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gender student-athletes from playing women’s sports is not followed. He did not specify which funding streams he would target.

“In the meantime, I am ordering local authorities, if necessary, not to allow the transitioned person to compete in the State Finals,” Trump said in the post. “This is a totally ridiculous situation!!!”

USA TODAY reported in February that the executive order directs the Education Department to pursue “enforcement actions” under Title IX. But some legal experts question whether the Trump administration’s interpretation of the law would hold sway in court.

The Justice Department said in a news release that it has filed a statement of interest in support of a lawsuit challenging AB 1266, which was passed in 2013.

“The letters of legal notice were sent at the time the Justice Department filed a statement of interest in federal court in support of a lawsuit filed by and on behalf of girls’ athletes to advance the appropriate in-

terpretation of Title IX to ensure equal educational opportunities and prevent discrimination based on sex in federally funded schools and athletic programs,” the news release states.

Changes to state championships

The California Interscholastic Federation announced on May 27 that it’s implementing a pilot entry process for the upcoming 2025 CIF State Track and Field Championships.

“Under this pilot entry process, any biological female student-athlete who would have earned the next qualifying mark for one of their Section’s automatic qualifying entries in the CIF State meet, and did not achieve the CIF State at-large mark in the finals at their Section meet, was extended an opportunity to participate in the 2025 CIF State Track and Field Championships,” according to the announcement shared on social media.

While the California Interscholastic Federation did not directly respond to a request for comment regard-

ing the investigation from the Justice Department, the Desert Sun was provided with a follow-up statement about the pilot entry process.

According to the news release, “a biological female student athlete who would have earned the next qualifying mark will also be advanced to the finals” in the high jump, triple jump, and long jump qualifying events at the 2025 CIF State Track and Field Championships, if necessary.

“Additionally, if necessary, in the high jump, triple jump and long jump events at the 2025 CIF State Track and Field Championships, a biological female student-athlete who would have earned a specific placement on the podium will also be awarded the medal for that place and the results will be reflected in the recording of the event.

“The CIF values all of our student-athletes and we will continue to uphold our mission of providing students with the opportunity to belong, connect, and compete while complying with California law and Education Code,” the news release added.

Contributing: Joey Garrison, USA TODAY

Rogers

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Lawson, that Rogers’ personal belongings were the only physical evidence of interest recovered from the car, but that the circumstances surrounding the findings were “amiss.”

Buckler went on to press Snow about a hairbrush that a private investigator who had been hired to assist the car after it was released back to Rogers’ family sometime after August 2015. The brush, Buckler argued, could have been used by a possible suspect. It, along with other hairs pulled from the vehicle, were never compared to samples from the FBI’s CODIS database, which contains DNA samples for more than 23 million individuals.

“That avenue was never explored,” Buckler said.

Young followed the defense’s questioning by referencing two individuals who he said the commonwealth has suspected of somehow being linked to the case but have not been charged. Those individuals, Nick and Rosemary Houck, are relatives of Brooks Houck, who is charged with murder and tampering with physical evidence in the case.

Nick Houck was a police officer with the Bardstown Police Department at the time of Rogers’ disappearance and was fired after allegedly interfering in the investigation, according to court records.

When asked by Young whether the possibility of there being additional suspects changes his views on Lawson’s alleged involvement, he responded, “Not in any way.”

Children of Lawson’s partners testify, prosecutors highlight discrepancies in Lawson’s story

The daughters of two of Lawson’s past wives took the stand after Snow.

Lauren Hardin, daughter of Lawson’s late ex-wife, Tammy Lawson, took the stand first. The prosecution’s questioning centered on the purpose of a July 4, 2015 phone call Lawson made to Houck’s phone just



Steve Lawson was part of pretrial conferences for the murder of Crystal Rogers in Nelson Circuit Court on Feb. 8, 2024. SCOTT UTTERBACK/COURIER JOURNAL

after midnight.

Lawson originally told investigators he made the call to ask Houck about a rental property for Hardin, but his explanation has changed since he made that statement.

At the conclusion of the proceedings on May 28, prosecutors played audio from grand jury testimony he gave on three different occasions in 2023. During his first appearance in May 2023, he told jurors the phone call was to tell him he had finished a job at a worksite. At his third appearance, he said the call was to inform Houck that the job of moving Rogers’ car was done — a task he said he was enlisted to help with after Houck told him he “wanted his wife gone.”

Hardin testified that she was not looking for a rental property at the time, adding that she had previously rented from Houck and could have contacted him herself. Still, she said, it would be plausible for Lawson to inquire about the topic on her behalf.

Elizabeth Chesser, the daughter of Lawson’s most recent wife and the mother of Joseph Lawson’s child, followed Hardin on the stand. Joseph Lawson, Steven Lawson’s son, is also charged in the case with conspiracy to commit murder and tampering with physical evidence.

Chesser said Lawson and her mother got together in late 2017, just months after Tammy Lawson died. She said Lawson told her in September 2017 that he was at one point planning to leave Tammy because she knew he “committed murder.”

“No evidence, no case,” she recalled Lawson telling her, which she said was a reference to the fact that investigators have never recovered Rogers’ body.

Chesser did not realize any possible connection between Lawson’s comments and the Rogers case until she recognized his voice while watching a docu-series, “The Disappearance of Crystal Rogers,” in 2018, but she did not speak to investigators about the case until the following year.

