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Bears close in on Hammond: After lawmakers leave Springfield without voting on a stadium deal, the team says it will proceed with plans across the border. But the door hasn't fully shut on the Prairie State

THE PRIDE AND JOY OF INDIANA?

“Without a final site selection, until we see shovels in the ground in Hammond, the City will continue to engage in discussions grounded in the interests of our residents.”

MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON, in a statement

By Robert McCoppin, Maya Wilkins, Jeremy Gerner and Olivia Olander
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The Chicago Bears will proceed with plans for a new stadium in Hammond, Indiana, the organization announced Friday.

In announcing the potential out-of-state move, the NFL franchise carefully worded its language to allow for a different outcome. And at least two Illinois lawmakers say team President and CEO Kevin Warren gave them advanced notice of the announcement and

Warren suggested talks about staying in Illinois would continue.

“Yesterday, the Chicago Bears Board of Directors met and voted to advance our stadium development project in Hammond, Indiana, with the exact site to be selected,” the team said in a joint statement from Warren and Chairman George H. McCaskey. “We believe a world-class stadium project in Hammond will transform the region, connecting Northwest Indiana to the South Side of Chicago through the Loop and across neighborhoods and suburbs stretching north of the city. It will

bring Chicagoland together and deliver new opportunities to its residents and businesses.”

The team's decision comes less than a week after the Illinois legislature adjourned without taking up a last-ditch Senate bill that would have allowed Arlington Heights or Chicago to enter into a public-private ownership deal with the NFL franchise. Such legislation would have given the team a path to build a new stadium without paying property taxes on the facility, bill sponsors said

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People play in Chicago's Grant Park during Pokémon Go Fest on Friday. JOSH BOLAND/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Senate OKs \$70B bill for immigration enforcement

Republicans thwart efforts to kill fund for Trump allies

By Mary Clare Jalonick and Joey Cappelletti
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Senate passed legislation to fund President Donald Trump's immigration enforcement agencies early Friday, after weeks of delays and fierce backlash to an unrelated \$1.776 billion settlement fund that threatened to derail the bill.

Senators voted 52-47 to pass the \$70 billion legislation to fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol for the next three years, through the end of Trump's term, after Democrats blocked the money for months. The bill will now head to the House, which is expected to take it up next week.

The final vote came just before 5 a.m. Eastern time, after Republicans narrowly defeated multiple attempts by members of both parties to add language to the bill that would permanently ban Trump's settlement fund for allies who believe they've been politically persecuted.

Republicans cleared the last major hurdle overnight when they defeated an amendment proposed by one of their own members, Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, that would have redirected payments from the settlement to members of law enforcement who were injured when a mob of Trump supporters seeking to overturn his 2020 presidential election loss attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

The amendments were a test of party unity that complicated what should have been an easy vote for Republicans who

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Staying on the right track

Summer tourist season looks strong for Chicago's hotels, even without Taylor Swift and Beyoncé to draw crowds

By Brian J. Rogal
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The number of foreign travelers staying at Chicago hotels has declined over the past year amid tensions between the Trump administration and other nations, hospitality experts say, while high fuel prices and other economic uncertainties have hurt U.S. travelers.

But hoteliers say they already see signs that Chicago will enjoy a healthy summer tourist season. That's mostly thanks to a densely packed calendar of events and concerts including Lollapalooza, Pokémon Go Fest and the June 19 debut of the long-awaited Obama Presidential Center on the South Side.

“We've got these disruptions out there including the Iran war and high oil prices,”

said Maverick Hotels and Restaurants CEO Robert Habeeb, the proprietor of several Chicago hotels, including the 223-room Sable at Navy Pier. “But (Chicago's) events calendar has always been its best feature, and even though our first quarter was a bit slow, we had a great April, and our advance bookings look pretty good for all segments.”

Except for the four-day Lollapalooza, which opens July 30 in Grant Park, Chicago doesn't have any truly blockbuster concert events such as Taylor Swift or Beyoncé,

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A night that was ‘just for us’

Former ASPIRA seniors celebrate prom with past classmates after dispute over school closures left them in the crosshairs

By Kate Perez
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Jesus Lara's eyes searched the room as he walked across the shiny floor, decked out in a black suit and silk tie. He quickly scanned the entryway of the Chicago Teachers Union headquarters, transformed with blue drapery and yellow-colored lights spelling out “prom,” for familiar faces, and smiled widely once he found them.

It was one of the rare times in months that Lara, 18, had been in the same room with his friends and classmates from ASPIRA Business & Finance High School. Like his ASPIRA peers, Lara had spent the last two months at a new, unfamiliar school rather than at the one where he began his high school career.

For Lara, finishing up high school at Lake

View High School was the result of the school network's charter being revoked by the Chicago Board of Education in March.

Students like Lara were caught in the crosshairs of the decision to revoke the charter, which district officials told the Tribune previously hinged on “systemic fiscal mismanagement” by the network, which ran out of funding to finish the school year, according to CPS officials. ASPIRA leadership repeatedly denounced those claims, the Tribune reported, pointing instead to declining enrollment and rising labor costs as the drivers of the network's financial struggles.

The decision led to the closure of two Avondale schools, ASPIRA Business & Finance High School and ASPIRA Early

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Students who once attended ASPIRA schools gather to celebrate the end of their school year at a prom put on at the Chicago Teachers Union headquarters on Thursday. TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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