

Halfway through 2026, almost hyperventilated

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand...Deuteronomy 6:4,5,6,7,8...

One more day of June as I write this. Did you feel the days go whooshing past? We are halfway through the year of 2026. Oh my!

But it is summer! Although the humidity is a little tough to take. But that's okay. Today we do have a nice breeze and it is still nice.

Our floors, which are concrete, which is okay in some ways, don't ask me how, I don't really know, except maybe it was quicker and easier. Nevertheless, they get wet when it is humid.

Granddaughter Marilyn said they leave their windows open at night, then close then during the day and run a dehumidifier and their house is cool.

I wasn't sure, I like open doors and windows, but if it would help to have dry floors, I may try it.

We were at daughter Rachel and Lloyd for supper Sunday evening. We had a delicious supper of burgers, bacon, and chicken fixed on the Blackstone and also potatoes. I don't know if those fixed on the grill, but they were delicious. All their children were home except Galen. They are a lively and somewhat chaotic bunch,



but we love and enjoy them.

Sunday was our Church Sunday, so we had the privilege of going.

It is always such a highlight of the week for me. I so enjoy everything, the sermon, the meal and fellowship. It is so precious.

Tomorrow I go back to my podiatrist and see what he says about my feet. They are some better. And they should be, everything left on. He re-

moved a huge, well it was big, callous. You could have thought I fed it steroids!

I had a problem. I had no one to bring Erwin home from work. So he has to stay home. But thankfully, granddaughter Sherilyn can come and check on him. She works only a couple of miles from our place.

He is usually okay, but since I'll be gone more than two hours, he needs someone to check on him.

Last week I also wrote my column on Monday and took it to the library late in the afternoon, as I had a really full week. Later in the week, like Thursday afternoon, all if a sudden it hit me, I almost passed out. I asked Erwin, did I write my column this week? I was almost hyperventilating! He thought surely I did. Then it came to me, I did. Oh yes, after my heart slowed down and I could think, I remembered, I took it in late in the afternoon.

I'm getting too old for this type of excitement. I either need to write things down or take some kind of memory help pills. I'd still forget to take them!

In closing---Gardening is a healthy exercise, if you can straighten up afterward.

We have bed and breakfast guests this week, on Thursday and Friday night. This is

the recipe I'm used for Friday morning.

Breakfast Enchiladas

2 cups diced ham
1/4 cup chopped onions
2 cups shredded cheese
2 Tblsps. flour
2 cups milk
12 eggs
1/4 tsp. salt
10 tortillas

Sauté ham and onions together.

Sprinkle ham and cheese down center of tortillas. Roll up and place seam side down in a greased 9x13 baking dish. Whisk together flour, milk, eggs, and salt. Pour over tortillas. Bake at 350* for 35-40 minutes or until set.

Serve with sour cream and salsa, if desired.

This can be fired the night before and refrigerated. May have to allow extra baking time

Cyberbullying

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AI-generated content in their bullying prevention policies. Beginning July 1, the state's definition of cyberbullying was expanded to include AI-generated digital replicas, forcing districts across Illinois to update policies and procedures.

Also by July 1, the Illinois State Board of Education was required to develop statewide guidance on artificial intelligence in schools. The guidance is expected to address AI-generated false representations of individuals to help districts update their policies ahead of the 2026-27 school year.

ISBE press secretary Lindsay Record said that while the agency is still developing guidance, “it remains the case that local policies, procedures and responses to specific

incidents are determined at the district and school level.”

In Lake Zurich for the coming school year, officials expect to build on the guidance provided following the earlier incident.

“The district anticipates continued integration of explicit teaching opportunities for all students regarding safe, responsible technology usage — in alignment with core district values,” Jean Malek, executive director of communications for Lake Zurich Community Unity School District 95, told the Medill Illinois News Bureau in an email.

“Additionally, the district anticipates continued information and resource-sharing with families on how to best support safe technology usage.”

Even though schools already have policies to address bullying, the new law provides important clarification by naming unauthorized AI-generated digital replicas

as a newer form of harm, said Scott Rowe, superintendent of Township High School District 214.

“The message is clear,” Rowe said. “AI does not remove responsibility.”

