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# The Gainesville Iguana

June/July 2024 - vol. 38, issue 6/7

‘a soapbox for Alachua County activists’

## Student activism over Gaza

*Since October, university students have been escalating campaigns for divestment from genocide, many culminating with encampments springing up nationwide*

*by Aron Ali-McClory, National Co-Chair of the Young Democratic Socialists of America*

“Intifada, Intifada — Globalize the Intifada!” is a chant which has been heard across the country since October, when student protestors first rose up across the country to demand an end to the genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza, part of the broader *Nakba* (lit. The Catastrophe) which has been perpetrated against Palestinians since 1948. While the chant might be alienating to many, the word originated in the Palestinian context to describe mass student protests in the early 1990s, while in the Arabic language the word *intifada* (lit. shaking off) it used simply to describe resistance against oppression.

Why is this significant? Because increasingly, Palestinian-led groups are describing the recent wave of campus uprisings as an extension of their global resistance, referring to the U.S. protests as the ‘student intifada’. Only in one instance before — the divestment movement against South Africa in the 1980s — has the

*See ACTIVISM, p. 28*



*At San Francisco State University, students engage in “open bargaining” with administration. Photo by Keith Brower Brown, SFSU student.*

## Vote to save our Gainesville Regional Utilities

*by Robert “Hutch” Hutchinson*

What is it about Gainesville Regional Utilities that makes it worth fighting over? Every decade or so, GRU faces a new existential crisis, yet our community has frequently played an outsized role in national utility policy as a result of decisions made in our little petri dish.

Gainesville’s utilities became “owned by the people it serves” over a hundred years ago when the private electric util-

ity turned off the power to the streetlights over a billing dispute — so the City took over. Gainesville’s willingness to entice the University of Florida with free water in perpetuity is credited with swaying the decision to locate UF here. In the 1960s, little old Gainesville won Supreme Court cases against Florida’s investor-owned utilities which required these large private companies to inter-connect their lines with the smaller public utilities — forever changing the reliability and the marketing of

electricity across the nation’s electric grid.

In the 1970s, GRU built a large coal-fired power plant (Deerhaven 2) over the objections of local environmentalists; the ensuing legal fight resulted in a settlement requiring the utility to invest in energy conservation that changed the energy profile of Gainesville — we still have the lowest energy consumption per capita in the state as a result. The newly inter-

*See GRU, p. 24*



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# Ken Burns: the importance of voting in November

*Honorary degree recipient Ken Burns delivered the Undergraduate Commencement speech at Brandeis University's 73rd Commencement Exercises on May 19. Below is an excerpt from that speech. The full speech can be found at [www.brandeis.edu/commencement/2024/burns.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/commencement/2024/burns.html).*

I have had the privilege for nearly half a century of making films about the U.S., but I have also made films about us. That is to say the two letter, lowercase, plural pronoun. All of the intimacy of “us” and also “we” and “our” and all of the majesty, complexity, contradiction, and even controversy of the U.S. And if I have learned anything over those years, it’s that there’s only us. There is no them. And whenever someone suggests to you, whomever it may be in your life that there’s a them, run away. Othering is the simplistic binary way to make and identify enemies, but it is also the surest way to your own self imprisonment, which brings me to a moment I’ve dreaded and forces me to suspend my longstanding attempt at neutrality.

There is no real choice this November. There is only the perpetuation, however flawed and feeble you might perceive it, of our fragile 249-year-old experiment or the entropy that will engulf and destroy us if we take the other route. When, as Mercy Otis Warren would say, “The checks of conscience are thrown aside and a deformed picture of the soul is revealed.” The presumptive Republican nominee is the opioid of all opioids, an easy cure for what some believe is the solution to our myriad pains and problems. When in fact with him, you end up re-enslaved with an even bigger problem, a worse affliction and addiction, “a bigger delusion,” James Baldwin would say, the author and finisher of our national existence, our national suicide as Mr. Lincoln prophesies. Do not be seduced by easy equalization. There is nothing equal about this equation. We are at an existential crossroads in our political and civic lives. This is a choice that could not be clearer. ✨

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### ***The Iguana mission:***

*We believe in advocacy journalism and strive to deliver grassroots progressive news written by those on the ground. We aim to engage readers, get them thinking critically, and ultimately join the activists who fill our pages in the fight for a more just, equitable world. We’re also a community calendar, promoting cultural events, because we believe having fun and enriching the heart and soul are as important as engaging the mind when it comes to community building and solidarity.*

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*From the publisher ...*

# 1968 state of mind

Some say, as a counterpoint to the oft-heard cliché, that “history doesn't always repeat itself, but at times it does rhyme.”

I just read a book that took me back to those times of dynamic change, Doris Kearns Goodwin's “An Unfinished Love Story.” It is a book with first hand observations about trying to bring the idealism of the 60's into reality through the core of young speech writers and advisors to JFK, LBJ and RFK in the period from 1959 to 1968.

The central source was the archives of her husband and life partner Dick Goodwin. I was a teenager watching the world with increasing interest and concern back then. I'd seen a president assassinated right before I turned 13, a younger guy with new ideas like the Peace Corp, and a vibrant spirit. Things seemed to be changing but I wasn't really seeing HOW this was happening. The why seemed obvious ... it was overdue! Blatant racism and voting rights denial were front page in the prior ten years, they were the scenes I grew up with. Goodwin's book filled in so many gaps for me; I highly recommend it. The major takeaways were the important role advisors and speech writers had (and have), and the difficult dynamics of an unpopular war overwhelming the ability of a president to stay in office, however much good they were trying to do. This was especially shown in the dynamics of the campaign for the 1968 presidential election.



*Joe Courter*

The Johnson administration in 1966 had the blame for the Viet Nam war overshadow all the good his JFK-inspired "Great Society" legislation was doing. (“Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids you kill today.”) The pictures and reality of the war became THE story. LBJ saw this, and in early 1968 he announced he would not run for re-election, leading to a contested primary for the Democratic nomination, the issue of ending the war in the forefront. Bobby Kennedy's assassination in May 1968 and the police riot that subsumed the 1968 Chicago convention followed. The pro-peace impetus was lost, Humphrey got the nomination, and out of that turmoil we got Nixon, and the meat grinder of the Viet Nam war continued another six years.

Now we have another President facing the horrible pictures and reality of another war, even as he is doing a lot of good things, and a younger generation and allies recoiling in horror, and hanging it around his neck. The shocking photos of the My Lai massacre of '68 horrified many back then. Now with Gaza, almost every day shows similar horrors. Chants of “Genocide Joe” are heard. There was the appropriate response of voting “uncommitted” during the primaries as a means of sending a message. Was that message heard? How will this play out at the Democratic convention? (Which, by the way, is again in Chicago.)

As I write this, it is five months from the November election. Lots of things may change, so there isn't a point to locking into hard positions or surrendering to hopelessness. It is now official that Trump is a convicted felon, with sentencing and endless appeals in the offing. It's freakin' ugly, and averting your eyes is understandable, but Nov. 5 will come, and what needs to be done then will become clear for the sake of this teetering representative democracy we share.

Getting back to where we started, two points to leave you with:

Who a president has around them is profoundly important and should be a very strong consideration when voting. Biden, for all his flaws, was made better by Bernie Sanders and other in his circles of influence, much like JFK, LBJ and RFK were. It is not, and should not be, a one-person job. True then, true now.

Second, it was those young people, many in their 20's, those idealists under JFK and LBJ who brought some of the visions of the Declaration of Independence into reality in the 60s: civil rights, voting rights, housing rights, education funding. These achievements are now all under threat and in play with the current Republican Party, should they consolidate their power. Heck, they are trying to do it right now!

We can't let that legacy be cast aside. We are the ultimate jury. It is up to us to render a verdict on Trump and on MAGA reactionary authoritarian madness. We need to organize and use the franchise that people have fought and died for: our vote! 🐘

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*The Gainesville Iguana* is Alachua County's independent progressive newsletter.

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# How tens of thousands of grad school workers are organizing themselves

by Valentina Luketa

It's the biggest organizing wave the U.S. labor movement has seen in decades. Graduate workers are unionizing in huge numbers, winning drive after drive with 90 percent support or more.

What's more, the workers are in the driver's seat of these campaigns, with little help from union staff.

Most union organizing these days relies on a staff-heavy approach that's tough to scale up. But the grad worker upsurge offers a sketch of a worker-led model that could help reverse labor's decline.

The United Electrical Workers (UE) alone has organized close to 30,000 graduate workers over the past year and a half. We've

won elections at eight major universities, including MIT and the University of Minnesota. Workers at other universities have voted to unionize with UNITE HERE, the United Auto Workers, and other unions.

At some campuses, grad workers have signed up 1,000 co-workers into the union in a single day and reached majorities on "vote yes" petitions within weeks.

Such massive mobilizations wouldn't be possible if they relied mainly on union staff. We couldn't move this fast if union staff had to talk with every worker, or even if a staffer had to train and debrief every worker doing outreach to others.

Instead, we're training workers up on organizing methods, tapping into their knowledge of their own workplaces and co-workers ... and then letting the organizing snowball, as workers train others who train others, and the campaign takes on a life of its own.

This isn't how UE or other unions typically organize. But the grad upsurge demanded a new way of doing things. We had to release the reins to catch up to how fast the workers were going.

The relationship between union staff and rank-and-file workers has changed.

Staff became educators and facilitators, guiding workers through the challenges of new organizing. Workers now develop their leadership skills by training other organizing committees, growing a national movement.

The roots of this strategy reach deep into our union's past, when UE leaders first built their union in electrical and machine shops without the help of outside staff. In other words, this capacity isn't unique to graduate workers. We believe this worker-led model can be tried in other workplaces too.

## HANDED LEADERS THE REINS

The graduate workers have built large organizing committees of hundreds on each campus, where workers taught each other organizing skills and helped each other develop into leaders.

Our goal: Turn every supporter into a leader, and every leader into a trainer. Organizing tasks that might traditionally be reserved for union staff were transferred to the worker-leaders. For instance, workers built and maintained the organizing databases, in which department organizers registered their notes and assessments.

Data was broadly shared, rather than remaining the domain of a closed group of staff, so that hundreds of worker organizers could use it to track their conversations and develop their department strategies.

We scaled up our organizing with walkthroughs, where workers went in pairs to approach their colleagues in labs and offices around campus — a chance to reach into new departments, build their confidence as organizers, and fine-tune the organizing script all at once.

Rather than hand out the union's answers to frequently asked questions, workers brainstormed the best answers together. This left them much better prepared when new anti-union talking points cropped up in their departments. Using their crowdsourced



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FAQ, workers trained themselves to undermine captive-audience anti-union meetings and turn them against their supervisors.

## NETWORKS ACROSS CAMPUSES

Strategies and materials that worked well were passed from campus to campus.

Many graduate worker drives had failed in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics departments. So after the groundbreaking win at MIT — one of the largest STEM universities in the country — organizers at other campuses borrowed their talking points on why research assistants need a union.

Graduate workers at Northwestern, University of Chicago, and

Johns Hopkins were organizing simultaneously, so they ran joint trainings and exchanged materials.

The grad workers at Stanford, Dartmouth, and Cornell had the benefit of lessons learned from all these prior campaigns. At Stanford they got more than 2,000 union cards signed in a single day.

On each campus, workers adapted and expanded the methods, always evaluating what might not work here — and trusting that they knew their own workplace better than anyone else.

*Valentina Luketa is the UE National Coordinator for Higher Education. This article was originally published by Labor Notes on May 29. See more at [labornotes.org](http://labornotes.org).*

# Amy Trask proposes legislation to protect women's health

by C. Gordon

With Florida's recent acquiescence to the six-week abortion ban, and with elected officials from other red states threatening to "monitor" women's fertility and possible pregnancies, it is not surprising that women's health and reproductive rights are driving progressive voter turnout this election cycle.

It is a welcome surprise that a first-time candidate for public office has, more than two months before the August Primary, proactively crafted legislation that addresses a key part of these abuses.

Amy Trask, candidate for Florida House District 22, has written a bill that remedies potential vulnerabilities to the personal medical data stored in phone apps women use to track their menstrual cycles. The thorough, well-crafted legislation she produced was a project for the Model Senate at Santa Fe College, at which she took top honors. The Model Senate is a three-day event simulating as accurately as possible in the space of three days what goes on in the real U.S. Senate

Trask's bill limits how personal reproductive health data is collected and shared. The bill aims to protect data from period-tracking apps that the federal health care law known as HIPAA does not currently protect.

HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act of 1996, established national standards to protect individuals' medical records and other individually identifiable health information.

Because it was passed in 1996, HIPAA did not include Fem Tech applications, the downloadable phone apps many women use to track their menstrual cycles and/or fertility. At this time such apps have over 200 million downloads and over 60 million users.

Trask's bill includes provisions which would:

- Upgrade information stored in these apps to HIPAA-level protection.
- Charge app developers with the responsibility to comply with all relevant HIPAA regulations regarding handling and storage of the information.
- Provide improved encryption of data.
- Provide enhanced transparency and consent for users, and include geographical opt-outs.

To date, just five states — California, Colorado, Connecticut, Utah and Virginia — have comprehensive data privacy laws that protect this sensitive information. Florida needs this, and can help get it if we elect the candidate who has already penned this legislation.

Amy Trask is a mom, a wife, a passionate advocate, and public servant. She currently works as a Landscape Analyst for Harvard Safra Center for Ethics. She focuses on philosophy and ethics, conflict resolution, and civil disagreement.

Her perspective on our hyper-polarized political environment: "Despite our differing beliefs, there's a fundamental, bipartisan agreement that we all have a stake in each other's well-being."

To learn more about the legislation and about Amy Trask's campaign for Florida House District 22, go to: [VoteAmyTrask.com](http://VoteAmyTrask.com).