Darren Wolff, a defense attorney for Lawson, was shocked by Chesser’s inaction and cast skepticism on her story. He asked about her substance abuse during the time when the conversation with Lawson occurred, to which she said she had been sober for about two months before the alleged comments. Wolff also asked whether her consumption of a docu-series about the case may have influenced her memory.

“That’s not something you forget,” Chesser said.

Former employees for Houck testify about interactions with him, Lawson

Both Steven and Joseph Lawson formerly worked for Houck, who is a prominent real estate entrepreneur

in Nelson County.

Two witnesses called to the stand May 28 were former employees of Houck and testified about their interactions with Lawson around the time of Rogers’ disappearance.

Stacie Cranmer, who built decks and installed insulation for Houck, was the first of those two witnesses. She testified she saw Lawson and Houck riding around a neighborhood in a truck where a job site was located on one of the days leading up to Rogers’ disappearance, which was unusual for him.

When they finished driving around, Lawson was walking around the area where Cranmer was eating lunch. She asked him about why he was riding with Houck, to which he responded that Houck needed help to “take care of this girl,” Cranmer said.

Her testimony was similar to a statement she gave to the Nelson County Sheriff’s Office in October 2015, Wolff said, but differed in that Cranmer said at the time Lawson mentioned the girl in question was using drugs, which Rogers had never been documented doing.

Charlie Girdley, another former employee for Houck, testified that he spent time with the Lawsons July 3 — the night Rogers was last seen on the Houck family farm.

Girdley said he and Joseph Lawson paid a visit to Houck after they got off work. Girdley picked up a check, he said, and Houck gave Joseph Lawson a set of keys. Girdley said he was told Joseph Lawson was going to perform maintenance work on the car.

Girdley also recalled a conversation he had with Steven Lawson. Lawson told Girdley that Houck came to him for help with getting rid of his “old lady,” but he told him that he was not the person for that request and pointed him to Girdley. Girdley said he laughed off the comment.

The defense countered this testimony again by questioning Girdley about his struggles with substance abuse. Wolff also asked Girdley about why he did not mention those details until 2023 when he was arrested for unrelated reasons, despite being interviewed by investigators in 2015 and 2016.

Girdley said he did not want to get in trouble for something he was not involved in.

Cell phone records show movement of Lawson’s phone night of disappearance

Following a series of witnesses who had known Lawson personally, two witnesses in law enforcement discussed cell phone records linked to Lawson.

Tim O’Daniel, a detective with the Louisville Metro Police Digital Forensics Unit, said the Kentucky State Police approached him in 2022 to analyze information from Lawson’s cell phone.

His analysis found that on the night of July 3, Lawson’s device traveled toward the area where Rogers’ car was found before traveling back in the opposite direction.

The analysis, however, cannot “specifically pinpoint where a device is” — only the general area, O’Daniel said.

Melissa Dover, a crime and intelligence analyst with the Elizabethtown Police Department, testified about a report she prepared about calls exchanged between Steven, Joseph and Tammy Lawson that night. Several calls were exchanged between the three phones, Dover said.

Her report also found that a call between Houck and Lawson a few days later on July 9 was deleted, though precisely when is unclear.

Contact reporter Killian Baarlaer at kbaarlaer@gannett.com or @bkillian72 on X.

Obituaries



Emmett E. Probus, Jr.

LOUISVILLE - Emmett E. Probus Jr., 88, of Louisville Passed away May 23, 2025.

He was a local business owner for many years and a long-time member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church.

He was predeceased by his wife Jean Hall Probus. He is survived by his son David E. Probus, daughter Carol R. Probus and one grandchild.

Funeral Mass will be Noon Monday June 2, 2025, at Our Lady of Lourdes Church with burial to follow at Calvary Cemetery. Visitation is from 1-5 pm Sunday June 1, 2025, at Ratterman Funeral Home, 3711 Lexington Road, St. Matthews.



Tariffs

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second-term economic plan. The president has imposed steep levies on goods from foreign countries, igniting international furor and disrupting the global economy.

The president has claimed broad authority to set tariffs under IEEPA, which is meant to address “unusual and extraordinary” threats during a national emergency.

The law has historically been used to impose sanctions on enemies of the United States or freeze their assets. Trump is the first U.S. president to use it to impose tariffs.

When Trump announced large reciprocal tariffs on a slew of nations in April, he called the trade deficit a national emergency that justified his 10% across-the-board tariff on all imports, plus higher rates for countries with which the United States has the largest trade deficits, particularly China.

He later paused most of the levies while he negotiated trade deals.

The trade court ruling came in a pair of lawsuits,

one filed by the nonpartisan Liberty Justice Center on behalf of five small U.S. businesses that import goods from countries targeted by the duties and the other by 13 U.S. states.

The companies, which include a New York wine and spirits importer and a Virginia-based maker of educational kits and musical instruments, have said that the tariffs will hurt their ability to do business.

The Justice Department has said the lawsuits should be dismissed because the plaintiffs have not been harmed by tariffs that they have not yet paid, and because only Congress, not private businesses, can challenge a national emergency declared by the president under IEEPA.

“It is not for unelected judges to decide how to properly address a national emergency,” White House spokesperson Kush Desai said in a statement. “President Trump pledged to put America First, and the Administration is committed to using every lever of executive power to address this crisis and restore American Greatness.”

White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller wrote on social media in response to the ruling that “the judicial coup is out of control.”

Contributing: Reuters