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# THE TIMES

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LIZZIE KABOSKI PHOTOS, THE TIMES

Indiana State Police Maj. Jerry Williams, left, hugs his son, Jerry Williams III, at a campaign kickoff event Saturday morning at Lloyd McBride Hall in Gary to announce the major's campaign for Lake County Sheriff.

## Young wins Senate approval for policies

Important bill will help advance fusion energy

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The U.S. Senate has overwhelmingly endorsed a proposal, championed by U.S. Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., that opens the door to a potential new energy source that produces no greenhouse gases or radioactive waste.

The Fusion Energy Act, co-sponsored by Young, codifies the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) regulatory authority over commercial fusion energy systems to streamline the creation of clear federal regulations that support the development of commercial production facilities.

Fusion energy has the potential to produce abundant clean electricity without harmful by-products by mimicking the way the Sun generates energy.

Though there currently are no fusion reactors consistently generating power that exceeds the reactors' energy inputs.

Nevertheless, Young is optimistic a tailored NRC regulatory framework geared toward supporting the growth of the emerging commercial fusion energy sector will help spur innovative developments in fusion energy generation.

"I am pleased the Senate passed this important bill to help advance fusion energy, which has the potential to usher in a new era of energy production in America," Young said.

"By establishing a clear regulatory framework, our legislation would improve the research and development of fusion capabilities, enabling commercialization and reaffirming American leadership in innovation and technology."

The legislation also requires the NRC to study and report to Congress within one year options for licensing commercial fusion machines, including streamlining considerations.

It was approved 88-2 in the Senate as part of the Fire Grants and Safety Act, after previously passing the House, 393-13.

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# 'Jerry's not a politician, he's a people person'

ISP Major Williams announces candidacy for Lake County Sheriff

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GARY — Experience. Integrity. Transparency. These are the three fundamental values that Indiana State Police Maj. Jerry Williams' said encompass his upcoming campaign for Lake County Sheriff — and after 34 years of work in law enforcement, he hopes they will convince voters to launch him into the county's top law enforcement position in 2026.

"We, together, can fight crime in Lake County from the most urban environment to the most rural environment," Williams said, met with whoops and cheers from a crowd of supporters.

Williams announced his candidacy for the role of Lake County Sheriff at an event at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Lloyd McBride Steelworkers' Hall in Gary. He was joined by campaign manager Erin Overly-Graham, campaign treasurer



Supporters applaud as Indiana State Police Maj. Jerry Williams announced his campaign for the county's top law enforcement office Saturday morning at the Lloyd McBride Hall in Gary.

Michael Gonzalez, his family, local politicians, law enforcement, attorneys and community members to initiate his campaign. Despite more than two years until the election, Williams said he felt it was necessary to start early to mobilize his campaign efforts deep into each of Lake County's diverse communities.

"I want to show people, who is the person behind those three core values," Williams said. "Who is telling Lake County's story?"

### The man behind the uniform

ISP Sgt. Glen Fifield told the crowd Williams began his career as a correctional officer with the sheriff's department before he worked for the state police. He was a community-oriented police officer, gaming officer, served on the FBI's Gang Response Investigative Task Force and took on roles in numerous divisions within state police, including the Lowell post's district commander. Most recently,

he pioneered an 18-month-long partnership between the Gary Police Department and Indiana State Police to re-evaluate the department's operating policies and procedures. He served as the department's interim chief for approximately six of those months.

He currently serves as assistant chief of logistics for state police. His responsibilities include managing approximately \$3 million in assets for ISP, leading 13 state police posts, overseeing the vehicle fleet and taking charge on the construction of new facilities, including the Lowell post's \$30 million project completed in October, Fifield said.

Williams is a Gary native who has lived in the Region his whole life. Former Mayor Jerome A. Prince awarded Williams with a Key to the City in December, two months after Gov. Eric Holcomb honored him with the Governor's Public Service Achievement award.

"I know his love and passion is for the people of this entire county," Fifield said.