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# New student movement: Veterans' perspective

by Nick Smith

Dozens of protests and campus occupations erupted at the end of the 2023-24 spring semester and many are still ongoing in solidarity with the Palestinian people as Israel continues its bombardment of Gaza. Columbia University's students acted as the epicenter of this movement with its students demanding divestment from companies that profit off of the war in Palestine. These demands from protestors are modeled after the Anti-Apartheid movement of the 1980s and the protest tactics resemble the sit-ins of the Anti-Vietnam protests of the 60s.

Scott Camil is a member of Jewish Voices for Peace and a Vietnam War veteran who testified in the Winter Soldier investigation while participating in anti-Vietnam War action. Camil was also a part of the Gainesville Eight — a group of anti-war veterans who were tried and acquitted for charges of conspiracy to disrupt the 1972 Republican National Convention — landing himself on President Nixon's "enemy list" as J. Edgar Hoover penned letters requesting that Camil be "neutralized at earliest possible time."

As a Jewish man who faced anti-Semitism as a child, Camil was not always supportive of the Palestinian people, stating that when people would ask him why he supported Israel he would respond with "Well, I'm Jewish and I know Israel wouldn't do that." His view of Israel's conduct changed in 1989 when he embarked on a fact-finding trip for Veterans for Peace and witnessed the treatment of Palestinians in Jerusalem, Gaza, and Ra-

## The University of Florida Divest Coalition (UFDC)



**Student & community-led Gainesville organizations demand an end to the Gaza genocide, Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine, and UF's complicity in international war crimes.**

### OUR DEMANDS:

- 1. DISCLOSURE:** The University's Investment Portfolio from 2014-2024 and beyond must be publicly accessible.
- 2. STUDENT OVERSIGHT:** Establish a Student Oversight Committee for future investments, ensuring student input and approval.
- 3. TERMINATE PARTNERSHIPS:** Sever ties with weapons, arms, and AI contractors (e.g., Lockheed Martin, RTX/Raytheon, Kratos Defense, and L3Harris) which are directly implicated in human rights violations, including the Gaza Genocide.
- 4. REINVESTMENT:** Funding from weapons manufacturers must be reinvested to grassroots organizations that support and uplift the Gainesville student body and community.
- 5. ACADEMIC BOYCOTT:** Sever all institutional ties with Israeli universities complicit in apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and falsifying historical information.
- 6. SPEAKER POLICY:** Refrain from hosting speakers affiliated with Israeli military or spreading misinformation about the history and occupation of Palestine.

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mallah. Camil specifies the oppression, stating “Israel has apartheid policy. Apartheid is racist. Racism is wrong.”

The apartheid of which Camil speaks can be exemplified by Israel’s policy of “Hafrada,” which seeks to physically separate the Palestinians from the Israelis. This policy was first coined by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the 1990s and continued through the 2000s, most notably in the form of the Israeli-Palestinian barrier. Heavy restrictions have been placed on the movement of Palestinians throughout the West Bank as well as between the West Bank and surrounding areas, often making securing healthcare and necessary resources difficult for Palestinians.

Scott Camil returned from Israel as a supporter of the Palestinians which upset his family, but as a person who had fought unwaveringly for justice in Vietnam, Camil could not ignore the violation of Palestinian rights, stating “It’s okay to hold against people their bad behavior. It’s not okay to hold against people things that they’re not responsible for. ... What if I was born a Palestinian? Then people would hate me just because I’m a Palestinian.”

While protesting the Vietnam War, Camil recognized that his veteran status amplified his arguments, eliminating the possibility of being slandered as somebody who hated his country and would not fight for it. Similarly, he contends that Jewish Americans are in a position to speak out against Israel’s actions without accusations of anti-Semitism. As a member of Jewish Voices for Peace, Scott Camil hopes to disprove the idea that the current anti-war movement is anti-Semitic, citing the massive amount of Jewish people joining in protest. On the contrary, Camil believes that anti-Semitism is being weaponized, stating “When people say they are against Israel, they are not against Israelis, they are not against Jewish people, they are against Israel’s foreign policy.”

As the current student protestors face expulsion, arrest, and many other repercussions for their anti-war action, Scott Camil wants to remind protestors that during the anti-war war movement of the ‘60s and ‘70s, “the government indicted 107 anti-war activists and got no convictions.” Ultimately, Camil wants to deliver this message to the protestors: “I salute them for their courage. I salute them for doing the right thing. I salute them for standing up for human rights.”

Another prominent voice in Gainesville’s anti-war movement is Dr. Paul Ortiz. A veteran who served with the 82nd Airborne Division and the 7th Special Forces group, Ortiz is currently the director of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida. Since his service, Ortiz has written several books, winning the Josephine Miles Literary Award. Ortiz is also an active member of the Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace, giving him a unique voice as a veteran opposed to the United States’ military assistance to Israel.

Ortiz contributes much of Israel’s aggression to the United States. To the assertion that supplying arms to Israel is the act of an ally, Ortiz responds, “If you’re friends with a nation and your main advice to them is to be more armed and erect walls ... I wouldn’t consider you a friend.” Ortiz draws on his experience with the special forces in Central America to conclude that teaching a people to conduct military incursions inevitably results in violence for those people. Thus, Ortiz would have preferred President Jimmy Carter’s approach as laid out in “Peace Not Apartheid.” In his book, Carter places a heavy emphasis on creating and honoring permanent borders between Israel and Palestine, paired with reciprocal security.

Ortiz also finds it important to acknowledge the United States’ strong core of anti-Semitism. At the time that many Europeans immigrated to America, anti-Semitism was a prominent ideology all across Europe. One example of how this anti-Semitism followed Europeans into this country is Henry Ford. Ford founded the “Dearborn Independent” at the height of his power, an openly anti-Semitic newspaper that had a readership of almost 900,000 in the United States. Ford was even mentioned in Adolf Hitler’s “Mein Kampf” as he wrote, “one great man, Ford, to their exasperation, still holds out independently.” Because of this history, Ortiz understands why some supporters of Israel are quick to dismiss pro-Palestinian arguments as anti-Semitic and he believes that the best avenue to solve this is to better educate all sides so that they can better sympathize with and navigate these worries.

Much like Camil, Ortiz’s view on the Israel-Palestine conflict is derived from personal experience. Though he had been aware of the conflicts in the region, the conflict became personal when Ortiz’s father faced deployment to Lebanon. Ortiz’s father was a veteran who had experience servicing diesel engines on ships such as the USS Missouri, so when the United States was contemplating shelling Beirut, he had to tell Ortiz about the possibility of deployment. Ortiz explains that this experience, among many, has brought him to believe that both the U.S. and Israel “should come to realize that military solutions to geopolitical problems just don’t work.”

Ortiz sees today’s student movement as particularly special because, unlike the onset of other American anti-war movements, polls indicate that a majority of Americans favor a cease-fire just as the protestors do. Thus, in Ortiz’s view, instead of a movement aimed at shifting public opinion, this movement should aim to win over policy-makers. Further, Ortiz believes that the call for university divestment should be aimed at the companies that make up the military-industrial complex. Pairing this divestment with political engagement and active voting seems to Ortiz to be the most effective way to reach our politicians. ✨

*Nick Smith is an editor at the St. Bernard, Santa Fe College’s independent newspaper.*



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## ‘Voices and Votes: Democracy in America’ Smithsonian exhibit comes to Gainesville

The exhibition “Voices and Votes: Democracy in America” examines the nearly 250-year-old American experiment of a government “of, by and for the people,” and how each generation since continues to question how to form “a more perfect union.” The Smithsonian exhibit will be on view at the Matheson Museum through Sep. 7. An opening reception will be held on July 20 at 2pm.

An additional exhibition, “Voices and Votes: Democracy in Alachua County,” will be on display from June 26 through early 2025. For more information go to: [mathesonmuseum.org](http://mathesonmuseum.org).

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# Book bans undermine principles of equality, freedom

by Sarah Rockwell

In the ongoing battle for civil rights and social justice, a new front has emerged in Florida: the fight against book bans.

Across the state, a small but vocal group is attempting to control the narrative in our schools, dictating which books children can access and what histories they are taught. These efforts threaten to undermine the principles of equality and freedom that are the bedrock of our society.

The fight against book bans is not just about preserving access to diverse literature; it's about ensuring that our children can learn about the world in all its complexity and diversity. It's about fighting against a regressive agenda that seeks to erase the stories and experiences of marginalized communities from our collective consciousness. As advocates for equality, we cannot allow a handful of people to impose their beliefs on the rest of us, especially when it comes to educating our youth.

The stakes are high. Limiting access to books that tell the stories of LGBTQ+ individuals, people of color, and other marginalized groups not only robs children of the chance to see themselves reflected in literature, but it also deprives all students of the opportunity to develop empathy and understanding for those who are different from them. Education should be about opening minds, not closing them off.

Despite the challenges, we are fighting back. Across Florida, activists, educators, and concerned citizens are coming together to resist these bans and fight for the right to read. Their efforts are making a difference. For instance, the "LGBTQ+ Support Guide for Alachua County Schools" was written with the support of Equality Florida and PFLAG to ensure all students are protected. Similarly, organizations like Alachua County Freedom to Read are standing firm in their commitment to keep diverse books on our shelves. We even have a gay man — Thomas Vu — running for school board. We will keep fighting back because we have so much at stake.

The fight against book bans is not just about the present; it's about the future we want to create for our children. It's about ensuring that they grow up in a world where all stories are valued and all voices are heard. It's about teaching them to think critically and compassionately, to question and to understand.

As we head toward August's and November's elections, there is a clear and urgent need for action. The upcoming elections present a critical opportunity to protect reproductive health care, fight for the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, and challenge the Republican supermajority in our state legislature.

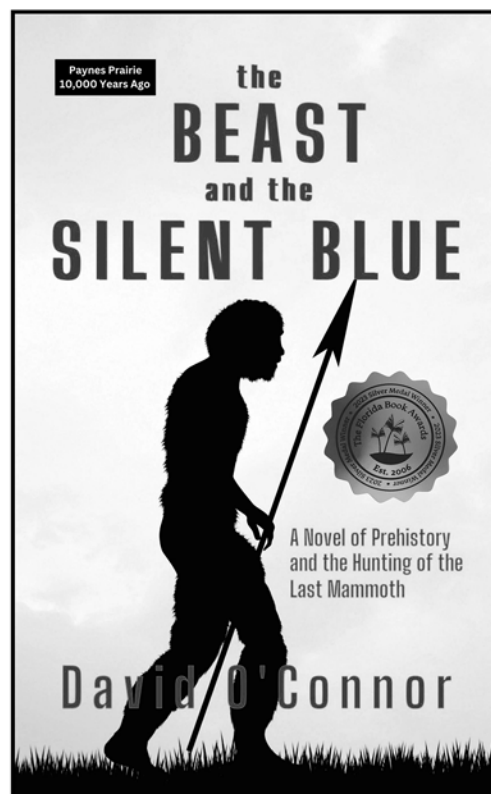
Each of us can make a difference. By committing just 10 hours between now and November to making phone calls, sending texts, or knocking on doors, we can collectively create a powerful force for change.

Let us stand together to oppose these

book bans and work towards a Florida where equality and freedom are not just ideals but realities. Our actions today will shape the world of tomorrow. Let us fight for a future where every child can access books that will allow them to understand themselves and the world around them. The fight is hard, but the cause is just, and together, we can ensure that the right to read is preserved for generations to come.

*Sarah Rockwell is a current member of the Alachua County School Board. She is also a mom, educator, and disability rights advocate with a doctoral degree in Special Education. ✨*

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\*Congratulations to Lauren Groff's *The Vaster Wilds* for winning the gold medal



# Elections preview

There will be a lot of local races on the ballot, this is a preview of what's coming, but incomplete because the filing deadline has not been reached. The Iguana leans pro-Democratic because, well, history ... Other candidates may still file, so that may force some primaries for August. Following are the probable ones for August.

If you are travelling this summer (or just don't want to or can't leave the house), it's important to have an absentee ballot so your voice is heard.

**Sheriff:** The sheriff is now a DeSantis appointed Republican, Emery Gainey. Multiple Democrats are running, we like Chad Scott.

**County Commission:** Mary Alford has a Democratic challenger for County Commission District 1. We like Mary a lot!

**School Board and City Commission:** School Board and City Commission contested races are in August, not November. As of June 1, we like Thomas Vu and Leanetta McNealy for School Board, and James Ingle (in a big way), Cynthia Chestnut and Desmon Walker for City Commission.

**State District 22:** This is a big one on some people's ballot. In that primary we favor Amy Trask as more electable in a tough District (see page 5).

The Alachua County Supervisor of Elections office is really helpful on line or in person. See [votealachua.com](http://votealachua.com) or call 352-374-5252 for more information. 🐉

The Civic Media Center is a reading room, a library of the non-corporate press, and community space.

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# Election dates

## State primary, local non-partisan races

**Jul 22:** Registration deadline

**Aug 5-17:** Early voting

**Aug 8:** Absentee ballot request deadline

**Aug. 20:** Election day

## General election

**Oct. 7:** Registration deadline

**Oct. 21-Nov 2:** Early voting

**Oct. 24:** Absentee ballot request deadline

**Nov. 5:** Election day

See page 16 for League of Women Voters Candidate forum information and dates.

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Volunteers gather for “Yes on 4” training at the Civic Media Center on April 20. Photo by Candi Churchill.

## Alachua County’s ‘Yes on 4’ action, local response to the 6-week abortion ban

by the Gainesville Radical Reproductive Rights Network & Planned Parenthood Generation Action – Santa Fe College Chapter

In response to the Dobbs decision, released in 2022, Floridians Protecting Freedom headlined a petition campaign to gather signatures from Floridians, to place an amendment on the November 2024 general election ballot to enshrine abortion rights into the state constitution.

