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Cops: Alleged hit-and-run driver blames dad, friend

BOB KASARDA
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LIBERTY TOWNSHIP — A 32-year-old Valparaiso-area man first blamed his father and then a friend before police determined he was the one who crashed his vehicle into the front of a store Wednesday causing substantial damage.

Javier Zamora was taken to the Porter County Jail on charges of leaving the scene of an accident and false informing, according to Porter County police.

Police said they were called out around 10 a.m. Wednesday to the Family Express at 298 W. U.S. 6 for a report of a vehicle crashing into the front of the store and then fleeing.

Officers were provided a license plate number and tracked the vehicle to Zamora, who first claimed his father had been driving the vehicle, police said.

When that was proven wrong, Zamora reportedly blamed a friend, who he said was out buying more beer. But Zamora would not provide police with the person's full name.

Police said they located the vehicle in the home garage and found it had damage consistent with the crash.

Police said Zamora had the odor of alcohol on his breath, but did not appear to be impaired.

Damage to the store was estimated to be in excess of \$80,000, police said.

THURSDAY LOTTERIES

INDIANA	ILLINOIS
Daily 3—Midday: 1-0-1, SB: 3 Daily 3—Evening: Not available Daily 4—Midday: 2-6-6-1, SB: 3 Daily 4—Evening: Not available Cash 5: Not available Cash 4 Life: 6-7-21-26-57, SB: 2 Quick Draw—Midday: 2-4-6-8-10-12-25-31-33-34-35-36-37-52-57-68-69-73-78-79, BE: 6 Quick Draw—Evening: Not available Hoosier Lotto jackpot: \$5.6 million	Pick 3—Midday: 7-8-5, Fireball: 0 Pick 3—Evening: Not available Pick 4—Midday: 0-2-3-6, Fireball: 7 Pick 4—Evening: Not available Lucky Day Lotto—Midday: 4-20-22-27-31 Lucky Day Lotto—Evening: Not available Lotto jackpot: \$3.65 million
MICHIGAN	POWERBALL
Midday Daily 3: 3-7-5 Midday Daily 4: 4-0-0-2 Daily 3: 1-6-0 Daily 4: 9-3-4-4 Fantasy 5: 2-4-22-33-38 Keno: 9-10-12-13-14-15-18-20-22-24-29-32-34-35-38-41-51-53-56-60-68-75 Lotto 47 jackpot: \$1.35 million	Wednesday's game: 13-26-29-38-50 Powerball: 6 Power Play: 2x Current jackpot: \$443 million MEGA MILLIONS Tuesday's game: 6-18-26-27-49 Mega Ball: 4 Megaplier: 3x Current jackpot: \$607 million

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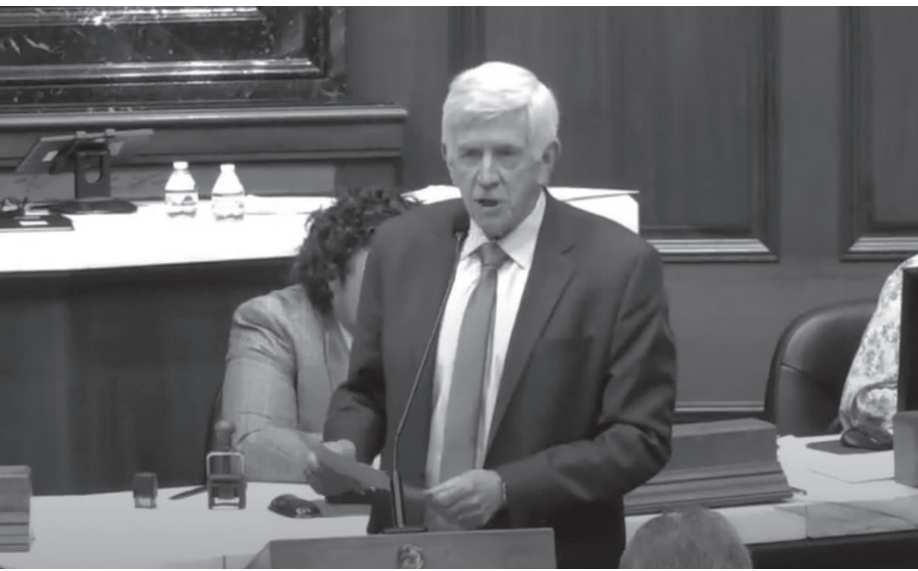
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2024 INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



SCREENSHOT

State Rep. Ed Delaney, D-Indianapolis, asks his House colleagues to push Republican Attorney General Todd Rokita back into his lane by shutting down Rokita's 'Eyes on Education' website for reporting "objectionable material" in Indiana schools. Delaney's proposal ultimately was ruled out of order by the House speaker.

Lawmakers consider shutting down school complaint site

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A legislative proposal to shut down the "Eyes on Education" website established by Republican Attorney General Todd Rokita for people to complain about "objectionable material" in Indiana schools was tripped up by a procedural hurdle this week in the House.

State Rep. Ed Delaney, D-Indianapolis, suggested revising Senate Bill 211 to explicitly prohibit the attorney general from operating a school snitch website, in favor of allowing the Indiana Department of Education to receive and evaluate complaints about schools.

"This is designed to get everybody back on their own turf," Delaney said. "I thought the attorney general ought to be busy doing whatever small jobs he apparently has, legally, and get out of the education business."

