

Pence group to run ads in Iowa against school trans policies

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DES MOINES — Former Vice President Mike Pence is stepping up his outreach in Iowa ahead of a possible 2024 presidential campaign by rallying conservatives against transgender-affirming policies in schools, like one adopted in an eastern Iowa district last year.

The effort by Advancing American Freedom, a group formed by Pence in 2021 and financed by his supporters, will include digital ads, rallies, canvassing and perhaps radio and television spots. It comes as a federal court in Minnesota is scheduled next week to hear a case brought by a group representing parents of students in Linn-Mar Community School District outside Cedar Rapids.

“The strength of our nation is tied to the strength of our families, and we cannot stand idly by as the radical left attempts to indoctrinate our children behind parents’ backs,” Pence said in a statement provided to The Associated Press. “Advancing American Freedom will not rest until parental rights are restored in Iowa and across the nation.”

The Linn-Mar board last



Former Vice President Mike Pence walks through the Varied Industries Building during a visit to the Iowa State Fair on Aug. 19 in Des Moines. Pence is stepping up his outreach in Iowa ahead of a possible 2024 presidential campaign.

AP PHOTO

year adopted a policy allowing students to request a gender support plan to begin socially transitioning at school and without the permission of their parents. The group representing the parents is suing to overturn the policy.

The planned budget for the effort is more than \$1 million, and the push is expected to last several months, said a Pence aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of a formal announcement later

Thursday.

The moves by the outside group — separate from any potential Pence candidacy — comes as school policy, notably involving gender identification and sexual orientation, has become an early focus of 2024 Republican presidential prospects.

The issue is particularly relevant in Iowa, given both the court case and the Republican-controlled Legislature advancing legislation barring schools from sup-

porting a student’s social

change in gender identity. Pence’s outreach comes before a trip to the early-voting state to headline an event next Wednesday in Cedar Rapids. Nikki Haley, the former South Carolina governor and United Nations ambassador, is planning to campaign across Iowa after announcing her 2024 campaign, while South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson are expected to visit Iowa later in the month.

Ukraine

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“Oh, man, I don’t know how to do the Medicaid paperwork. I don’t know how to do the U.S. government forms — I don’t know. Then we heard about the Marshalltown United for Ukraine, went to a meeting, and we heard about how CAPS, the Child Abuse Prevention Services, was helping.”

“That gave us the courage to go into their profile,” Alan Talbert said. “And we connected pretty quick.”

Having already hosted MCC exchange students and another Marshalltown family after the 2018 tornado, the Talberts were no stranger to opening their home for others and were honest in what they had to offer.

“We knew from those experiences that having that common ground of some values would be really important with living and sharing a house,” Bethany Talbert said. “We did make our faith pretty central in what we wrote. We tried really hard to accurately describe Marshalltown as having a lot of diversity, and a lot of poverty too, because we wanted them to know what they were getting into. We didn’t want to oversell. There is a limit to what we had. The reason why we weren’t putting them in another house was because we don’t have the funds to do that, but we could share what we had.”

On Sept. 23, the Talberts connected with the Reznik family, who hailed from the city of Vinnytsia, located in west-central Ukraine with a population of approximately 370,834 before the war.

They began communicating with Oleksandr, or Sasha for short, and his wife Olya Reznik, who were seeking a sponsor in the U.S. with Sasha’s mother Halyna, and their four boys Arsenni, Tymur, Mark, and Viacheslav in tow.

Sasha and his family, speaking through a translator, described their fruitless efforts to communicate with American families before the

Talberts, often being stonewalled when they would try to communicate in their native language.

But the Talberts were never dissuaded by the language barrier, and with uncharacteristic speed of the sponsorship process, a month later, the Rezniks were on their way to Iowa.

Since the Rezniks arrived in Marshalltown, organizations and individuals from across the community have stepped in to help get them onto their feet and establish their new life in the United States.

The First Presbyterian Church purchased and donated a van large enough to transport the entire family around the area.

The mosaic church acquired plane tickets for the family to travel to the United States and meals to eat, defraying costs the Rezniks would have otherwise had to pay with their limited funds.

Terry and Aaron Buzbee found employment for Sasha, an interior carpenter, and Olya at Zen’s Pizza and Wayward Social, respectively, and the House of Compassion gave the family bunk beds for their four boys. 2nd Chance on 3rd donated clothes to the family, who was only able to bring a single suitcase on their journey.

When December and the holiday season rolled around, Bethel Grove Church donated Christmas gift after Christmas gift for the family as they found their footing halfway across the world from their home.

The Black Tire Bike Co. and the Iowa Valley Bicycle Club gave each of the boys a new bike for their new home, and the Salvation Army provided food and vouchers.

The widespread support is not lost on the Reznik family, whose gratitude was palpable when speaking about their newfound community in Iowa, and who have already begun to give back themselves, with Halyna volunteering each week at 2nd Chance

on 3rd and Sasha volunteering at the House of Compassion.