By the January 2024 state deadline, the campaign submitted over 1.4 million petitions to supervisors of elections across the state, surpassing the required 891,523 validated petitions. On April 1st, the Supreme Court of Florida decided that Amendment 4 will be on the November general election ballot. Amendment 4 reads as follows:

“No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient’s health, as determined by the patient’s healthcare provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature’s constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion.”

Simply put, the government should not interfere with anyone’s right to access health care. Abortion is health care. Those who

believe in an individual’s right to choose should vote Yes on 4 in the November general election. There is still much work to do to ensure that Amendment 4 meets the 60 percent threshold in the election. Please get involved with local Gainesville organizations working on the campaign!

The proposed amendment is a comprehensive measure designed to uphold reproductive rights, ensure women’s, children’s, and all people’s health and safety, and minimize government intrusion into personal medical decisions.

By affirming the right to access abortion services before viability and when necessary for health, the amendment would create a legal environment that respects and protects women’s autonomy and well-being.

Public opinion in Florida regarding abortion is divided but shows significant support for reproductive rights. A recent poll finds that the majority of Floridians support maintaining access to abortion and the government is failing to uphold the demands of their constituents. Specifically, around 65 percent of both Black and White respondents support an amendment that would protect abortion rights before viability.

Support among Hispanic respondents is

slightly lower at 52 percent. Younger voters, especially those aged 18 to 24, show strong support, with over three-quarters favoring the initiative. Women are more supportive than men, with 68 percent of female voters backing the amendment compared to 55 percent of male voters (FL Politics) (Pew Research Center).

While Floridians will have the chance to enshrine abortion access into the state constitution in November, it must be noted that, on the same day that the Florida Supreme court approved the language of Amendment 4, they also upheld the 15-week abortion ban, triggering a 6-week ban, effective May 1, 2024, barring access to essential healthcare for tens of thousands of Floridians.

Florida law requires patients seeking an abortion to wait at least 24 hours after receiving in-person counseling before the procedure can be performed. This law effectively requires two separate trips to a clinic, posing logistical and financial challenges for many patients. Florida law had banned abortions after 15 weeks of gestation, allowing exceptions only in cases where the mother’s life is in danger, the fetus has a fatal abnormality, or there is a serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function.



Given that many patients don't even realize they are pregnant by this time, the recently imposed 6-week ban represents a near-total ban on abortion.

In response to the ban, there have been teach-ins locally, aiming to train individuals on self-managed abortions by destigmatizing common misconceptions and providing important healthcare information to community members.

The Civic Media Center has been instrumental in providing resources and space for activists in the Gainesville area. Additionally, Florida Access Network is committed to providing resources for "reproductive kits" to be distributed locally. These kits contain essentials for reproductive health and self-managed abortions.

Gainesville's abortions clinics, Bread and Roses and All Women's Health Center of Gainesville, are working tirelessly to provide essential healthcare under the recently-imposed ban.

At the statewide level, the Yes on 4 campaign is organizing local "Super Saturday" events to train activists on campaigning and communicating with undecided voters. Each major city across Florida has hosted a training one Saturday each month, focusing on campaign initiatives.

April's Super Saturday focused on best practices in communication about the ballot language, while May's event centered on text-banking and introduced participants to the Reach app.

The next Super Saturday event will take place on June 22 at 10am at The How Bazar in downtown Gainesville. Additionally, starting in June, local businesses will serve as "hubs," where individuals can fill out commit to vote cards for the Yes on 4 campaign.

For those wanting to get involved, there is a local coalition of activists from different Gainesville organizations, such as National Women's Liberation - Gainesville Chapter, the Gainesville Radical Reproductive Rights Network, League of Women Voters of Alachua County, the Santa Fe College and University of Florida chapters of Planned Parenthood Generation Action, and University of Florida chapter of League of Women Voters.

The coalition currently meets alternating Mondays at 6:30pm at Curia on the Drag. The coalition's current goal is to organize canvassing at local events to engage in discussions with Alachua County voters. The coalition also works to coordinate with the Yes on 4 campaign in a local capacity.

Learn more about Amendment 4 from Floridians Protecting Freedom here: <https://www.floridiansprotectingfreedom.com>

View upcoming events in Florida and register for your local or online Super Saturday event here: <https://www.mobilize.us/yes4florida/>

To stay up-to-date or get involved, follow the GRRR! Network at <https://www.instagram.com/thegrrrnetwork>, National Women's Liberation-Gainesville Chapter at <https://www.instagram.com/nwlgainesville>, and Planned Parenthood Generation Action @ Santa Fe College at <https://www.instagram.com/santafeppgenact>

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This project is funded in part by Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, in part by the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council of Arts and Culture and the State of Florida, and in part by a grant from the City of Gainesville, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department.

# Proposed Florida Right to Clean & Healthy Waters State Constitutional Amendment: Let's put the 'Heart' in the springs heartland!

by Lucinda Faulkner Merritt

*This amendment creates an enforceable, fundamental right to clean and healthy waters, authorizing a person to sue for equitable relief when a State executive agency, by action or inaction, allows harm or threat of harm to Florida waters. See more at <https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>*

A quote on Facebook recently caught my eye: "One reason people insist that you use the proper channels to change things is because they have control of the proper channels and they're confident it won't work."

Thinking back on the 10 years I spent working for the Ichetucknee Alliance, during which I also did some work

for the Silver Springs Alliance and helped at the founding of the Florida Springs Council, I can vouch for the truth of that quote.

All of our springs defender groups have been working through proper channels and "fighting the system" (the water management districts, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Legislature) to make the kinds of changes—increased flows and decreased pollution—that we need to save our beloved freshwater springs. But as the Springs Council documents so well in just one example for the Santa Fe River basin, our efforts so far have failed: <https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/santafe>

Part of the reason we have failed is because Floridians have bought into a couple of myths about our water. The first myth is that we have an infinite supply of freshwater. The second myth is that "out of sight, out of mind" is an effective pollution prevention strategy. Neither of those myths is true.

Another reason we have failed is because the decision makers in our state agencies — many of whom have been and are appointed by Florida's governors — find it politically advantageous to ignore enforcement of Florida's water laws.



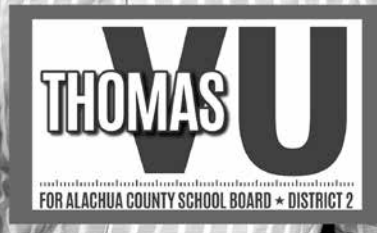
The most important reason we have failed, however, is because our current laws actually *permit* individuals and businesses to damage natural systems in order to profit. Taxpayers are left to pay for restoration projects. We're privatizing profits and socializing losses.

I'm remembering another quote, this one from Buckminster Fuller: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

To save our springs, we need to change the ways we are living with water. We need a new water ethic. We need to

“ I am a math teacher and data nerd who believes decisions about our children and our tax dollars should be transparent and data-driven.

Paid for by Thomas Vu, Non-Partisan Candidate for Alachua County School Board District 2

**CHAD SCOTT FOR Alachua County Sheriff**



Paid for by Chad Scott, Democratic candidate for Alachua County Sheriff



change the water paradigms that have guided us up until now, because those paradigms are not working. We need to change our thinking from “fighting” to “building a new model.” We need to change our strategies to aim for getting what we want instead of just asking for what we think we can get. Instead of *fighting* the existing system, we need to begin *creating* something new that’s based on *love* for our springs and rivers. We need to be working toward what anthropologists call “culture change.”

Changing our culture and our thinking is linked to changing our laws, and the proposed Florida Right to Clean & Healthy Waters (RTCW) state constitutional amendment does that in a profound way — by guaranteeing Floridians a fundamental RIGHT to clean water, a right that’s on a par with the freedoms we are guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. The amendment offers us the *highest possible protections* for our waters and enables us to hold our state agencies accountable for their failures to protect our waterways. This is the kind of Green Amendment that is gaining traction throughout the United States; see: <https://forthegenerations.org/>

In an effort to put a similar amendment on the Florida ballot this year, the RTCW team received about 100,000 signed petitions; however, that number was short of the approximately 900,000 petitions needed. Now, the RTCW team has regrouped, strengthened the petition language, and re-strategized the campaign for the 2026 election cycle.

**If you signed a petition during the 2024 effort, you will need to sign again for 2026.** A new petition is available at: <https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/petition>

Candidates for public office may also register on the RTCW home page (<https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>) for a June 21 training event that will explain more about what the proposed amendment will and will not do. It’s important to understand that the proposed amendment does not allow lawsuits to individuals or

businesses, only to state agencies for their failures to enforce our laws.

Remember that when given the chance to vote yes or no on saving our environment, Floridians have historically voted “yes” by large margins. The RTCW amendment will be a winner if we can gather enough petitions to get the amendment on the ballot.

You can show your love for our springs and rivers — help us put the heart in the Springs Heartland — by volunteering to help as an individual, a business or another kind of organization. Click on the “Support” tab here to see the pull-down list of ways to help: <https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>

Petition campaigns are expensive. You can also help by donating to this effort: <https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/donate>

Independent campaign consultants have told us that our petition-gathering effort has a strong foundation and can be successful. We simply need more people to get involved. You could even create your own team to help out and have fun together at the same time.

As we approach the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, please remember that there’s no economic stability and no life, liberty or

pursuit of happiness without clean water — and the RTCW effort aims to ensure clean water not only for us, for our rivers and springs, but also for our children and grandchildren. 🐾

*“It was miraculous. It was almost no trick at all, he saw, to turn vice into virtue and slander into truth, impotence into abstinence, arrogance into humility, plunder into philanthropy, thievery into honor, blasphemy into wisdom, brutality into patriotism, and sadism into justice. Anybody could do it; it required no brains at all. It merely required no character.”*

~ Joseph Heller, Catch-22

(Heller wrote this in the late 1950s. It was published in 1961.)

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**MARY ALFORD**

FOR ALACHUA COUNTY COMMISSION, DISTRICT 1

Paid for and approved by Mary Alford, Democrat for Alachua County Commission District 1

## University of Florida Performing Arts hosts Live 24/25 Season Preview

University of Florida Performing Arts (UFPA) to host 24|25 Season Preview on Tuesday, July 16, at 7 p.m., at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, 3201 Hull Rd. This event is free and open to the public. Attendees will get a sneak peek of more than 40 performances by Grammy award-winning and world-renowned artists slated for the upcoming season. Director Brian Jose will introduce artists through a presentation in which he shares his excitement about season highlights.

The 24|25 season will include national and international artists that range from classical, jazz, bluegrass and world music, to modern dance, Broadway productions, humor, and circus. 24|25 season performers hail from Mexico, Colombia, India, Spain, Taiwan, Cuba, New Zealand, Australia, England, Italy, Guinea, Iran, Ireland, the Czech Republic, New York, Nashville, Detroit, and more.

The Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, Gainesville's home for Broadway and world-renowned acts announces its 24|25 season July 16. One of the country's leading university performing arts presenters, UF Performing Arts, punches well above its weight bringing world stars to Gainesville's stages. ✨

## League of Women Voters to host two candidate forums

The League of Women Voters of Alachua County (LWVAC), in collaboration with the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida, will be hosting two candidate forums this election season covering primarily the local races.


The forum on June 23 at 1 pm at the Ocora Room at the Graham Center on UF's campus covers the primary races. A general election forum will be held on Sep. 22 on the Santa Fe College Campus, also at 1pm (location TBA).

Candidates for the following offices will answer questions devised by the League: 1) Sheriff; 2) County Commission; 3) School Board; 4) City Commission; and 5) State Representative. Since the qualifying period ends on June 14 at noon, at that time we will know exactly who is on each slate.

LWVAC also hosts a website called Vote411.org that will be up and running in mid-July. This site will have all the information on candidates that voters may want to study, with candidates providing answers to questions posed for each race.

State and Federal races will be handled by the State of Florida League of Women Voters and League of Women Voters US. ✨

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# And the good news is ...

## Abortion ballot measures could lift Dems in U.S. House races, campaign chief says

Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chair Suzan DelBene told reporters Friday that ballot questions on abortion access, which will go before voters in several states this November, can help vulnerable Democratic candidates in

swing districts — potentially increasing the odds the U.S. House flips from red to blue. “We’ve seen huge turnout as a result of that over and over in elections since November of 2022,” DelBene said during a breakfast hosted by the Christian

Science Monitor. “And I have no doubt we’re going to continue to see that all the way through.”

*From an article by Jennifer Shutt in the Florida Phoenix on May 17. See the full story at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1993](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1993)*

## Biden administration seeks to speed some asylum cases with new immigration docket

The Biden administration will start a new system Friday to hasten asylum claims for single adults, administration officials said in mid-May. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security and U.S. Dept. of Justice will

launch a new expedited docket for migrants who arrive alone at ports of entry and turn themselves in to border authorities, senior administration officials said on a call with reporters previewing the changes.

*From an article by Ariana Figueroa in the Florida Phoenix on May 17. See the full story at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1994](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1994)*

## ‘Historic’ DOJ antitrust suit could topple Live Nation-Ticketmaster monopoly

“For far too long, Live Nation-Ticketmaster has acted as the mafia boss of the live events industry — using its power to rip off fans with sky-high prices and junk fees, exploit musicians and artists, and bully workers,” an expert said. The Department of Justice Antitrust Divi-

sion filed an extensive antitrust lawsuit against Live Nation-Ticketmaster for its monopoly power over the live events supply chain, including the primary ticket selling market, concert promotions, and major venues. The complaint alleges that Live Nation has reinforced its monopoly

power through exclusive dealing, tying up of large amphitheatres and concert promotions, and the splitting of markets with potential competitors.

*From an article by Edward Carver in Common Dreams on May 23. See the full story at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1995](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1995)*

## FCC announces disclosure rulemaking on AI political ads

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it will begin a rulemaking to require disclosure for Artificial Intelligence (AI)-generated content in political advertising on the nation’s airwaves. “Americans expect and deserve

to know whether the content they see on our public airwaves is real or AI-generated content — especially as the technology is increasingly being used to mislead voters,” said Ishan Mehta, Common Cause Media and Democracy Program Director.