"This amendment simply would give to the Department of Education, and to our school districts, the responsibility that the attorney general has taken onto himself with the thing

he calls 'Eyes on Education.' It might be called 'Blind Eyes on Education' as far as I know. But I think he should get out of that business."

State Rep. Ben Smaltz, R-Auburn, objected to Delaney's proposal. Smaltz argued under House rules Delaney's proposal was not sufficiently related to the underlying school curriculum legislation to be inserted in the measure.

House Speaker Todd Huston, R-Fishers, agreed, and Huston ruled Delaney's amendment out of order — officially ending consideration of the proposal.

Delaney said the result in no way changes the fact that the Department of Education, and not the attorney general, is responsible for publishing and investigating complaints against classroom material or teachers.

"Our attorney general has a habit of expanding his authority into matters that he has no place in," Delaney said. "This new 'Eyes on Education' website uses taxpayer money to go after teachers for unsubstantiated accusations of 'spreading woke ideologies.'"

"Attorney General Rokita's website



Rokita

speech in our public schools."

Rokita, meanwhile, continues to insist students across the state are being indoctrinated by harmful political ideologies while at school.

"This is just the beginning, and we will continue to empower parents across the state to engage in their child's education," Rokita said.

The office of attorney general is created by state law, not established in the Indiana Constitution. Rokita's powers can be adjusted or eliminated at any time by the General Assembly and the governor.

State education policy likewise is controlled by the Legislature and the governor. The Senate has been Republican-controlled since 1979, the governor's office since 2005, and the House since 2011, records show.

2024 INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

House halts school bus stop-arm crackdown

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The Indiana House has gutted a Senate-approved proposal authorizing police to ticket the registered owner of any vehicle photographed driving past a school bus with its stop-arm extended — regardless of who was actually operating the vehicle.

On Thursday, the Republican-controlled chamber voted 64-29 to delete nearly the entire text of Senate Bill 30, and to replace it with a sentence directing the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to annually remind Indiana vehicle owners that passing a stopped school bus is a misdemeanor crime.

The revision was proposed by state Rep. Jennifer Meltzer, R-Shelbyville, and approved on an unrecorded stand-in-place vote after a standard voice vote produced unclear results.

State Rep. Hal Slager, R-Schererville, the sponsor of the measure, encouraged his House colleagues to support the change to keep the plan alive in the waning days of this year's legislative session.

"I think we can all agree



TONY V. MARTIN, FILE, THE TIMES

The Indiana Senate has approved legislation allowing police to ticket the registered owner of a vehicle that unlawfully passes a stopped school bus, regardless of who was driving the vehicle when the violation occurred. Senate Bill 121, sponsored by state Sen. Rick Niemeyer, R-Lowell, now goes to the House.

we've got an issue we need to deal with. And it's complicated," Slager said.

Slager explained that advancing the measure out of the House — even if it no longer does anything — gives lawmakers more time next week to work toward a final compromise version of the proposal that must be re-approved by both the House and the Senate to go to the governor to be signed into law.

The legislation is part of a multiyear crusade led by state Sen. Rick Niemeyer, R-Lowell, to more vigorously enforce school bus stop-arm violations.

Niemeyer told the Senate in January that police and

prosecutors currently are reluctant to pursue school bus stop-arm violations because stop-arm cameras only capture an image of the offending vehicle's license plate and typically do not photograph the driver.

He said Senate Bill 30 addresses that issue by automatically holding the vehicle owner liable for the violation, unless the owner takes steps to prove he or she wasn't driving the vehicle at the time of the stop-arm violation and provides information about who was.

His original proposal was approved 33-12 by the Republican-controlled Senate.

BRIEFS

Police: Man pointed gun at his head, walked away

PORTAGE TOWNSHIP — Moments after a woman told Portage resident Joshua Arndt she wanted to end their relationship, he stood over her with a gun, pointed it at his head and said he intended to pull the trigger if she confirmed they were no longer a couple, according to police.

The woman closed her eyes, looked away and then heard a gunshot, Porter County police said.

She looked up to see Arndt still alive and watched as he placed the gun down and walked away, police said.

Arndt had reportedly told a witness before the shooting "that he was sorry for what he was going to see."

Police were called and took Arndt into custody on a felony count of criminal recklessness, records show.

Police said they responded shortly before 8:30 p.m. Wednesday to a home in the 500 block of Serenity Trail after receiving a 911 call and hang up.

Officers located and took custody of the 9 mm handgun in question, police said.

Arndt said he was cleaning the gun to relieve stress following an argument with the woman and the weapon accidentally went off, according to police. He said the bullet traveled from the kitchen down the hall toward a bedroom, but police determined the damage was not consistent with his claims.

Coroner seeks help locating family of Valpo sisters

VALPARAISO — The Porter County Coroner's Office is seeking help locating relatives of two sisters, who had lived together in near the Aberdeen development in Valparaiso.

The sisters were identified by the office as Radojka Predovic, 74, and Darinka Predovic, 67.

Radojka could have gone by the name Radmila and Dranka could have used the name Dawn, officials said.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact the coroner's office at 219-548-0208.

— Bob Kasarda, *The Times*

Lake coroner seeking man's next of kin

LAKE COUNTY — The Lake County coroner's office is seeking the public's help to locate a possible sister and/or next of kin for a 59-year-old Hobart man who recently died, the coroner's office said in a statement.

Bernard Jay Tucker died on Feb. 21 at his childhood residence located at 2122 E. Cleveland St., in Hobart.

Anyone with information should contact the coroner's office at 219-755-3267.

— Grace Opinker, *The Times*

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