

## FLORIDA

# From Key West to Pensacola, LGBT attitudes differ

**BY BRENDAN FARRINGTON**  
Associated Press

**TALLAHASSEE** — Florida's Key West is one of the most gay-friendly places in the country. The Florida Panhandle — many locals call it the Redneck Riviera — is a different story.

The massacre of 49 people in a gay nightclub happened between these extremes, forcing many Floridians to reconsider their assumptions about the state's evolving culture.

Key West has a gay police chief, a lesbian county mayor and was the nation's first city to elect an openly gay mayor. It attracts 450,000 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender tourists a year. Bumper stickers reading "One Human Family" appear on all city vehicles, including police cars, ambulances and fire trucks.

"It's a safe place; they know that they are free from judgment, free from hassle, free from physical violence," said Guy Ross, who heads

LGBT sales at the Monroe County Tourist Development Council. "We do not tolerate gay bashing down here. It just doesn't happen."

Drive 780 miles north and west to the gleaming, white-sand beaches of the Panhandle, and you'll find "family friendly" towns that aren't known for welcoming gays.

After gay marriage became legal in Florida in 2014, the Santa Rosa County clerk stopped performing any wedding ceremonies — gay or straight — to avoid marrying same-sex couples. In Pensacola, a small LBGT community center called Equality House closed for lack of funds after less than three years.

The attack in central Florida on June 12 — Latin Night at the Pulse club in Orlando — has drawn an outpouring of solidarity, but also fear, particularly among people who saw the tourist mecca as a refuge from hatred.

The shooting also created awkward moments for some of Florida's Republican and conservative Christian



Orlando Fire Dept. Lt. Davis O'Dell walks Wednesday among 49 flags posted in front of Fire Station 5 to honor the victims of the Pulse massacre in Orlando, Fla.

leaders, who tried to show compassion even as they defended positions gays and lesbians find hurtful.

"There are two Floridas," and between them there's a "patchwork," said Nadine Smith, CEO of the gay and transgender rights group Equality Florida.

Only 56 percent of the people in the nation's third-

most populous state live in communities that have enacted non-discrimination protections. The state provides "no protections whatsoever," she said.

Year after year, Florida's Republican-led Legislature has rejected legislation prohibiting discrimination for reasons of sexual orientation or gender identity.

"When I drive from where I live in the Tampa Bay area to my hometown in the Panhandle, I have to weave my way through places that have full protections for me and my family and places where they're absolutely indifferent to the discrimination my community faces," Smith said.

Republican Attorney

General Pam Bondi came to Orlando and was put on the spot by CNN's Anderson Cooper after she vowed to prosecute anyone who attacks the LGBT community.

Cooper asked her to respond to the many gays and lesbians who call her a hypocrite because she spent hundreds of thousands of tax dollars trying to uphold the state's gay marriage ban.

In her defense, Bondi said she had an obligation to represent the will of the voters, and added that her own views are reflected by a photo of clasped, rainbow-colored hands that she posted — after the shooting — on her personal Facebook page.

Republican Gov. Rick Scott, who campaigned against adoptions by gays and lesbians in 2010, didn't respond directly when asked if the attack made him rethink this position. Scott instead spoke of the need for love, even with "the gays."

"These are individuals. Let's love every one of them," he said.



Photos by ERIN O. SMITH | The Times

Sweet and sour chicken was one of the recipes tested Wednesday during the Shake It Up in School Nutrition taste test at the Lanier Charter Career Academy at The Oaks in Oakwood.

## FOOD

■ Continued from 1A

mode, serving things they like, the nutrition will take care of itself," he added. "Let's make school food fun."

Sheridan said the dishes used ingredients commonly found in school cafeterias.

All of the main dishes were variations of chicken — jerk chicken tacos, fiesta chicken burrito bowls, sweet and sour chicken and chicken lime taquitos. The vegetables included three versions of cauliflower — southwestern, roasted and buffalo — plus refried beans and green beans.

Sheridan encouraged the students to be honest about likes and dislikes. She asked them to identify "things you would want to eat."

The students, she said, "were going to be the ones that determined whether these would be put out to the state."

Students generally were not fans of green beans. "Too sweet," two elementary students said.

The taquitos were well-received.

Some mothers who brought children said they



Donnie Hensley, 10, eats fruit between taste tests.

wanted "bigger servings."

Sheridan said the idea is to provide at least one meal for Georgia's schools to use for National School Lunch Week, which is in October.

The goal is to find "at least one reimbursable meal," she said.

"If all four are a success,

then we'll do all four" in schools, she said.

During a group photo after the testing, Sheridan asked the students for a "thumbs up or down" about their experience — which lasted about an hour. The majority of students offered thumbs up.

Old Oakwood Road leads to Mundy Mill Road to the south and Mountain View Road to the north.

The bridge would be near the new Mundy Mill elementary school being built by Gainesville City Schools.

Gibbs said he's grateful the state helped round out the funding for the project.

"We were glad that they saw the importance of it," Gibbs said.

## ROAD

■ Continued from 1A

project, with Hall County chipping in \$400,000, Gainesville \$200,000 and Oakwood \$50,000.