*From a press release in The Progressive Newswire | Common Dreams | May 22. See the full story at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1996](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1996)*

## Florida Dems want the fight to pass abortion rights amendment to be intergenerational

Laurie Plotnick recalled marching in rallies and signing petitions advocating for access to legal and safe abortions. Roe v. Wade was decided when she had just graduated college. In her 70s, she is taking on that fight again as president

of the Democratic Senior Caucus of Florida. During a Florida Democratic Party press conference Monday morning, leaders within the party shared their experiences as mothers and daughters to emphasize the importance of working

across generational divides to enshrine abortion access in Florida’s constitution come November.

*From an article by Jackie Llanos in the Florida Phoenix on May 13. See the full story at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1997](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1997)*

## Forced sterilizations for people with disabilities decried by members of Congress

Three members of Congress have introduced a resolution intended to bring attention to the experiences and challenges people with disabilities face when it comes to reproductive rights. Massachu-

setts Democratic Rep. Ayanna Pressley announced the resolution Thursday during a press conference with advocates just steps from the U.S. Capitol, saying that under a Supreme Court ruling still in ef-

fect, people with disabilities can be sterilized without their consent.

*From an article by Jennifer Shutt in the Florida Phoenix on May 25. See the full story at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1998](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1998)*

## ‘I don’t believe anybody deserves absolute immunity’: Republican senators oppose Trump’s claim

CNN’s Manu Raju on Monday shared to X (formerly Twitter) a clip from his interviews with several GOP senators regarding their thoughts on the MAGA hopeful’s immunity claim. “GOP senators disagree with Trump claim he has ‘absolute immunity,’” Raju wrote. One Republican lawmaker who doesn’t agree with the ex-

president’s claim is senior Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC). “I don’t believe anybody deserves absolute immunity,” the North Carolina GOP leader said.

*From an article by Maya Boddie in Alter Net on May 25. See the full story at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1999](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1999)*



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# The unbearable hypocrisy of Ben Sasse

*UF president disses student protestors and ‘timidity’ of university administrators*

By Brian Rosenberg

This article was originally published by Inside Higher Ed on May 15. See more at [insidehighered.com](https://insidehighered.com).

Ben Sasse, president of the University of Florida, wants everyone to know that he’s a grown-up.

In an op-ed entitled “The Adults Are Still in Charge at the University of Florida,” published this month in The Wall Street Journal, Sasse directs his disdain at both the student protesters currently roiling higher education and the “embarrassing timidity of many college administrators.” Though the photo accompanying the op-ed shows a scattered group of students holding signs while surrounded by empty pizza boxes, Sasse insists that he will stand firm against “throwing fists, storming buildings, vandalizing property, spitting on cops and hijacking a university.”

As far as one can tell, no protesters have thrown any fists, stormed any buildings, or vandalized any property at the University of Florida, where the prohibited activities, punishable by a three-year suspension, now include littering, sleeping outdoors, and building a chair. Nine protesters have been arrested, three of whom were sitting in chairs — unclear whether they were built or

purchased — and one was charged with battery for allegedly spitting on a police officer (an allegation disputed by student protest organizers). Since Sasse insists that “universities must say what they mean and then do what they say,” UF’s rules will no doubt be consistently enforced going forward: litterbugs and nappers at the University of Florida, consider yourselves warned.

A spokesperson attributed these actions to the fact that the “university is not a day care,” which is demonstrably true, since children at day care do in fact tend to litter and sleep. If they build chairs, they are probably made of Lego bricks and it is unclear if that would be covered by Florida’s list of prohibited activities.

Rather than simply criticizing Sasse’s Wall Street Journal op-ed, we should, I think, embrace it as an opportunity to set aside, at least for a moment, our many differences of opinion about the value and virtue of the ongoing campus protests and to agree that some forms of hypocrisy are so staggering as to merit condemnation. These days common ground should be welcomed wherever and whenever it can be found.

Sasse writes that universities are “in the business of discovering knowledge and then passing it, both newly learned and time-tested, to the next generation. To do that, we need to foster an environment of free thought in which ideas can be picked apart and put back together, again and again.”

Nice — except that at Florida’s public universities, “free thought” isn’t so free and only some ideas are entitled to be “picked apart.” The measure popularly known as the “Stop WOKE Act,” signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis, imposes strict limits on the way a wide range of topics, related especially to race and gender, may be taught at public institutions in Florida. The constitutionality of the law has been challenged in court by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression—the latter hardly a proponent of anything “woke.” In issuing an injunction temporarily barring enforcement of the act in higher education, Chief U.S. District Judge Mark Walker described it as “positively dystopian.”

On this topic, Sasse, the president of Florida’s flagship public university, has been silent, or perhaps I should say has shown “embarrassing timidity” in defending the autonomy of his faculty and the ability of his community to “foster an environment of free thought.”

Surely with “Stop WOKE” in mind, Sasse complains that “many academic disciplines have capitulated to a dogmatic view of identity politics ... With little regard for historical complexity, personal agency or individual dignity, much of what passes for sophisticated thought is quasireligious fanaticism.”

To be fair, I think there is an element of truth in Sasse’s criticism and that, to paraphrase Tyler Austin Harper in The Atlantic, higher education, especially as it has evolved at elite universities, is in the absolutism and extremity of some of these protests reaping what it has sowed. But the appropriate way to address that complex topic is to allow it to be examined and debated on college campuses and in college classrooms—not, as Florida has done, to impose strict limits on the manner and content of academic work. If aspects of higher education have veered off course, by all means let’s confront that — through



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exactly the kinds of debate that are now banned by Florida law.

As for “quasireligious fanaticism,” well, that is hardly a state of mind that is at the current moment limited to one side or another of our vast political divide.

“Life-changing education,” Sasse writes, “explores alternatives, teaches the messiness of history, and questions every truth claim.”

Here is education as prescribed by Florida law: “American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence.” This is the inverse of what Sasse describes as “life-changing education”—open to neither alternatives, nor messiness, nor questions about the truth of absolute claims. To proclaim that any historical narrative can be purely factual is to misunderstand the nature of the historian’s work, and to insist that the United States was from the start faithful to the principles stated in the Declaration of Independence is, plainly, to dismiss the “messy” reality of slavery.

If Sasse’s performative paean to the ideals

of the university were simply a one-off, it could and probably should be quickly dismissed. But Sasse has emerged as one of the most visible spokespeople among the powerful (and hypocritical) “free speech champions” of the political right, and his argument is symptomatic of a problem for higher education that is both deep and widespread. He describes the actions of what is, in the greater scheme of things, a relatively small number of student protesters as “naked threats to the mission of higher education.” This particular threat, which has monopolized the attention of the news media and provided ammunition to those who see political gain in attacking colleges and universities, is coming from a fairly disorganized group with little real power and, it appears, little understanding of how to build effective coalitions. It is a particularly disruptive but not especially unusual example of students directing their fear and frustration—over climate change, racism, war—at their campuses because these are the only targets that seem reachable. No one who understands how universities function actually believes that there will be a massive shift in endowment strategies or a stream of official university statements condemning Israel. The deals that have been struck on

some campuses to end protests have actually ceded very little ground.

Far less attention is being paid to the actual threat coming from those who are organized, powerful and determined: the politicians and outside groups who are pushing through legislation in multiple states that poses the greatest challenge to what Sasse calls “an environment of free thought” that most of us have seen in our lifetimes. The “naked threats to the mission of higher education” in Florida and Ohio, Indiana and Texas, come not from a few dozen angry students — dismissed by Sasse as “20-year-old toddlers” — but from state houses and from university presidents who fail to defend academic freedom.

Many of the students who have in recent weeks broken the law or violated campus rules will in the end pay a price, as they should: The willingness to pay that price is, after all, what lends civil disobedience its force. Those who are not breaking the law but making the laws that are undermining the commitment to free and open inquiry will, I fear, pay no price at all. The “adults” in Florida seem indeed to be in charge, and that is far more frightening than any encampment of tents on a college green. ✂

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## Beau of the Fifth Column

Beau is a YouTube journalist based in NW Florida. He posts short pieces every day covering foreign policy, education, security, politics, and human rights. He can be ironic, dead serious, a bit whimsical, and/or analytical. He also produces longer form videos.



Check him out at:

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## The Point

Daily Roundup from WUFT News

WUFT at the University of Florida has created a portal to news that comes to your email box five days a week. It has items from multiple sources to click on for local, regional, and national coverage. It is useful and free. Go to [WUFT.org/thepoint](http://WUFT.org/thepoint) and enter your email.

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## Florida Phoenix

FloridaPhoenix.com is a free, nonprofit news site that covers Florida government and politics with a mix of in-depth stories, briefs, and social media updates on the latest events, editorial cartoons, and progressive commentary. Many stories focus on emerging innovative ideas or report on the people who are trying to help solve problems and shift policy for a more compassionate world.



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From *NEWBERRY*, p. 32

effort have never come clean about how or when this effort actually started.

Shortly after their first presentation, hyperlinks were discovered within their website that linked to their internal planning document which showed that Marlowe was assigned to create a "fundraising committee" as well as raising the \$100,000+ they budgeted for the takeover campaign.

He and Searby were then to seek out ideal parents to lead each school's charter conversion proposal through letters provided by their highly paid attorney, Shawn Arnold. They have not disclosed who their funders are, nor how much they raised. We do know that they raised enough to buy numerous large signs (near billboard size), yard signs, T-shirts, and to send tens of thousands of dollars of mail to teachers and parents leading up to the vote.

According to the Florida Administrative Code, for a school to convert, a majority of the parents participating must support it and at least half of the parents at the school must participate in the vote. A majority of teachers must also support the conversion and if they did not vote, it counts as an automatic "no" vote.

According to Rule 6A-6.0787.(3).d "If a majority of teachers employed at the school and a majority of voting parents support the charter proposal, the conversion charter application must be submitted..."

For Newberry Elementary, 52.7 percent of parents voted. Of those, 54.38 percent supported converting. However, of the total number of parents at NES who could've voted, only 28.65 percent actually supported conversion. 71.35 percent of parents either voted no or abstained.

For teachers, 21 voted against the conversion while 22 voted for the conversion out of a total of 44 teachers. One ballot was incorrectly submitted and tossed out. As the rule states that a majority is needed, and 22 is only half of 44, not a majority, they did not meet the required threshold.

The middle and high schools never met the 50 percent parent participation thresholds, though a strong majority voted overwhelmingly against each conversion.

Moreover, in their letters to the schools and at every public forum held, they made clear the threshold they needed to meet for the initiative to pass was a majority.



Because they didn't hit that threshold, they are now attempting to force the conversion by lying and saying it passed, even going as far as claiming the Department of Education offered an opinion to overturn the ruling, which it did not. Despite Chuck Clemons pleading for the DOE to step in, as of yet they have not weighed in.

Effectively, Marlowe and his group are demanding that Alachua County Public Schools ignore the Florida Administrative Code and allow them to reappropriate a public school for their private use.

The way to overturn a code is through a legal process, not arbitrarily based on the political needs of a few. And removing a public school, not adding to the choices, is exactly the opposite of what the law was intended to do.

We are grateful that Alachua County School Board Members Dr. Sarah Rockwell and Tina Certain have spoken out forcefully against this proposal and we hope SBAC stands by their determination and the original opinion of EFN's own lawyers and reject any attempt to steal NES. ✨

*Tyler Foerst is co-chair of Save Our Schools Newberry, a Newberry school parent and a field rep for the North Central Florida Central Labor Council.*

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# Oral History Project

## History and the people who make it: Dr. Bruce Purnell



*This month at the SPOHP, we are highlighting our second interview with Dr. Bruce Purnell in May 2023. Dr. Purnell is a descendant of John Jones, William Whipper Purnell, and others who were involved in abolition and the struggle against slavery in the United States. Dr. Purnell shares his family history and tells us about how the Underground Railroad inspired his current work in community healing and activism. You can watch this interview with Dr. Purnell at [tinyurl.com/Iguana1985](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1985).*

**C:** My name is Donovan Carter. I'm a researcher with the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, with my friend, Kristen Anderson. We're both recent graduates from the University of Florida.

**A:** My name is Krystin Anderson. I'm also a recent graduate of the University of Florida with my bachelor's in anthropology, and a minor in ethnomusicology. I've been researching with SPOHP for the past two years.

**C:** Thanks so much again, Bruce. This has been super exciting to hear from you. Can you remind the people who you are?

**P:** I'm a psychologist by trade, founded a community-based organization called The Love More Movement. The mission is to heal from past trauma and move the transformation through a vibration of love. And it's intergenerational. Our oldest I think is ninety-four. Youngest is like two. So, we believe that we have to heal together. That's the solution of many of our problems is healing from past trauma. We use the metamorphosis of the caterpillar to the butterfly as our guiding metaphor for the entire piece. If you trust love enough, to enter your cocoon for transformation, then you're gonna come out flying, you know? Also, we wrote a curriculum for life coaching to kind of break the stigma from mental health. So instead of calling it therapy, we just say transformation. And you become

ing a life coach, committing to healing yourself, your family, and your community. We have a cultural movement called the Overground Freeway. Whereas the Underground Railroad was about physical freedom, the Overground Freeway is about mental liberation. So same way we have stations, we try to form stations the same way. My family in Canada, the Shadd family, if I go back to my own genealogy I go back into the Underground Railroad and find my Underground Railroad family. There's a lot of connections so we have stations put Overground Freeway that way.

**C:** I really like the terms you use, Overground Freeway for the mental liberation. I remember you mentioned that before and that's very unique and powerful. Could you talk a little bit more about that and could you start with yourself, maybe your siblings, your parents, and then could you go back?

