

# Chicago Tribune



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## Johnson pushes CTA to pick leader

A state law will soon limit the mayor's control over appointment process at the transit agency

By Talia Soglin and Gregory Royal Pratt  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Mayor Brandon Johnson asked the Chicago Transit Authority board to select a permanent leader just weeks before a new state law limits his control over the executive

appointment process at the mass transit agency.

In a May 7 letter addressed to CTA board Chair Lester Barclay, Johnson directed the agency's board to "move expeditiously to finalize the selection of a permanent President for the CTA," which has been led on an interim basis by an

acting president, Nora Leerhsen, since early 2025.

"This should include prompt commencement of interviews with finalists, including the Acting President, before submitting the Board's recommended candidate to my office for final consideration," Johnson wrote.

Johnson, who has struggled to make appointments for leadership positions at key city sister agencies, has allowed the city's public trans-

portation provider to be helmed on an interim basis for more than a year.

His attempt to finally set a permanent leader for the CTA comes just weeks before legislation permanently removing some of his control over the process takes effect.

The legislation — which saved the CTA from massive service cuts — creates the new Northern Illinois Transit Authority, a governing body that is supposed to be a more power-

ful version of the CTA's current governing body, the Regional Transportation Authority.

Notably, the new legislation requires the new NITA board give its "advice and consent" for the appointment of a CTA leader. The law also requires the NITA board chair and executive director to be included in any search process for a new leader.

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Jasmine Jones, 28, left, walks her dog Dutches with her mom, Patricia Smith, in Chicago's Calumet Heights neighborhood on Sunday. Jones had a quadruple transplant in January due to Cystic Fibrosis. JOSH BOLAND/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## 'In many ways, a miracle'

South Side woman undergoes rare quadruple organ transplant at U. of C. Medicine

By Lisa Schencker  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

It took some time for Jasmine Jones to absorb the news that doctors wanted to replace four of her organs at once.

She had been through so much already because of cystic fibrosis, a genetic disorder that can damage the lungs and other organs. The 28-year-old South Side woman had become almost numb to the situation.

"I was still on autopilot,"

Jones said. "Nothing hit until I was getting ready to go down to surgery where I just felt this, 'Wow, it's really about to happen.' But I felt so calm and just grateful. It was just like a wave of just peace and gratitude."

In January, University of Chicago Medicine doctors performed a rare quadruple organ transplant on Jones. Over the course of 36 hours, they gave Jones a new right lung, left lung, kidney and liver, all from one deceased donor.

The procedure was the first known one of its kind in Illinois, and one of six such transplants that have been performed across the country, according to UChicago Medicine, citing information from the United Network for Organ Sharing.

"It continues to be at the edge of what we can do in transplantation," said Dr. Rolf Barth, a transplant surgeon and co-director of the UChicago Medicine Transplant Institute. "There's only been a handful done."

Now, five months later, Jones is back home and feeling "pretty good," she said. She spent about six weeks in the hospital after the transplants, and then another couple weeks at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab rehabilitation hospital downtown.

She didn't learn how rare her transplants were until about a month ago.

"I was like, 'Oh my God,' Jones said. "My mom was like, 'I'm

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## New state GOP chair will face challenges

Voting data shows low primary turnout, suburban voter collapse

By Rick Pearson  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Former DuPage County Auditor Bob Grogan will be the new chair of Illinois' Republican Party, taking over what has become a moribund political organization that new election data show has hemorrhaged voters from what was once its key suburban base and a March primary turnout that is the lowest non-presidential-year balloting in four decades.

Grogan, of Downers Grove, was elected by the state GOP's 17 state central committee members in a closed meeting held virtually on Monday. He defeated incumbent state Chair Kathy Salvi of Mundelein, who was elected to the post in July 2024 following the resignation of Don Tracy of Springfield, the GOP's current U.S. Senate nominee.

Grogan had held the DuPage County auditor's post for three terms before losing by 75 votes to Democrat Bill White in 2020 and by fewer than 5,000 votes in a rematch in 2024. Grogan also made an unsuccessful 2014 GOP primary bid for the party's nomination for state treasurer.

Though four candidates ran for the post, including former Kendall County Board Chair Scott Gryder and Lawrence Stowe of Moline, only Grogan and Salvi received votes, with Grogan gaining the majority of the weighted vote of the 17 state central committee members on a single ballot, according to a person familiar with the voting process who was not authorized to speak.

In a statement, Grogan said he was "honored and humbled" to

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## Jan. 6 rioters could qualify for payouts from \$1.776B fund

Blanche won't rule out payments as he spars with senators

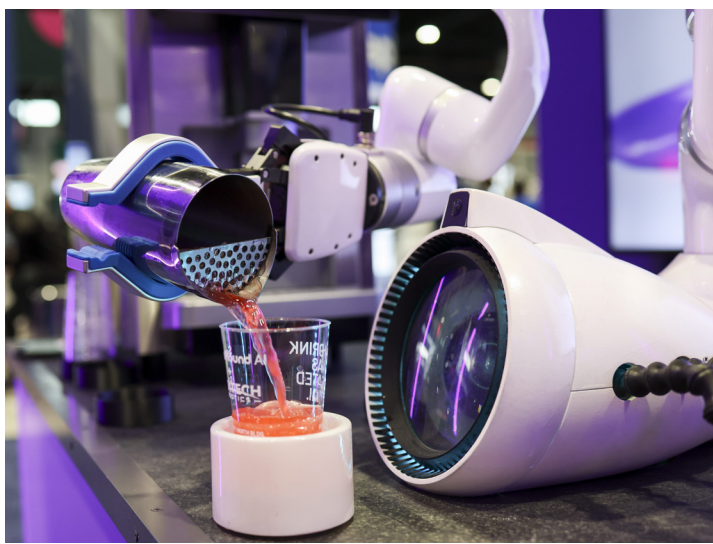
By Alanna Durkin Richer and Eric Tucker  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche on Tuesday wouldn't rule out the possibility that people who carried out violence during the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capi-

tol will be considered for payouts from a new \$1.776 billion fund to pay individuals who believe they were targeted politically.

Pressed during a Congressional hearing over whether those who assaulted police officers would be eligible for compensation from the "Anti-Weaponization Fund," Blanche responded that all people can apply if "they believe they were a victim of weaponization." The acting attorney general also

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INSIDE

## Welcome to future of restaurants

A SoundHound AI-integrated Richtec Robotics Scorpion robot makes a lemonade during the National Restaurant Association Show at McCormick Place on Tuesday. The four-day event features some 53,000 attendees exploring the latest in foodservice technology. Welcome to the restaurant of the future, where machines take your order, make and deliver your food. Business

EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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WEATHER FORECAST

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