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# Israeli strikes kill 39 in Gaza

WAFAA SHURFA AND JACK JEFFERY  
Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli strikes across northern Gaza killed at least 39 people Saturday and sent rescue workers scrambling to find survivors in the rubble, according to Palestinian and hospital officials.

Fadel Naem, director of the al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, told The Associated Press that more than three dozen bodies arrived at the hospital. The Palestinian Civil Defense, an emer-

gency group active in Gaza, said its emergency workers dug for survivors at the site of a strike in the Shati refugee camp west of Gaza City and pulled several dozen bodies from a building hit by an Israeli strike in an eastern neighborhood of Gaza City.

Israel said Saturday that its fighter jets struck two Hamas military sites in the Gaza City area but did not elaborate further.

The deaths came a day after at least 25 people were killed in

strikes on tent camps and 50 wounded near the southern city of Rafah. Israel said Saturday that it continued to operate in central and southern Gaza and pushed ahead with its invasion

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HUSSEIN MALLA, ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Fires and black smoke rise Saturday from the northern Israeli border town of Metula, which was hit by Hezbollah shelling, as seen from the town of Marjayoun, Lebanon.



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NASSER NASSER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Palestinian mourners chant slogans Saturday while they carry the body of Mohammad Hoshiya, 12, during his funeral in the West Bank village of Qatana, southwest of Ramallah.

### Gaza

From A1

of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from fighting elsewhere.

Most now fled the city, but the United Nations says no place in Gaza is safe and humanitarian conditions are dire as families shelter in tents and cramped apartments without adequate food, water or medical supplies.

A separate Israeli strike Saturday in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley killed a member of the military wing of al-Jamaa al-Islamiya, or the Islamic Group, a Sunni Muslim faction closely allied with Hamas, according to the group. The member was the seventh killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon since the war began.

The Israel-Hamas war erupted Oct. 7 when Hamas militants stormed southern Israel; about 1,200 people were killed and militants took about 250 hostages.

Israel responded by bombarding and invading the enclave, killing more than 37,400 Palestinians there, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The agency does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count.

Also Saturday, Israel's army said an Israeli man was fatally shot in the northern West Bank town of Qalqilya, where Israeli forces fatally shot two militants Friday, after violence flared in the territory since the Israel-Hamas war erupted.

And the Palestinian Health Ministry said a 12-year-old Palestinian boy died from his wounds after being shot a little over a week ago by Israeli forces in Ramallah.

Commenting on the shooting, the Israeli army said its forces raided al-Amari refugee camp near Ramallah to arrest a suspect and then opened fire on a group of Palestinians who pelted them with stones.

At least 549 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli fire since the war began, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry, which tracks the killings. Over the same period, Palestinians in the West Bank have killed at least nine Israelis, including five soldiers, according to U.N. data.

Israeli nationals are prohibited from entering Qalqilya and other areas of the West Bank that fall under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

In April, the death of a 14-year-old Israeli settler sparked a series

of settler attacks on Palestinian towns in the territory. The army said a Palestinian later was arrested in connection with the killing.

In a separate incident, Israel said Saturday it was investigating the conduct of its soldiers after a video surfaced online showing an injured Palestinian being transported on the hood of an Israeli armored car in the northern West Bank.

The army said the man in the video was a wanted suspect and injured during an exchange of fire between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces near the city of Jenin. The man was being transported to a Red Crescent ambulance nearby, it said. The army said the conduct in the video didn't "conform to the values" of the army.

Anger across the country is growing at the government's handling of the war in Gaza and the hostage crisis.

On Saturday, tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Tel Aviv calling for new elections and for the government to bring the remaining hostages home. Among the families were the parents of Naama Levy, an Israeli soldier who marked her 20th birthday in captivity.



LEO CORREA, ASSOCIATED PRESS

People protest against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government Saturday in Tel Aviv, Israel, and call for the release of hostages held in the Gaza Strip by the Hamas militant group.

### Fusion

From A1

Every Indiana lawmaker, including Northwest Indiana U.S. Rep. Frank J. Mrvan, D-Highland, supported the measure, except for the three who missed the vote: U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, the Republican nominee for Indiana governor; U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate; and U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, D-Indianapolis.