**P:** Yeah. My father's side is connected to the Underground Railroad. My mother's side goes to North Carolina, and my father is Washington, D.C. up to Canada. So, my father's father was Lee Julian Purnell, retired Dean of Engineering at Howard University. And his father was William Whipper Purnell, who was a surgeon. He married Theodora Lee, which was John Jones from Chicago, his granddaughter. William Whipper Purnell's parents were James Whipper Purnell, who was Secretary [to Martin R.] Delaney in the Back-to-Africa movement. And also, he was at John Brown's convention in Chatham, Canada. They were together and kind of organizing that piece. And James Whipper Purnell married Julia Shadd. Him and Julia — were cousins with — Mary Ann actually lived with them on the time. Her mother's father was Absalom Shadd who had a restaurant in DC but during Nat Turner's [Slave] Rebellion, he couldn't even sit at his own counter, the restaurant that he owned. So, he moved back to Chatham and got a farm right next to Abraham Shadd, which was Mary Ann Shad's father. So, him and Osborne Anderson and Absalom Shadd ran the farm in Chatham.

That's where they had the John Brown meetings. And as you know Osborne Anderson was the only one that escaped the

Harper's Ferry raid, [except] John Brown. He's the one told the story about what happened. So, James Whipper Purnell was kind of raised by William Whipper, who was a Underground Railroad station master in Philadelphia. And even though he was his nephew, he was raised as his son and they had a lumber yard and they actually had a real railroad. Steven Smith had box cars that were empty and they were moving enslaved people or freedom seekers across with the railroad. And they were the first, not founders, but co-founders of the Dawn Settlement in Southern Ontario. That's where Uncle Tom's cabin was. And they had a community that was the real Uncle Tom's Cabin. They had businesses, he had a hotel, like cleaners and different businesses and stuff.

But it was a thriving community going in Dresden. It was Dresden, Chatham, and then Buxton where we had a reunion every year. We had the Buxton reunion every Labor Day. Then like I said William Whipper Purnell married Theodora Lee, John Jones's granddaughter. So, John and Mary Jones were station masters also in Chicago. And their daughter was Lavinia. Lavinia Jones married Theodore Lee. And Theodore Lee was the grandson of William Billy Lee, who was enslaved by George Washington. And he was the only one that got his freedom when George Washington died. He was his valet almost. He rode in the American Revolution with him, fox hunts and all of that stuff, but was invisible. Was invisible because he was Black basically. But, he's in a couple of pictures now, and then if you go to Mount Vernon, you'll see oh, William Billy Lee, [in] this piece. His grandson married Lavinia and they had one daughter, which was Theodora Lee who became Theodora Lee Purnell when she married William Whipper Purnell.

**C:** That's quite something. You mentioned it before, how it spans like from the DC Eastern shore area all the way up to Canada. So, where you went to your family reunions during Labor Day, where were those?

**P:** So, every Labor Day, the Buxton reunions is Buxton, Ontario and Ryan Prince who has quite a few books about the Underground Railroad and the Canada history is the steward of that space, a cousin,

but that's just the Shadd side. But Buxton, Chatham, Chatham was where John Brown had the meetings, when they came and they really planned the Harpers Ferry Raid and stuff, that happened in Chatham, and Buxton and Chatham maybe fifteen minutes away. But both Absalom Shadd and Abraham Shadd, Mary Ann Shadd's father, they had farms next to each other. They were brothers and you know, the Shadds they had so, Hans Shadd who came, he was a mercenary from Germany. And he got wounded. They were actually fighting the French. He was being paid by the British then. And he got wounded and you know, then Elizabeth brought 'em in, and they actually couldn't get married, but they were really a couple. So they had two children, Hans and Jeremiah. Hans, he went to Florida and we haven't seen him. I guess he lived as a White man in Florida. And Jeremiah had like twelve children and maybe fifteen. And that was all the Shadd's and almost everybody connected to like an Underground Railroad. That was 1790s, 1780s in Delaware.

**C: That's incredible, any questions Krystin?**

**A: Yeah, that's a lot of connections. Family is intertwined with history in so many ways. So, in your life, how did you learn these stories about all of your family and your connections? Did you hear these stories growing up or how did this work?**

**P:** My father used to talk about John Jones and the fact that, you know, he had to ride. So, when he was indentured, basically he was born free to protect him from being enslaved—this is in Tennessee. But when the person he was indentured to, when he died, the siblings tried to enslave him, said that was not, that was never the case. He was their slave. So, he rode after the night to North Carolina to get his freedom papers, and he came back and they had trial and stuff. My father used to talk about that, "Oh yeah, you ride, like John Jones in the middle of the night." So, we hear the stories and stuff. I didn't know what it meant, right. And really until later on.

It even saved my life truthfully because, you know, all the things going on, that's probably what pulled me out of it. I mean like you almost had to be a part of some cruel game. Like, so having that 'why', as to why I'm not participating in this, cause you know, that was the narrative that was going, if you wasn't hustling, you wasn't nobody at a certain point. I gotta have, accountability to something else. And I think that, you know, as I started to learn

more. It's like, wow, this thing was about liberation, it wasn't about chasing paper money, it was about freedom. I felt like we've been misdirected to something else. Like, you know, the pursuit of something else that made no sense. And being socialized to be a consumer.

So, I started to think about that too, like, what is it you want from me? Oh you want me to be a consumer? I have to try to buy love through this process. And I'm never going to get it, but I'm always gonna be searching for it. If I don't have any money to buy, then I'm nobody. So, you know, even dealing with that piece, like that's the other side of it. And going back I'm like, "wow," like, you know my ancestors have been through too much for me to just give this up for this. Like, it doesn't even make sense. So, I didn't mind being the weird one at that point.

**C: What kind of other things did you hear? Did you also hear about your Shadd connections in your home? Did you hear about the Lee's and Purnell's in the same way or ...?**

**P:** I started to ask questions. Like, my father started to really just tell me because you know, what was going on. He didn't talk about it too much until I started to ask. We had some deep conversations about it. The more I asked, the more he gave me. And one day he just gave me a duffle bag. It was just full of pictures, like in letters. I got letters from Frederick Douglass to John Jones, like, handwritten letters and different things. He's like "You're gonna

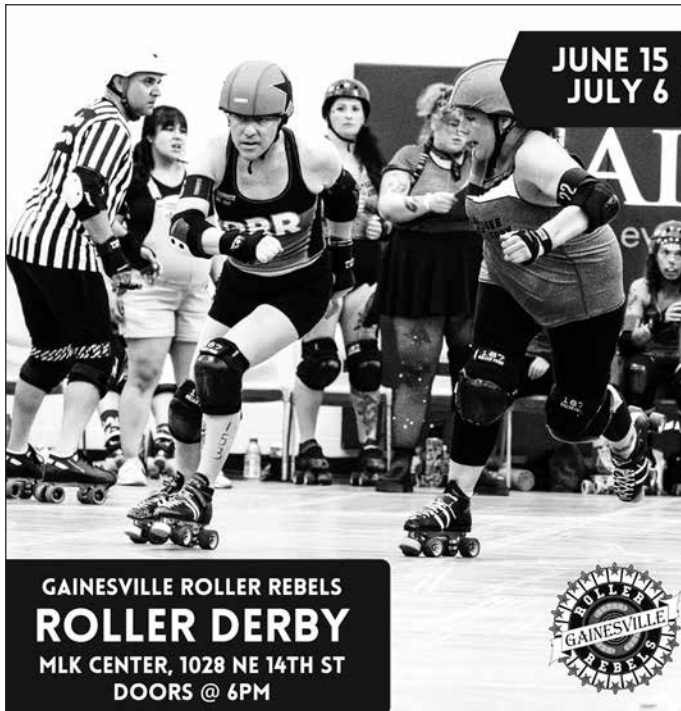
be the one that cares about this. You're gonna be the one that you know makes sure that your future generations know their story and who they are and what they meant."

One time we traveled to Chicago, the Masonic Lodge. I think it is John Jones' Number Seven. And that's probably why I became a Mason. From the time all the way to my fifth great great-grandfather, they all were [Masons] so, it kind of led my journey. Even what I'm doing now, the Overground Freeway. That's the whole purpose. The purpose is still, "Look everybody gets to experience liberation and unless all of us are free, none of us are free." So having that kind of mentality, it comes from there.

*The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program believes that listening carefully to first-person narratives can change the way we understand history, from scholarly questions to public policy. SPOHP needs the public's help to sustain and build upon its research, teaching and service missions: even small donations can make a big difference in SPOHP's ability to gather, preserve, and promote history for future generations. ✨*



# Roller Rebels bouts June 15, July 6



Looking for a unique weekend activity you can bring the whole family to? The Gainesville Roller Rebels are playing two home games this month. On Saturday, June 15, GRR will take on Swan City Roller Derby. And on Saturday, July 6, the Swamp City Sirens and the Millhopper Devils home teams, both made up of GRR skaters, will face off for the second time ever! You won't want to miss these hard-hitting games.

Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. Kids 12 & under get in free. Purchase tickets online at <https://tinyurl.com/grrJune15> (June 15) or [tinyurl.com/grrJuly6](https://tinyurl.com/grrJuly6) (July 6), or in person at Loosey's Downtown (120 SW 1st Ave).

Doors open at 6pm and the action starts at 6:30pm. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. Raffle proceeds will go to local charities. On June 15th, GRR will be supporting Dogs Playing for Life, and on July 6th we'll be supporting Peaceful Paths. After the game, join the afterparty at Loosey's Downtown.

Roller derby wouldn't exist without volunteers and officials. The Gainesville Roller Rebels love our volunteers, and we have a lot of different ways to show it. Volunteers get free admission on the day of the bout, free food at the after party, and a free raffle entry. They also receive GRR swag after volunteering at multiple home bouts. If interested in volunteering, fill out the form at <https://tinyurl.com/VolunteerForGRR2024>. 🐾

## From GRU, p. 1

connected state grid also allowed GRU to run our new, efficient powerplant at full capacity and sell huge amounts of excess power to other utilities. For more than a decade, GRU had the most inexpensive electricity in the state due to the ratepayers of other communities paying the bill for our over-sized powerplant.

In more recent decades, the City embraced renewable energy. We were the nation's first community to subsidize rooftop solar on residential and commercial buildings, which jump-started that industry. Faced with the need for additional baseload generating capacity to replace our now aging and dirty powerplants, GRU built, and then bought, the biomass plant that uses waste wood from forestry and conservation lands for fuel. The original contract for the biomass plant's energy was poorly negotiated, resulting in the City going into substantial debt to buy out the bad contract. Today, the City carries more utility debt than it should, and our electric bills are higher. Most other utilities chose natural gas for their baseload generators, and have benefited from historically (and temporarily) low gas prices.

For more than a decade, when we aren't fighting among ourselves about GRU, we are fighting the state legislature — a wholly owned corporate subsidiary. Our legislators, who are often at odds with our local

city and county officials, find it laughably easy to demagogue utility bills — that thing everybody hates to pay. So, under the cover of caring about poor people (which virtually every other action they take shows they don't care), legislators carry water for the investor-owned utilities. Florida Power & Light is expressly intent on monopolizing the state's utility system, and has become the largest investor-owned electric utility in the nation. Many of the bad things that happen in Florida politics have their DNA at the scene.

That brings us to today, where local activists with the League of Women Voters, Central Labor Council, Sierra Club, Gainesville Residents United, Inc. (a purpose-built non-profit), and others are engaged in a fight with our legislative delegation and the Governor-appointed Gainesville Regional Utilities Authority (GRUA). Five lawsuits have been filed by various plaintiffs — some challenging the constitutionality of the bill that transferred our local utility to the Governor, and others challenging aspects of the Utility Authority's legality. One successful suit required the Governor to actually follow the law, and Ron DeSantis had to appoint a new board that met for the first time in late May.

This chaos is not what a utility system or its customers want or deserve. Also in May,

the City Commission unanimously voted to place a referendum on the November ballot to let the voters decide whether to amend the City Charter to take back GRU from Governor DeSantis and our legislative delegation. The City will not be mounting a campaign, but the political committee "Let the Voters Decide" will be advocating for a Yes vote, and they are building an impressive coalition. Opponents are also mounting legal efforts to deny the voters the opportunity to decide who should operate the City's utility system.

We flip the switch, turn on the tap, flush the toilet, and 99.9999 percent of the time, we take for granted that this magic is deserved. Yet we are truly privileged, compared to people throughout history and around the world today, to enjoy such luxury. But like all freedoms, good utility service must be defended with vigilance against those who would try to control the most basic aspects of our lives. That's why I will be advocating for the return of GRU to local democratic control against the ongoing authoritarian takeover.

*Robert Hutchinson worked in the conservation and public information departments of GRU for a decade in the 1980s. Hutch is a former Alachua County Commissioner, and is president of Gainesville Residents United, Inc. Call/text: 352-256-6043. 🐾*



# Editors' picks: News that didn't fit

## Florida 'callously' strips healthcare from thousands of children despite new law

*Gov. Ron De Santis's challenging of a 'continuous eligibility' rule has booted over 22,500 children off insurance since January*  
by Richard Luscombe ~ *The Guardian* ~ April 29 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana1988](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1988)

The DeSantis administration has stripped Medicaid "KidCare" coverage from at least 22,000 needy Florida children -- probably illegally.

## House GOP committee pits young against old

*Mainstream media often gets it wrong these days when covering Social Security*

by Tia Maria ~ *Gainesville Iguana* ~ June 1 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2002](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2002)

It's not just seniors who should be concerned about cutting social security — young people will need their earned Social Security benefits perhaps even more than their parents and grandparents. Let's change the conversation from cutting benefits to increasing revenue sources.

## How silly can right-wing culture warriors get?

*Gov. Ron De Santis is goofier than ever*

by Jim Hightower ~ *Jim Hightower's Lowdown* ~ May 30 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana1992](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1992)

Jim Hightower describes DeSantis as having "the personality of a dirt clod and the political sensibility of a tin-pot totalitarian." In one of DeSantis' absurd actions, he has decreed that Florida's bridges "can only be lit up in hues of red, white, and blue — no 'liberal' colors like green or purple."