The law, he said, will give districts clearer language for policies, student expectations and family conversations.

The school-focused legislation doesn't change Illinois' criminal statutes governing AI-generated sexual imagery. Under state law, AI-generated sexual images that appear to depict minors may be prosecuted under child pornography and related obscenity statutes. Depending on the circumstances, creating, possessing or distributing such images can result in felony charges.

The issue is not isolated: A 2024 survey by the Center for Democracy & Technology found that 40% of K-12 public school students were aware of a deepfake involving someone at their school, including 15% who knew of a sexually explicit deepfake depicting a member of their school community.

The survey also found that many schools had not proactively addressed the issue, with more than 60% of teachers reporting their school had not shared policies or procedures related to AI-generated sexual imagery.

Laura Tierney, founder of The Social Institute, a company that provides schools with digital literacy resources, said Illinois is taking a step in the right direction by acknowledging that educators have a role to play alongside law enforcement in addressing harmful AI-generated content.

“Legislation alone won't solve the spread of this. With legislation has to come education on the topic, and Illinois schools now have a legal obligation to address AI-generated cyberbullying,” Tierney said. “And so now I think the question is whether they have the curriculum and the tools to back this policy up.”

Tierney said most students are well aware that deepfakes are hurtful but might not fully understand how to support their friends if they see images

circulating online.

“I think this is an opportunity to coach towards the positives rather than solely scare students with the negatives,” Tierney said. “It's old school to focus on how harmful it is, like, 'here's all the legal implications.' The reality is that it's still going to happen. So how can we help students make positive choices?”

Rowe said the biggest challenges for schools when responding to incidents involving AI-generated content are speed, realism and reach: Images can spread quickly and students may not know whether or not they are fake.

“AI-generated content may be artificial, but the harm it causes can be very real,” Rowe said.

Rowe added that students do not have to create the original content to contribute to the harm. Sharing or forwarding it can extend the damage and may result in school consequences and, in some cases, legal consequences, he said.

“Anything related to AI —

it's a bit of a game of Whac-A-Mole, just because the technology is evolving very quickly,” said Debra Jacobson, general counsel of the Illinois Association of School Boards. “Kids are often way ahead on technology and what they're doing with it so that can contribute to the challenge. I don't think that's anything necessarily new, but I think the trend has just been accelerating.”

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Hemp

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products in a way designed to look like common snacks.