The DOT had ordered the closing of a railroad crossing at the same area of Tumbling Creek Road in late 2014 out of safety concerns.

## AMAZON

■ Continued from 1A

"We are excited to expand in the state of Georgia and add a new fulfillment center to better serve our customers in the region," said Akash Chauhan, vice president of Amazon's North America operations. "This facility will create hundreds of new jobs with competitive pay and great benefits starting on day one."

Jackson County Commission Chairman Tom Crow said the county is "excited" Amazon has chosen to locate there.

Gibbs said the Tumbling Creek Road bridge is important because it serves as a backup for emergency vehicles if Old Oakwood Road or Atlanta Highway is shut down, giving them another option without having to go 4 or 5 miles out of the way.

The bridge would let drivers travel between Ga. 13/Atlanta Highway near Chipope Woods Golf Course and Old Oakwood Road.

"We have an outstanding corporate citizenship, and Amazon is a great addition and fit for our community," he said. "Our town looks forward to partnering with Amazon and its employees."

Gov. Nathan Deal said Amazon's decision to build a facility in Jackson County speaks to the strength and

vitality of Georgia's business-friendly environment.

"We are thrilled that a global leader such as Amazon has chosen to expand its footprint here in Georgia," he said.

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## DEBATE

■ Continued from 1A

measures to expand background checks and block gun purchases by some suspected terrorists in the aftermath of last week's massacre in Orlando, Florida, that killed 49 people. It was the worst shooting in modern U.S. history.

"No bill, no break," shouted Democrats, who demanded that House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., keep the House in session through its planned week-long recess next week to debate and vote on gun legislation.

Rep. Doug Collins, R-Gainesville, said the Democrats are taking the wrong approach.

Recent tragedies have heightened the need for our country to have a conversation about the terrorist threats we are facing at home and abroad. We need to be focused on the real fight — combating ISIS and Islamic terrorism — but congressional Democrats are trying to twist the narrative to serve their political agenda and curtail constitutionally guaranteed Second Amendment rights," Collins said in a statement to The Times.

"Instead of posing for pictures, it's time for Democrats to end their staged C-SPAN fight and come to the table to talk about how to prevent future brutal attacks on our homeland and stop the spread of ISIS' radical ideology."

Democrats accused Republicans of political cowardice by failing to schedule a vote.

"Are they more afraid than the children at Sandy Hook?" asked Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., referring to the 2012 shooting that killed 26 people, including 20 elementary school children, in Newtown, Connecticut. "What is so scary about having a vote?"

Lewis, a veteran civil rights leader revered by Democrats, said action on gun violence is long overdue.

"We have lost hundreds and thousands of innocent people to gun violence,"

Lewis said as he urged fellow Democrats to stand with him in the area near the podium, known as the well.

"What has this body done" to respond to the violence, Lewis asked, then answered his own question: "Nothing. We have turned a deaf ear to the blood of innocents. We are blind to a crisis. Where is our courage? How many more mothers ... and fathers need to shed tears of grief?"

About 30 minutes after Wednesday's sit-in began, Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, tried to start the House's work at noon. The customary prayer and pledge of allegiance went ahead, but Poe was forced to recess

the House when dozens of Democrats refused to leave the well.

Rep. John Larson, D-Conn., said lawmakers were "calling for the simple dignity of a vote." Joining the protest was Sen. Chris Murphy,

D-Conn., who had waged a nearly 15-hour filibuster last week to force the Monday votes in the Senate.

Ryan said Wednesday that House leaders were "waiting to see what the Senate does before proceeding" on gun legislation, including a possible compromise being sought by Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine.

Earlier in the week, a divided Senate blocked rival election-year plans to curb gun violence.

In largely party-line votes, senators Monday rejected one proposal from each side to keep extremists from acquiring guns and a second shoring up the government's system of required background checks for many firearms purchases.

Democrats called the GOP proposals unacceptably weak while Republicans said the Democratic plans were too restrictive.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., proposed letting the government block many gun sales to known

law-abiding Americans. Unfortunately, partisan politics stalled these efforts. This clearly warrants a full and serious debate in order to get the policy right."

Isakson echoed Perdue's take on gun control.

"We must roll up our sleeves and redouble our efforts to ensure that we are using every resource at our disposal to enable our federal and local law enforcement agents to

locate, monitor and stop domestic terrorism," Isakson said in a statement released Monday.

"I supported two common-sense measures today that would keep weapons out of the hands of suspected terrorists, while ensuring that the Second Amendment rights of law abiding citizens are not infringed upon."

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

## CITY OF BUFORD

## PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET

The public is hereby notified that the City of Buford anticipates adopting the Fiscal Year 2017 Operating Budget at its regularly scheduled Commission meeting to be held Monday, August 1, 2016 at 7:00 P.M., at Buford City Hall, located at 2300 Buford Highway, Buford, GA 30518. There will be a public hearing held on July 1, 2016 at 11:00 A.M. at Buford City Hall, 2300 Buford Highway, Buford, GA.

A summary draft of the proposed budget may be inspected beginning July 1, 2016 during regular business hours, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday at Buford City Hall, located at 2300 Buford Hwy, Buford, GA 30518.