## It is time to ... WAKE UP!

*The U.S. has the worst social record of any developed country in the world and many developing countries*

by Bill Gilbert ~ *Gainesville Iguana* ~ June 1 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2001](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2001)

Bill Gilbert, long-time Gainesville activist and social justice advocate who just turned 90, demands a nonviolent wakeup call in America. To stop climate change, to stop corporate greed, to protect the most vulnerable among us, and to make our representative democracy work for everyone.

## Project 2025 explained

*It is frighteningly anti-democratic and goes against what the vast majority of Americans want for our country*

*Red Wine & Blue* ~ [redwine.blue/project2025/](https://redwine.blue/project2025/)

Project 2025 is the far-right extremists' vision for America. It's a plan that has been formed by politically powerful allies and supporters of Donald Trump that he will implement if he wins a second presidential term in 2024. Be afraid, be very afraid.

## Real estate mogul Charles Kushner funded PAC network that backed Surfside candidates

*Florida's loosened law governing state political committees has opened a new avenue to conceal donors in local elections*

by Alex DeLuca and Naomi Feinstein ~ *Miami New Times* ~ May 20 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana1986](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1986)

A DeSantis-signed law allows massive contributions from political groups to local-election candidates to go unreported until after the elections in question: who could say Gainesville and Alachua County won't experience the same big-dollar corruption that recently flooded Surfside, Florida?

## The moral imperative of voting for Biden

*Threats to abandon Biden are unfair, wrong, and dangerous*

by Robert Hubbell ~ *Substack newsletter, Today's Edition* ~ May 3 ~ [roberthubbell.substack.com](https://roberthubbell.substack.com).

The president is always the lightning rod for the nation's angst. It comes with the job and is no ground for complaint. But the natural tendency to "blame" the president for events over which he has no control has been converted into a cudgel by every side in a polygonal dispute that has endured for millennia.

## This, that and the other

*Emmitt Smith isn't going to go quietly into that good night*

by FreeGNV ~ May 28 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2000](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2000)

Emmitt Smith, the Gator football legend, was one of the first to object when UF gutted its DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness) staff. In a recent interview with USA Today Sports: "When I see them destroying DEI for the sake of politics ... it's not even common sense ... This is just sheer out of spite and sheer power."

## Zionist activist meets undercover with Muslim professors at UF, invites Israel criticism

*'You hear about these things happening to other people,' a professor said. 'You never think it's going to happen to you'*

by Vivienne Serret ~ *Fresh Takes Florida* — *UF's College of Journalism and Communication* ~ May 19 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana1990](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1990)

A Messianic Zionist activist, who pretended to be Muslim and said he was concerned about Islamophobia, met undercover with UF Muslim professors in an apparent scheme to goad them into making remarks that would expose their bias against Israel and conservatives. 🐿



**SCAN ME**

Scan this code for a full list of Editors' picks with easy links to the articles.

# Gainesville area events

## WEEK OF JUNE 2-8

- Thu 6/6 **KennaDec**, 7-11pm, Mother's Pub & Grill North (5109 NW 39th Ave), acoustic pop, rock & soul; tinyurl.com/Iguana9019
- Thu 6/6 **Poetry Jam**, 8-11pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), poetry readings every Thurs, free; civicmediacenter.org
- Fri 6/7 **Free HIV Testing**, 1-3:30pm, UF HealthStreet (2401 SW Archer Rd), free linkage services; 352-294-4880 & facebook.com/UFHealthStreet
- Fri 6/7 **"Cabaret"**, 8pm (runs through 6/23, 2pm), Acrosstown Repertory Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), musical of impending fascism, \$20-25; acrosstown.org/2024-06-cabaret
- Fri 6/7 **Free Fridays Concerts**, 7-9pm, Bo Diddley Downtown Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), every Fri through 9/27 (tonight: jazz from Mindwalk), free; see pg ••• & tinyurl.com/Iguana9020

## WEEK OF JUNE 9-15

- Sat 6/8 **NAACP Youth Council Empowerment Brunch**, 10:30am-2pm, Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church (718 SE 11th St), free for under 18, \$25 for adults; facebook.com/alachuaaacp
- Sat 6/8 **Brew at the Zoo**, 4-7pm, Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo (3000 NW 83rd St), live music, food, animals, craft beer, \$60 (non-drinkers \$25); tinyurl.com/Iguana9021
- Sat 6/8 **Juneteenth Film Festival**, 5pm, A. Quinn Jones Museum (1013 NW 7th St), reception & meet-the-artists, films shown 6 pm at AQ Jones School, 1108 NW 7th St, free; many Juneteenth events at tinyurl.com/Iguana9022
- Sat 6/8 **Trae Crowder**, 8pm, The Woolly (20 N Main St), "The Liberal Redneck" + Donnie Sengstack, \$35-55; tinyurl.com/Iguana9023
- Sun 6/9 **Pride Party**, 4-10pm, Boca Backyard (232 1/2 SE 1st St), \$?; facebook.com/BackyardGNV
- Sun 6/9 **"Treasure Island"** final performance, 4:30pm, Gvl Community Playhouse (4039 NW 16th Blvd), \$12-24; gcplayhouse.org
- Sun 6/9 **UF Internat'l Piano Festival Faculty Recital**, 7:30pm, UF Music Bldg Room 101 (435 Newell Dr), free; tinyurl.com/Iguana9024
- Mon 6/10 **Hipp's Scene Queens**, 7 pm, The Hipp (25 SE 2nd Pl), opens Pride Week at The Hipp with shows, movies, more every day, \$15 (for Monday); thehipp.org/hippride
- Tue 6/11 **Countertop Hydroponics for Beginners**, 3-4:30pm, Alachua County Ag Auditorium (22716 W Newberry Rd, Newberry), free (pre-registration required: tinyurl.com/Iguana9025)
- Tue 6/11 **Parents & Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG)**, 7-8pm, Pride Ctr (850 NW 83 St, 2nd

floor); pflaggainesville.org

- Thu 6/13 **Artist Meetup**, 5:30-7pm 2nd Thurs, Gvl Fine Arts Ass'n (1314 S Main St), exhibit & conversation, free; gainesvillefinearts.org
- Thu 6/13 **Pride Night**, 6pm, Harn Museum (3259 Hull Rd), with community mural, scavenger hunt, free; tinyurl.com/Iguana9026
- Fri 6/14 **Clubes de Escucha**, 6-8pm, Curia on the Drag (2029 NW 6th St), segundo y cuarto Viernes de cada mes; clubesdeescucha.com
- Sat 6/15 **Free Store**, 2-5pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), free stuff for all; pg 16 & civicmediacenter.org
- Sat 6/15 **Gvl Roller Rebels**, 6pm, MLK Ctr (1028 NE 14th St), hosting Swan City, \$12-15(?); pg 24 & gainesvillerollerrebels.com

## WEEK OF JUNE 16-22

- Sun 6/16 **Sunday Assembly**, 11am, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, 2nd floor), Michael Hall of Internat'l Medical Corp on working In Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, free; sagainesville.weebly.com & internationalmedicalcorps.org
- Sun 6/16 **World Sea Turtle Day Celebration**, 1-4pm, Fla Museum of Natural History (3215 Hull Rd), w/ virtual reality from a testudine viewpoint, free; floridamuseum.ufl.edu/event/world-sea-turtle-day
- Sun 6/16 **Jewish Voice for Peace** meets, 4-6pm, Civic Media Center (433 S Main St), both UF & Gvl chapters; jewishvoiceforpeace.org
- Sun 6/16 **The Wailers** w/ Maca Reggae Samba, 6pm, Heartwood Soundstage (622 SE 1st St), Skip Marley & friends on 40th anniversary of "Legend" album, \$25-30; heartwoodsoundstage.com/event/the-wailers
- Wed 6/19 **Juneteenth & Black Music Month Celebration**, 7:30-9:30am, Cotton Club Museum (837 SE 7th Ave), hot breakfast, \$35; tinyurl.com/Iguana9027
- Wed 6/19 **Juneteenth Jubilee**, 11am-2pm, Bo Diddley Downtown Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), music & talks, free; many Juneteenth events at tinyurl.com/Iguana9022
- Thu 6/20 **"Gaza Is Our Home,"** 6:30pm, The Hipp (25 SE 2nd Pl), film screening + talk with Fla-based Palestinian filmmaker, \$12 donation requested; gazaisourhome.com
- Fri 6/21 **Jazz Bandits**, 7pm, Cypress & Grove (1001 NW 4th St), free
- Sat 6/22 **Reproductive Rights teach-in**, 10am, How Bazar (60 SW 2nd Ave), pro-choice "Super Saturday" campaign training, free; pg 13 & mobilize.us/yes4florida/
- Sat 6/22 **Pollinator Palooza**, 2-6pm, 1st Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), education, music, food, & free plant, free; floridamuseum.ufl.edu/

event/pollinator-palooza

Sat 6/22 **Summer Soulstice Festival**, 4-11pm, Heartwood Soundstage (622 SE 1st St), 6 bands, all-ages show, \$20-25; [tinyurl.com/Iguana9028](http://tinyurl.com/Iguana9028)

Sat 6/22 **Block party**, noon-4pm, S Main St & SE 5th St, by Frenchmen Street Food, SoMa, CMC, & Kardia; pg 11

## WEEK OF JUNE 23-29

Sun 6/23 **Candidates Forum**, 1pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora, sponsored by League of Women Voters, free; see [tinyurl.com/Iguana9029](http://tinyurl.com/Iguana9029)

## WEEK OF JUNE 30-JULY 6

Sun 6/30 **Artwalk**, 7-10pm last Fridays, various venues around town, free; see pg 7 & [artwalkgainesville.com](http://artwalkgainesville.com)

Sun 6/30 **Leah Senior & Kevin PM**, 8pm?, Loosey's (102 SW 1st Ave)

Wed 7/3 **Fanfares & Fireworks**, 6-10pm, UF Flavet Field Bandshell (605 Woodlawn Dr), 5 bands, food trucks, pyrotechnics, free; [wuft.org/fireworks](http://wuft.org/fireworks)

Sat 7/6 **Gvl Roller Rebels**, 6pm, MLK Ctr (1028 NE 14th St), Swamp City Sirens vs Millhopper Devils, \$12-15(?); pg 24 & [gainesvillerollerrebels.com](http://gainesvillerollerrebels.com)

## WEEK OF JULY 7-3

Sun 7/7 **"Gainesville from Frontier to Mid-Century,"** 12-1pm, Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Ctr (1500 NW 45th Ave), Alachua County history in pictures, free; [tinyurl.com/Iguana9034](http://tinyurl.com/Iguana9034)

## WEEK OF JULY 14-20

Tue 7/16 **Preview Night**, 7 pm, Phillips Ctr (3201 Hull Rd), highlights of '24/'25 season, free; see pg 16 & [tinyurl.com/Iguana9030](http://tinyurl.com/Iguana9030)

Fri 7/19 **"In the Heights"** opens, times tba (through Aug 11), Gvl Community Playhouse (4039 NW 16th Blvd), musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda, \$12-24; [gcplayhouse.org](http://gcplayhouse.org)

Sat 7/20 **Free Store**, 2-5pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), free stuff for all (masks required); pg 16 & [civicmediacenter.org](http://civicmediacenter.org)

Sat 7/20 **"Voices & Votes,"** 2pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), Smithsonian exhibit on US democracy, free; pg 8 & [mathesonmuseum.org/events](http://mathesonmuseum.org/events)

Sat 7/20 **Poetry**, 7pm, CMC (433 S Main St), touring poets from Razorcake magazine join locals putting punk into words

## WEEK OF JULY 21-27

Sun 7/21 **Sunday Assembly**, 11am, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, 2nd floor), Elliott Mutschecner on "The Trans Experience" (tentative), free: [sagainesville.weebly.com](http://sagainesville.weebly.com) & [internationalmedicalcorps.org](http://internationalmedicalcorps.org)

Sun 7/21 **"The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"** final performance, 2 pm, Hippodrome (25 SE 2nd Pl), phonetic musical comedy, \$55; [tinyurl.com/](http://tinyurl.com/)

Iguana9031

Mon 7/22 **Voter Registration deadline**, Supervisor of Elections office (515 N Main St, 352-374-5252), also last day to change party registration for August primaries, free: [tinyurl.com/Iguana9032](http://tinyurl.com/Iguana9032); see pgs 10,11, 32

## WEEK OF JULY 28-AUG. 3

Fri 7/26 **Artwalk**, 7-10pm last Fridays, various venues around town, free; see pg 7 & [artwalkgainesville.com](http://artwalkgainesville.com)

Sat 8/3 **Rhonda Vincent**, 7pm, UF University Aud. (333 Newell Dr), "Queen of Bluegrass", \$40-100; [tinyurl.com/Iguana9033](http://tinyurl.com/Iguana9033)

## RECURRING EVENTS

**Monday Farmers Market**, 4-8pm: Cypress & Grove

**Thursday evening Poetry Jam**, 8pm at Civic Media Center

**Free Fridays Concert Series**, 7-9pm at Bo Diddley Plaza downtown (111 E Univ Ave); pg 5 & [gainesvillefl.gov/Events-directory/Free-Fridays-Concert-Series](http://gainesvillefl.gov/Events-directory/Free-Fridays-Concert-Series)

**Civic Media Center volunteer meetings**, 1st & 3rd Wed, at CMC (433 S Main St) & via Zoom

**PFLAG Meets** on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tue of every month at 7pm at the Pride Center, 3850 NW 83<sup>rd</sup> St, second floor.

## GAINESVILLE OPEN MICS

Gainesville is a talent-rich town, and open mics are a great way to have an evening of varied entertainment out of the house. Check them out for a variety of music and other entertainment. Of course, you performer-types should go perform at. Each venue has its own character.