Democratic President Joe Biden soon is expected to sign the proposal into law.



JOHN J. WATKINS, FILE, THE TIMES

Senate-approved legislation backed by U.S. Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., opens the door to a potential new energy source that produces no greenhouse gases or radioactive waste.



LIZZIE KABOSKI PHOTOS, THE TIMES

Indiana State Police Maj. Jerry Williams speaks at a campaign kickoff event Saturday morning at the Lloyd McBride Hall in Gary.

### Williams

From A1

Williams said he understands the multitude of communities in Lake County have varying needs when it comes to public safety and he is determined to address each of them. He touted a "tough on crime" approach, his hope to establish connections with youth in schools and have frequent communication with constituents to figure out local needs, he said.

"Don't try and fabricate broad strokes and think that one public safety solution works for everybody," Williams said. "When I tell you we're going to be tough on crime, we will be tough on crime."

### A bleak history

The role of Lake County sheriff is not without scrutiny.

Two individuals who have held the role have faced public scandals of corruption. Former Sheriff John Buncich, who served as sheriff from 1995 to 2002 and again from 2011 until his 2017 convictions, was found guilty of accepting thousands of dollars in bribes from towing companies in exchange for lucrative towing contracts with Lake County. In the 1980s, former Sheriff Rudy Bartolomei was indicted on 15 bribery-related counts and pleaded guilty to two of them.

Sheriff Oscar Martinez Jr., who was appointed by a democratic caucus in 2017 and reelected in 2022, was indicted in January 2022 on felony charge of resisting law enforcement and a misdemeanor charge of reckless driving. He pleaded guilty to reckless driving in January. The felony charge was dropped. Martinez's term will be up in 2026.

Williams is also not the first to announce his candidacy for the 2026 race. St. John police Chief Steven Flores told The Times in January that he would also be running for the role. Flores said he hopes to "work collaboratively to reach across all of Lake County to build upon the successes of the police departments."

Williams said he's not phased by the position's history. He said he will "let that be" and move forward with the hope that if he is elected, he can contribute positively to the role.

"I'm not afraid of it at all," Williams said. "The truth of the matter is, there is a lot of good work being done at the sher-

iff's department. There are a lot of good people going to work there everyday who are very dedicated."

### "Not a politician, he's a people person"

Many of Williams' supporters shared similar sentiments about him: a "people person," who is mission-driven and understands how to "utilize resources to protect the community."

"Jerry's not a politician, he's a people person," said Mark Sain, vice president of United Steelworkers Local 1014. "Jerry is what we need in Lake County. He's the guy that's going to make a change."

"But, he can't make a change by himself. We got to get behind Jerry and give him all our support," Sain said.

Former Sheriff Roy Dominguez said Williams has a reputation of being honest and hard-working with integrity. He said he initially didn't intend to get involved in the upcoming elections, but wanted to support Williams because he believes he would serve the role well.

"[Lake County] needs someone who will increase morale and utilize resources to protect the community," he said. "He's a humble fellow. He knows the job he does affects all of us today and tomorrow."

ISP First Sgt. William H. Jones III said Williams served as his supervisor during Williams' time as Lowell post commander. He said he believes Williams is an excellent candidate for sheriff because he is very mission-driven and could create a culture of care within the workplace, as Jones said he has done at ISP.

"He is family-oriented to the point where he wants his employees to treat each other like family," Jones said. "Having that type of investment is what you got to do to make sure your guys get home to their families at the end of every day."

For Williams, family and work really do overlap. Three of his sons work in public service; two are state troopers. One of his sons, Jerry Williams III, spoke at the campaign kickoff event right before his father.

"My dad...he would never say the words goodbye. He would always say, 'be good people,'" Williams III said. "It was extremely clear what he meant: just be a good person. My father is a good person."

More information is available at [jerrywilliamsforsheriff.com](http://jerrywilliamsforsheriff.com).



ISP Maj. Jerry Williams poses with supporters at an event Saturday morning at Lloyd McBride Hall in Gary to announce his campaign for Lake County Sheriff.

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