The Rezniks consider themselves incredibly blessed to have found a sponsor so quickly and a wider community which has embraced them, attributing much of their good fortune to the divine and God’s grace. As Sasha said, it was hard for him to believe so many in the community would be so welcoming.

When they visit their Orthodox Christian Church in Ames and speak with other Ukrainians in Iowa, they find themselves as notable outliers who were able to leave the war torn country so quickly and find refuge for their family in the U.S.

Looking ahead, the Rezniks and Talberts alike both indicated their desires for American lawmakers to make changes in the status of Ukrainians fleeing from the active warzone who have come to the U.S.

Currently, the displaced Ukrainians are considered to be on “Humanitarian Parole,” which allows a foreign national, who is otherwise inadmissible, to temporarily enter the United States and stay for up to two years due to an emergency and urgent humanitarian reason.

The families hope U.S. citizens can press their local lawmakers to enact these changes in the status of Ukrainians and allow the families to stay in their new home perma-

nently.

For the Reznik family, and many others in a similar position, returning to Ukraine presents a much less hopeful future, as the country will take decades to rebuild to its former state, if at all.

In the U.S., they see more opportunity, and ensured safety, for their growing family, and in Marshalltown, they have found an embracing community to help them start their new life.

For more information about Marshalltown United for Ukraine, and additional ways to help, see their Facebook page www.facebook.com/MarshalltownUnited or contact Kathy Duncan via email at kathyduncan1958@gmail.com. Interested parties can also visit <https://forms.gle/NWBMnArs3v9bghxZ9> and identify in which areas in which they can help.

Financial donations to Marshalltown United for Ukraine can be made to the “Community Foundation — United for Ukraine” and mailed to the Community Foundation, att: Julie Hitchens, 709 S. Center St., Suite 131, Marshalltown, IA 50158 or online at www.desmoines.org/marshalltownunited-forukrainefund. All money collected goes directly to caring for these families’ needs until they become self-sufficient.

Contact Nick Baur at 641-753-6611 or nbaur@timesrepublican.com.

Fraud

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if a potential scammer attempts to press someone into an immediate payment.

“If it’s that good of a deal and if it’s that good of a business and they want your business, they’re gonna honor those things and

respect the fact that you want to vet it out,” Thein said. “Everybody works hard for their money, but make sure you know where it’s going.”

Iowans with information about insurance fraud are encouraged to contact the Iowa Insurance Division’s Fraud Bureau at 515-654-6556.

Pork

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Tama County Swine royalty announced included Tama County Pork Queen Lily Bru; Tama County Pork Princess Skylar Murty and Pork Ambassadors Jay Bru and Owen Koester. These young people will attend grilling events, ride in parades and assist the Pork Producers in promoting pork and the industry.

The Youth Swine Committee recognized the Youth Swine Exhibitors who met all requirements to receive the bonus money. Criteria required included attending the Swine Workshop, Showing the pigs at the fair, attending Swine Carcass Meeting after the fair, turning in a completed record book and attending the Pork Producers Banquet. Individuals recognized included: Jayden Beichley, Jay Bru, Lily Bru, Faith Dvorak, Grace Dvorak, Hope Dvorak, Mason Hosek, Ryan Hosek Owen Koester, Ryan Koester, Rhianna Murty, and Skyler Murty.

The 2022 Scholarship Recipient was Thomas Hulme. He is attending Hawkeye Community College. He will receive his scholarship money following the completion of one year of college. The 2021 Scholarship Recipients Frances Jackson and Dylan Hosek were awarded their scholarship money. Frances is attending Iowa State and Dylan

is attending Morningside College. Both are taking Ag related classes.

Thomas Hulme, Clayton Boldt, and Carter Kemp spoke about the Florida Ag Trip they attended in March of 2022.

Jarrod Sutton, former Chief Strategy Officer at the National Pork Board, spoke about bridging the gap between farmers and the consumers.

“Farmers need to continue to share their story, especially on social media. Forty percent of the United States population lives in a coastal county. If farmers can reach those viewers and tell them the story, there is an opportunity to change people’s beliefs,” he said.

Guest Speaker Eric Keller told how he was a shy child growing up and that 4-H presentations pushed him outside of his comfort zone. After his first presentation in front of his 4-H group, his leaders pushed him to deliver the presentation at the Tama county Fair. He placed first and was awarded the opportunity to present at the Iowa State Fair. This inspired him to pay it forward by becoming a 4-H leader.

The meeting concluded with the annual pie contest and auction.

Special recognition goes to Megan Gienger who took all the Pork Producers Banquet pictures and for compiling information used for the article.



InBrief

Times-Republican

Conservation Board to meet in regular session

The Marshall County Conservation Board will

meet at 5 p.m. on Feb. 13 at the Grimes Farm and Conservation Center, 2349 233rd St., Marshalltown. Agenda item: approval of claims and approval of hiring new Naturalist. This meeting is open to the public.

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