**The Bull:** Mon, 7pm, sign up at 6:30

**Mai Kai:** Mon, 8:30pm, sign up at 8pm

**"The Reverend Angel Dust's Tabernacle of Hedonism Hosted by Tom Miller" at the University Club (UC):** Every Mon (until Dec), 10:30pm, sign up at 9

**How Bazar:** 3rd Wed of the month, 8-10pm, DM to sign up

**Satchels:** first Wed of the month, 6-9pm, sign up at 5:30pm

**"Front Street" at Boca Backyard:** 4th Wed of the month. 7:30-11pm

**Swamp Head Brewery:** 2nd Wed of the month, 7-9pm, sign up at 6:30pm

**The Midnight:** every Tue, 8pm-?, sign up at 7:30 🐾

## OTHER EVENT LISTINGS

**Please support Gainesville live music venues, they all have calendars:**

- Boca Backyard, Cypress & Grove, First Magnitude, Heartwood Soundstage, Loosey's, One Love Café, Satchels, the Wooly, Wormhole, etc.
- See [visitgainesville.com/events](http://visitgainesville.com/events) for a weekly event list, updated Thursdays; also try [352arts.org](http://352arts.org); and don't forget the [civicmediacenter.org](http://civicmediacenter.org) calendar.

Support live music, theater, and festivals! Get out into nature! Leave the freakin' house and have fun!

# Iguana Directory

Call 352-378-5655 or email [gainesvilleiguana@cox.net](mailto:gainesvilleiguana@cox.net) with updates and additions

*Readers: If there is inaccurate information here, let us know. If you are connected to an organization listed here, please check and update your listing so others can be accurately informed. Readers should confirm times of meetings with individual organizations.*

**Alachua Audubon Society's** mission is to foster appreciation and knowledge of birds and other native wildlife, to protect and restore wildlife populations and their habitats, and to promote sustainable use of natural resources. We offer free birding field trips open to all, college internships, birding for kids, conservation activism, volunteer opportunities. [AlachuaAudubon.org](http://AlachuaAudubon.org) | [facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/](https://facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/)

**Alachua Conservation Trust, Inc.** has been protecting North Central Florida's natural, scenic, historic and recreational resources for over 25 years. 352-373-1078 | [AlachuaConservationTrust.org](http://AlachuaConservationTrust.org)

## *From ACTIVISM, p. 1*

student movement in the heart of empire been so deeply connected to decolonial struggle far beyond our borders.

Significant questions face our movement, though: how do we move forward, and how do we continue to escalate to win divestment from Israeli genocide? To begin to answer these questions, it is critical to understand the context of these protests and how campuses can regroup to build strong campaigns for disclosure and divestment. The over 100 long-term encampments and countless more direct actions that sprung up in late April did not come out of nowhere. Escalating campaigns at Columbia, Brown, and Yale — among many other primarily private universities — had been started even before Oct. 7 with coalitions like CUAD (Columbia University Apartheid Divest) and Brown Divest! staging increasingly escalatory actions on their campuses, demonstrating a tactical use of skills commonly used in the labor movement to identify and develop organic leaders while continuing to apply pressure to specific targets. While for many campuses, encampments rose spontaneously in response to calls to action or solidarity, at these few universities who started the great wave across the country, camping was simply just the next logical step in their plans for escalation.

This kind of aggressive and nonviolent escalation is directly carrying forth the

**Alachua County Greens** is part of a worldwide movement built out of interrelated pillars that support its politics: the peace, civil rights, environmental and labor movements. Meetings are the 1st Sunday of the month @4pm.; for location contact 352-871-1995 | [alachuagreens@gmail.com](mailto:alachuagreens@gmail.com) | [GainesvilleGreens.webs.com](http://GainesvilleGreens.webs.com)

**Alachua County Labor Coalition** organizes to support local labor and advance the Medicare for All and A Living Wage campaigns. Meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday at 6pm: on Zoom. 352-375-2832 | [info@laborcoalition.org](mailto:info@laborcoalition.org) | [LaborCoalition.org](http://LaborCoalition.org)

**Alachua County Organization for Rural Needs Clinic** is a not-for-profit in Brooker providing low-cost, high-quality dental care for people with and without health insurance to Alachua, Bradford and Union County residents. The Clinic fulfills its mission with the help of volunteers. 352-485-2772 |

legacy of not just the anti-apartheid movement of the 1980s, but also the Palestinian Intifada itself.

As a national leader of the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA), I oversaw a robust operation that encompassed the scope of the national movement, with our national leadership and member-led communications committee providing almost 24/7 support to chapters and non-chapters alike who needed support with their encampment or direct action organizing. This experience allowed me to witness the power of collective action, of the student intifada, even where there weren't sustained divestment campaigns prior to the formation of a divestment coalition or the decision to camp, the University of Florida included.

Among my other key takeaways from this top-down view are the importance of democracy and long-term strategic vision. Not all campuses are built equally, and organizing conditions are absolutely different from Florida to Ohio to California, and everywhere in between. However, despite these differences, many of these encampments have met the same fate: extreme police brutality, forcing protestors to strategically retreat and reassess next steps. Other encampments, those who do have robust democracies and long-term strategic vision, and happen to have the right organizing conditions, have been met with some victory,

[acornclinic.org](http://acornclinic.org)

**American Civil Liberties Union** has no Alachua County chapter. For info on forming a new chapter, or for ACLU info, contact the Northeast Chapter at [firstcoastaclu@gmail.com](mailto:firstcoastaclu@gmail.com) | [northeastflorida.aclufl.org](http://northeastflorida.aclufl.org)

**Alachua NAACP** – With 2+ million activists across the country, we work to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all people and to eliminate racial hatred and discrimination. Everyone invited to join. [Facebook.com/alachuaNAACP](https://Facebook.com/alachuaNAACP) | [NAACPacb.org](http://NAACPacb.org)

**American Promise Association** is a cross-partisan, citizen-powered endeavor to amend the US Constitution to ensure We The People – not big money, corporations, unions, or wealthy special interests – govern the United States of America. [americanpromise.net](http://americanpromise.net)

**Avian Research and Conservation Institute**

though. Brown University reached a deal with encampment organizers to vote on divestment in October, while the democratically elected team of student negotiators at San Francisco State University have negotiated with administration in a public square surrounded by principled observers, mimicking tactics of 'open bargaining' often seen throughout the class struggle wing of the labor movement.

The glimmers of hope we see from campuses at Brown and SFSU, as a result of their robust democracies and vision, is not the end-all-be-all for divestment organizing, of course. Recognizing the chance of brutal police oppression and deciding to take concessions while regrouping to apply pressure to achieve bigger demands is a specific political decision, and it's not one that every campus has to choose. However, as the national movement to sustain the student intifada enters summer, and looks forward to the fall, campuses must think about how they maximize their material victories for Palestine.

Building power for Palestine was never going to be easy, but if there's any generation to meet the moment, it is this generation of students agitating from the heart of empire to aid in the liberation of Palestine. With them, I stand on the right side of history, and look forward to the many divestment victories we will win together.✌️



is a non-profit research group working to stimulate conservation action to save threatened bird species in the southeast. 352-514-5606 | arcinst.org

**Black Graduate Student Organization** helps UF Black graduate and professional students foster meaningful and lasting relationships that aid in academic achievement and success. bgsoatuf@gmail.com | facebook: UF BGSO

**Central Florida Democratic Socialists of America** is a chapter of DSA focusing on local social and political activism issues to better our community. Meetings are the 4th Monday of the month on Zoom. centralfldsa@gmail.com | facebook.com/NCFFloridaDSA

**Citizens Climate Lobby** builds awareness and lobbies for sensible climate policies. 352-214-1778 | btancig@gmail.com | citizensclimatelobby.org/chapters/FL\_Gainesville | facebook.com/CitizensClimateLobbyGainesvilleFL

**Civic Media Center** is an alternative reading room and library of the non-corporate press, and a resource and space for organizing. 433 S Main St., Gainesville | 352-373-0010 | civicmediacenter.org | coordinators@civicmediacenter.org |

**The Climate Reality Project Gainesville Area Chapter** is the local chapter of an international nonprofit group dedicated to accelerating urgent action globally on the climate crisis. Join the chapter (see website) for news, action alerts, meeting alerts. ClimateRealityProjectgnv@gmail.com | facebook.com/GlobalClimateEducation | ClimateRealityProjectGNV.wordpress.com | ClimateRealityProject.org

**Coalition of Hispanics Integrating Spanish Speakers through Advocacy and Service** is a UF student-run group focusing on immigrant rights and immigrant advocacy. chispasuf@gmail.com | chispasuf.com | facebook.com/chispasUF

**Code Pink: Women for Peace** is a women-led grassroots peace /social justice movement utilizing creative protest, non-violent direct action and community involvement. Facebook.com/CodePINKgainesville | CodePink4Peace.org

**Community Spring** is a local organization to help people get a step up on re-entering society after incarceration with financial & housing assistance as a means of overcoming structural poverty. 352-363-1259 or info@csgnv.org

**Community Weatherization Coalition's** mission is to help their neighbors save energy and water and reduce utility bills by engaging volunteers, building community, and learning together. info@communityweatherization.org | 352-450-4965 | communityweatherization.org

**Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.** is a Gainesville non-profit land trust working to protect Florida's rural landscapes, wildlife corridors and natural areas. 352-376-4770 | info@conserveflorida.org | conserveflorida.org

**Current Problems** cleans up waterways across north Florida, removing over 1,000,000 pounds of trash (& recycling/ reusing 63% of it) since 1993, and finding ways to reduce pollution sources; volunteers welcome. 352-222-6727 | currentproblems.org

**Democratic Party of Alachua County** meets monthly on the second Wednesday at 6pm: on Zoom. 352-373-1730 | alachuadems.org

**Divest Gainesville** advocates divesting City financial assets from fossil fuel industries and educating on racial justice and climate change. youngersn@outlook.com | facebook.com/DivestGainesville

**Divest UF** is a student-run organization and a loose collective of Gators seeking to divest the university from fossil fuels, the prison industry, and arms and surveillance companies. Divestuf.org | facebook.com/DivestUF

**Edible Plant Project** is a volunteer-run, non-profit Gainesville collective aiming to create positive alternatives to the unsustainable food system in this county. facebook.com/groups/edibleplantproject

**Families Against Mandatory Minimums** works to reform Florida's sentencing laws and restore fairness to Florida's criminal justice system. PO Box 142933, Gainesville, 32614 | gnewburn@fam.org | 352-682-2542 | FAMM.org

**Final Friends**, run by volunteers, helps families learn how to accomplish legal home funeral care as an alternative to a commercial funeral home. 352-374-4478 | FinalFriends.org@gmail.com | FinalFriends.org

**Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice** provides space for meetings, workshops, and educational activities that promote peace, human rights, social justice awareness, conflict resolution, self-empowerment and environmental awareness. 352-603-3680 | florida4peace.org

**Florida School of Traditional Midwifery** is a clearinghouse for information, activities, educational programs regarding midwifery. 352-338-0766 | info@MidWiferySchool.org | midwiferyschool.org

**Florida Defenders of the Environment** works to protect freshwater resources, conserve public lands, provide quality environmental education. 352-475-1119 | FloridaDefenders@gmail.com | FlaDefenders.org

**Florida Prisoner Solidarity** is a carceral abolitionist collective with members

inside and outside of prisons. Efforts focus on incarcerated individuals' needs and their care networks. P.O. Box 358439, Gainesville, FL 32635 | 850-895-1505 | FLPrisonerSolidarity@gmail.com | facebook.com/FLAbolition | FLPrisonerSolidarity.org

**Floridians Protecting Freedom** is a campaign of allied organizations and concerned citizens working together to protect Floridians' access to abortion as reproductive health care and to defend the right to bodily autonomy. Contact Laura at 617-767-6664 or go to floridiansprotectingfreedom.com.

**Gainesville Area AIDS Project**, a program of Pride Community Center of North Central Florida, provides toiletries, household cleaners, hot meals, frozen food at no cost to people living with HIV/AIDS. 352-377-8915 | info@GAAPonline.org | Facebook.com/GAAPonline | gainesvillepride.org

**Gainesville Area Chapter of Climate Reality Project** addresses the climate crisis for future generations. The chapter mobilizes people to become powerful activists and push for aggressive climate action. The hope is to transform society and to change the world. climaterealityprojectgnv@gmail.com | @climaterealityprojectgnv | climaterealityprojectgnv.wordpress.com

**Gainesville Books to Prisoners** is a volunteer-run, donation-based organization that sends hundreds of books monthly to incarcerated people in Florida. We pack books at the CMC on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month, 6-7:30pm. We also need brown paper grocery bags and packing tape. Instagram: @gnvbooks2prisoners. Donate funds at paypal.com/gnvb2p.

**Gainesville Citizens for Alternatives to Death Penalty** works to abolish the death penalty. Join vigils when Florida has an execution. 352-378-1690 | mark1343@juno.com | www.fadp.org

**Gainesville for All** The Gainesville Sun's GNV4ALL initiative is an effort to identify and address problems related to inequities and racial injustice in our community. See Facebook for online activities. GNV4ALL@gmail.com | facebook.com/GNV4ALL

**Gainesville Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice** organizes faith communities to work together for immigrant justice. Meetings are the second Monday of the month on Zoom. Richard@371-6772 | Gainesvilleiaij@gmail.com | gainesvilleiaij.blogspot.com

**Gainesville National Organization for Women** focuses on reproductive rights, ending sex discrimination, constitutional equality, promoting diversity, ending racism, economic justice, stopping violence against women, lesbian rights including marriage

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equality. Contact Lisa@352-450-1912 for meeting info | info@gainesvilleNOW.org | facebook.com/gainesvilleNOW

**Gainesville Quakers** have a 350-year tradition of working peacefully for social justice. Silent, unprogrammed worship Sundays at 11, followed by potluck. Visitors welcome. 702 NW 38th St., Gainesville | 352-372-1070 | GainesvilleQuakers.org | facebook.com/GainesvilleQuakers

**Gainesville Residents United** educates, advocates, negotiates, and litigates issues of community concern – currently the State takeover of Gainesville Regional Utilities. www.GRUnited.org

**Gainesville Roller Rebels**, a women's Flat Track roller derby team, needs skaters and volunteer assistance. join@gainesvillerollerrebels.com | gainesvillerollerrebels.com

**Gainesville Stamp Club**, established in the 1960's, is open to all interested in philately. Auction held every meeting. Advanced level program occasionally. Under 18 must be accompanied by adult. First and third Tuesdays starting at 7:30pm; no meetings in December/holidays. For meeting locations and info. call 352-371-1991 | Stamps4Laffs@yahoo.com

**Generation Action UF**, a student organization dedicated to promoting reproductive justice and health care on campus provides UF students with free contraceptives, Plan B, and other key reproductive health care materials. through The Brown Bag Project <3. UF students can discreetly request and receive condoms, internal condoms, dental dams, pregnancy tests, and Plan B. Instagram @ppgenactionuf.

