gets longer and longer for the constituents who are trying to, you know, use these materials and many libraries are now spending almost 50% of their collection budgets on e-books and audiobooks."

That growing cost is why librarians are pushing lawmakers to

See LIBRARIES on Page A2



State Rep. La Shawn Ford talks on Feb. 17 at the Illinois State Capitol in Springfield. BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Dems want redistricting, 'millionaire tax' on ballot

By Olivia Olander and Jack O'Connor
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Illinois voters could get a chance this fall to decide whether residents who earn more than \$1 million a year should pay more in taxes, as some Democratic lawmakers are trying to convince a supermajority of their colleagues that it will resonate with families squeezed by rising costs.

The millionaire's tax is one of two proposed constitutional

amendments the Illinois House teed up to vote on as soon as this week, ahead of a deadline to place questions on the November ballot. The second measure would reframe how voting maps are drawn for the Illinois General Assembly.

A House committee voted in favor of the millionaire's tax question along party lines Tuesday, though it hadn't yet received a vote in the full House as of Wednesday

See TAX on Page A4

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TODAY H: 81 L: 64 FRI H: 72 L: 52 SAT H: 64 L: 46 Complete details on Page A12

INDEX

Almanac A9 Crossword B13 Nation & World B4 Arts & Living B7 Editorials A6 Obituaries A9 Comics B12-B13 Horoscope B12 Television B11

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