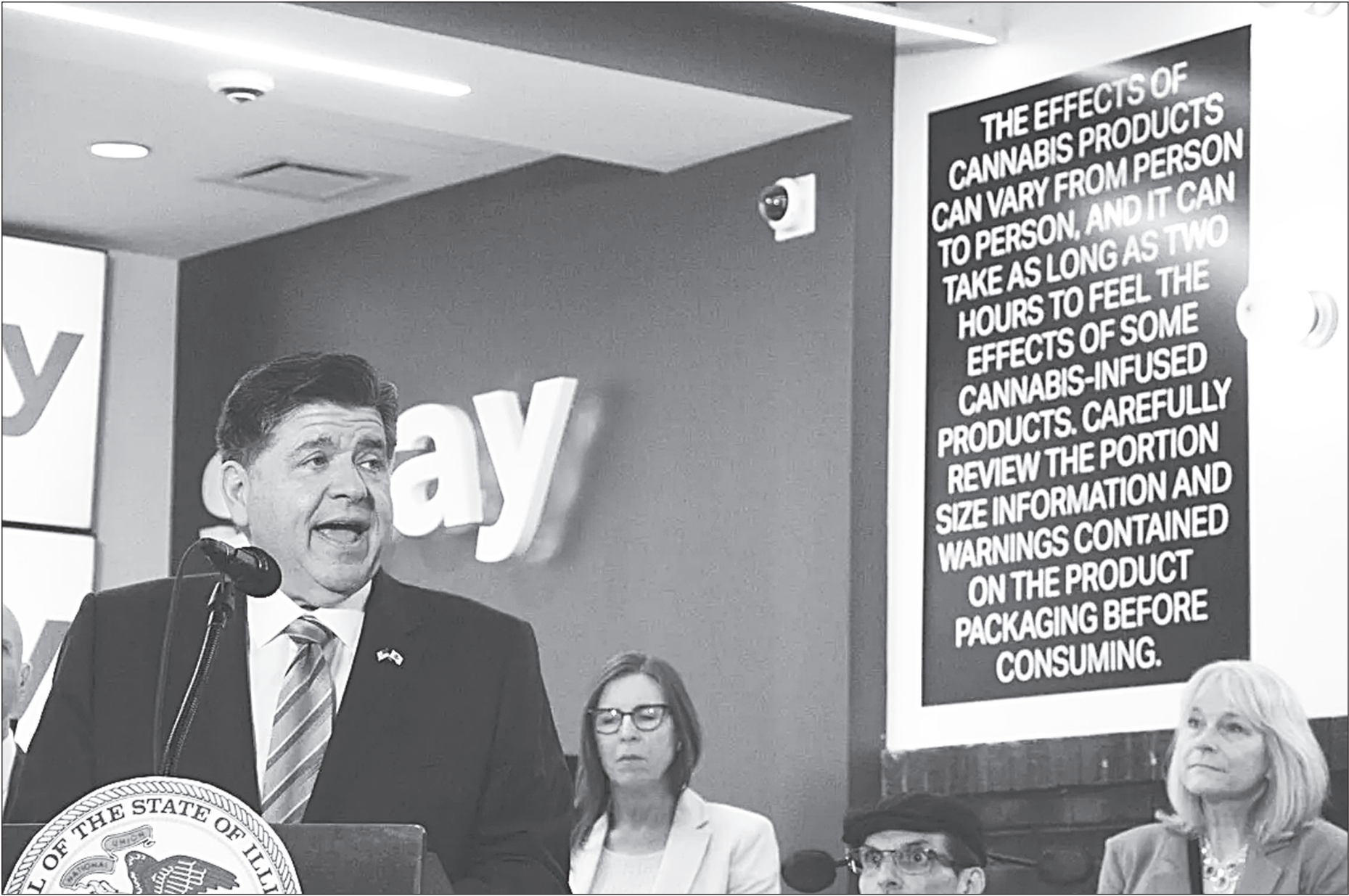
“These are not harmless products that carry real risks for young children and young people,” said Dr. Mark Butterly, the chief medical officer at Advocate Aurora Children's Hospital. “These products can impair judgments, affecting the developing brain, and send children to our emergency departments.”

The law is years in the making after legislators debated how to regulate hemp. Proposals ranged from sweeping bans on hemp products to introducing an entirely new framework of regulations.

Reforms Pritzker supported stalled in early 2025 after fighting between Pritzker, Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson and House Democrats. The governor endorsed a Senate-passed bill, but the House declined to take it up after a big blow up in a private caucus meeting where Pritzker said members of his administration were verbally abused.

Johnson's team opposed the Pritzker-supported bill. Pritzker bashed the mayor afterward, saying he rarely reaches out to discuss issues with Pritzker, though the governor said he doubts Johnson's opposition stalled the measure.

But this spring, there was little fighting over hemp and cannabis reforms and the bill was introduced in the final days of session without drama.



GOV. JB PRITZKER discusses new hemp regulations he signed last month during an event at SWAY Cannabis Dispensary in Chicago on July 2, 2026. Capitol News Illinois photo by Maggie Dougherty.

Other reforms

Beginning Nov. 12, non-intoxicating CBD products with less than 0.4 milligrams of THC will be allowed to be sold outside the regulated market.

With more businesses that sell intoxicating products now subject to regulation, the law also allows the state

to issue 45 unused infuser licenses to businesses in January to applicants with prior experience under the state's social equity laws and add 100 new licenses in 2028.

“As industries evolve, our laws must also,” Pritzker said. “Today, we are strengthening protections for children, we are expand-

ing access for patients, we're advancing social equity even further, and we're making our regulatory system operate more efficiently and better for everyone.”

The bill also made several changes to the state's existing cannabis laws.

All dispensaries in the state will be able to regis-

ter as medical dispensaries, ending previous restrictions that distinguished between those that could sell medical products or only ones for recreational use. The new changes will also allow medical patients to pick up cannabis curbside or through a drive-thru. More conditions will also qualify patients to

receive a medical cannabis prescription.

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