**Graduate Assistants United** union represents UF grad assistants by fighting for improved working conditions, community involvement and academic freedom. 352-575-0366 | organizing@ufgau.org | UFGau.org

**Grow Radio**, a non-profit podcast station, provides opportunities for the community to create/manage engaging, educational, locally-generated programming promoting music, visual arts, humanities for enrichment of the community. 352-219-0145 | Bryson66@gmail.com | growradio.org

**Ichetucknee Alliance** focuses on ensuring the restoration, preservation and protection of ecosystems along the 5.5-mile length of the Ichetucknee River, including associated springs. Meetings are on the 4th Tuesday every other month via Zoom. 386-454-0415 | ichetuckneealliance@gmail.com | ichetuckneealliance.org

**Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)** Gainesville General Membership Branch Union represents all workers, regardless of industry, trade, job, employment status.

gainesvilleiww@gmail.com | iww.org

**Institute for Tropical Ecology and Conservation** is an academic nonprofit that provides undergraduate field courses in tropical marine and terrestrial ecology, hosts biology-based study abroad programs, provides a venue for researchers, conducts conservation and community service programs. 352-367-9128 | itec1@itec-edu.org | itec-edu.org

**Jewish Voice For Peace** in Gainesville was inspired by the JVP actions nationwide calling for ceasefire in Gaza. JVP envisions a world where all people live in freedom, justice, equality and dignity. jewishvoiceforpeace.org/resource/our-vision | Instagram: @jvp\_gnv | jvpgnvpod@gmail.com

**League of Women Voters of Alachua County** Nonpartisan grassroots political group of women and men who fight to improve our system of government and impact public policies such as fairness in districting, voting and elections, through citizen education and advocacy. info@lww-alachua.org | LWValachua.org

**Madres Sin Fronteras** (Mothers Without Borders) is a local grassroots immigrant-led organization working to protect the rights of immigrants' families in our community and to ensure all are treated with dignity and respect msfgainesville@gmail.com | facebook.com/MSFGainesville

**MindFreedom North Florida** is a human rights group for psychiatric survivors and mental health consumers, working to educate the public about harmful psychiatric practices and about humane alternatives to those harmful practices. 352-328-2511 | facebook: MindFreedom Florida

**Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America** is a grassroots organization working to end gunviolence by electing gun sense candidates, advocating for policies that save lives, educating parents on responsible gun storage. Alachua County events listed at momsdemandaction.org/events

**Move to Amend, Gainesville** is an organization dedicated to amending the US Constitution to establish that money is not speech, and that only human beings have constitutional rights. Contact Alachua County Green Party for information. Facebook.com/MoveToAmendGainesvilleFL

**National Alliance on Mental Illness | Gainesville** offers support, education and advocacy for families and loved ones of persons with mental illness and/or brain disorders. 352-320-0457 (information) | 352-335-7770 (helpline) | namigainesville.org

**National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare** works to preserve these threatened programs for senior citizens and families. Local volunteers needed.

Marion.Co.Fl.1590@gmail.com | ncpsm.org

**National Lawyers Guild** consists of lawyers, law students, legal workers and jailhouse lawyers who use the law to advance social justice, support progressive social movements.gainesvillengl@gmail.com | nlg.org

**National Women's Liberation** is a feminist group for women who want to fight back against male supremacy and win more freedoms for women. Inequalities between women and men are political problems requiring a collective solution. 352-575-0495 | nwl@womensliberation.org | womensliberation.org

**North Central Florida Association for Women In Science** is an advocacy organization championing the interest of women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) across all disciplines and employment sectors. ncfawis@gmail.com | leanin.org/circles/ncfawis

**Occupy Gainesville** is about engaging local people in grassroots, participatory democracy, diversity and dialogue; we stand in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street Movement and the rest of the people peacefully occupying public space across this county and the world. Facebook.com/occupygainesville

**Our Santa Fe River** is a non-profit composed of concerned citizens working to protect the waters and lands supporting the aquifer, springs and rivers within the watershed of the Sante Fe River. 386-243-0322 | oursantaferiver.org

**Paynes Prairie Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society** promotes the preservation, conservation and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. paynesprairie.fnpschapters.org | https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1952

**PFLAG Gainesville** is a local chapter of Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays, the nation's foremost family-based organization committed to the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. 352-340-3770 | info@pflaggainesville.org | pflaggainesville.org

**Planned Parenthood Clinic at Gainesville Health Center** is a full-service health center for reproductive and sexual health care needs. Offering pregnancy testing and options counseling. 914 NW 13th St., Gnv. | 352-377-0881 | plannedparenthood.org (enter Gainesville FL in "find a health center" box)

**Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery** promotes natural burial practices that conserve land and reunite people with the environment. 352-317-7307 | info@prairiecreekconservationcemetery.org | prairiecreekconservationcemetery.org

**Pride Community Center of North Central Florida** has resources for the LGBT+ community, open Sat. 2-4pm: and by appt.

3131 NW 13th St., Suite 62, Gnv | 352-377-8915 | pccncf@gainesvillepride.org | GainesvillePride.org

**Repurpose Project**, a nonprofit junk shop/community center, diverting useful resources from landfills and redirecting items to the public for art and education, rethinking what we throw away. Help protect the planet and buy used. Check website for hours. 1920 NE 23rd Ave, Gnv | 352-363-8902 | info@RepurposeProject.org | repurposeproject.org

**River Phoenix Center for Peace-building** provides solution-based innovative ways to resolve conflicts, and offers related services such as mediation, communication skill building and restorative justice. 352-234-6595 | info@centerforpeacebuilding.org | centerforpeacebuilding.org

**Rural Women's Health Project** is a local health education organization that develops materials promoting health justice for migrant and rural women. Robin or Fran @ 352-372-1095 | info@rwhp.org | www.rwhp.org

**Samuel Proctor Oral History Program** focuses on story-telling, social justice research, social movement studies, oral history workshops. oral.history.ufl.edu

**Sister City Program of Gainesville** links Gainesville with sister cities in Russia, Israel and Palestine, Iraq, Haiti. 352-376-8600 | Steve@gnvsistercities.org | gnvsistercities.org

**Stand By Our Plan** informs the public on critical differences between the Comprehensive Plan & Plum Creek's proposal, which we do not support. Alachua County's Comprehensive Plan is the best blueprint for future growth in the county's unincorporated areas; it protects valuable wetlands. StandByOurPlan@gmail.com | StandByOurPlan.org

**Student Animal Alliance** is a UF-based group whose purpose is to educate and bring fellow animal lovers together to better the lives of the animals around us. StudentAnimalAllianceUFL@gmail.com | facebook.com/SAAatUF | instagram@studentanimalallianceUF

**Student/Farmworker Alliance** is a network of youth organizing with farmworkers to eliminate sweatshop conditions and modern-day slavery in the fields. billy@sfalliance.org or brett@sfalliance.org | facebook.com/sfalliance

**Sunday Assembly Gainesville** is a secular congregation celebrating life with talk, music, sing-along, discussion, fellowship. Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month. SundayAssembly32601@gmail.com | SAGainesville.weebly.com

**Suwannee-St. Johns Group Sierra Club** is a local group within the nation's largest and

most influential grassroots environmental organization, representing 14 North Central Florida counties. ssjsierra@gmail.com | sierraclub.org/florida/suwannee-stjohns | 561-707-4565

**The Majorie** is Florida's independent reporting outlet dedicated to the critical intersection of social justice and the environment. themajorie.org

**The Party for Socialism and Liberation - Gainesville** pre-branch exists to carry out the struggle for Socialism inside the U.S. | Linktr.ee/psl\_gainesville | psl\_gainesville@proton.me | pslweb.org/join

**UF Black Student Union** strives to create, cultivate, and challenge all minority Gators to be better citizens of the Gator Nation. Facebook.com/groups/BlackStudentUnionUF

**UF College Democrats** is the official voice of the Democratic party on UF campus. 407-580-4543 | president@ufdemocrats.org | facebook: UF College Democrats | UFcollegedems.org

**UF Pride Student Union** is an LGBT+ group open to queer folk of all sorts, including students, non-students, faculty and staff, that educates and provides a safe space for those of marginalized sexualities and gender identities. UFPridesu@gmail.com | facebook.com/ufpsu | plaza.ufl.edu/jsoto19/PSU

**UF Students for Justice in Palestine:** In stark recognition of the failure of modern society to produce a just and reasonable solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict, Students for Justice in Palestine promote public awareness and activism in our community. We promote international law, human rights, and justice for all affected by this conflict. We welcome a diverse membership from all faiths and nationalities who believe in the attainability of peace. sjpuflorida@gmail.com

**UF Young Democratic Socialists of America** is a student-run socialist organization dedicated to organizing students to fight for the needs of workers and students while building the capacity to fight radical and structural changes. Weekly meetings. ufydsa21@gmail.com | facebook.com/ufydsa

**United Faculty of Florida, UF chapter** is run by and for faculty, and represents over 1600 faculty and professionals at UF. Its origins lie in efforts by faculty to protect academic freedom, defend civil liberties, end racial discrimination at UF. 352-519-4130 | officemanager@uff-uf.org | www.UFF-UF.org

**United Nations Association - Gainesville Chapter** works to heighten citizen awareness/knowledge of global problems and the UN's efforts to deal with them. facebook.com/UNAUSAGainesvilleFIChapter | UNA-USAGainesvillefl.org

**United Way Information & Referral** is a human-staffed computer database for resources and organizations in Alachua County. 352-332-4636 or simply 211 | UW211help@gmail.com | unitedwayncfl.org

**University of Florida HealthStreet** is a community engagement program that employs community outreach practices to reduce disparities in healthcare and research. Free services include medical and social service referrals, health screenings, Narcan Nasal Spray Kits, clothing/toiletry items, health education, events, support groups. 352-294-4880 or healthstreet.program.ufl.edu/

**UF Un-PAC** is a non-partisan organization working to reform our democracy and get big money/lobbying out of politics. Our Youth Power Campaign works to make UF work better for students to participate in/understand our democratic system, including demands such as voter registration at Freshman Preview, classes cancelled on election days, more transparency on how our tuition money is spent on lobbying and political influence. Go to: un-pac.org, @un\_pac\_uflorida, or email un.pac.uf@gmail.

**Veterans for Peace Gainesville Chapter** is an anti-war organization that raises awareness of the detriments of militarism and war, as well as seeking peaceful and effective alternatives. 352-375-2563 | Facebook.com/VFPchapter14 | vfp Gainesville.org

**WGOT-LP 100.1 FM** is a community low-power radio station operating as part of the Civic Media Center. info@wgot.org | www.wgot.org

**Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) at UF** aims to foster the success of women, non-binary folks, other underrepresented genders in science and engineering. People of all genders are welcome. uf.wise@gmail.com | Facebook.com/UFWiSE | wise.group.ufl.edu/about-wise

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom** has been promoting peace since 1915. Donate or join the at-large Jane Addams Branch. Local info: juned@stevellittler.com | wilpfus.org

**Women's March Florida - Gainesville/Ocala Chapter** is a grassroots progressive mobilization network inspired and created by the women who brought about the Women's March on Washington. facebook.com/wmflgnv

**World Socialist Party of the United States** welcomes anyone wanting to know more about Marxian socialism and our efforts to transform the dog-eat-dog – Devil take the hindmost world that's been created by capitalism, into a democratically arranged world society of equality. wspus.org. 🌐

# Newberry opens new front in war on public education

by Tyler Foerst

In February, right after qualifying ended for their City Commission with only the incumbents qualifying, the Mayor of Newberry, Jordan Marlowe, and his group launched a \$115,000 effort to take over the three traditional public schools in Newberry and convert them to “public” charter schools. The difference being that traditional public schools have to take every child, whereas charter schools can be more selective while still receiving public funds.

In Florida, a parent can petition a public school to convert it into a charter school. The intention of the law was to enable small

communities to keep their neighborhood public schools open in the face of school closures brought about by the defunding of public education by the Legislature.

But that’s not what’s happened in Newberry.

Instead, this small, highly funded, and well-organized group, led by Marlowe and a highly-paid political consultant, Joel Searby, launched a hostile takeover of all three traditional public schools in Newberry. If all converted, it would’ve left no public school in Newberry for any child to attend.

Despite Marlowe’s claims that this all magically came together in January, documents incorporating the organization

were filed in November. Additionally, e-mails obtained through a public records request show that the mayor was ordering city staff to assist in the creation of budgets for Education First for Newberry back in December.

The Gainesville Sun reported on March 21 that “Naim Erched, a parent who signed onto the Newberry Elementary School conversion letter, said Wednesday that he, Searby, and “Education First for Newberry” board members Carsen Stefanelli and Chelsea Leming all put their ‘heads together’ about six to eight months ago and organically came up with the charter idea.” The organizers of the

See *NEWBERRY*, p. 20

## 2024 PRIMARY ELECTION

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**July 22**



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