

# GUARDIAN

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Election Day is March 15 — See Inside for Candidate Q&A

## HRCNCF Queries Gainesville City Commission Candidates

The Human Rights Council of North Central Florida (HRCNCF) received responses to its Gainesville City Commission candidate questionnaire as well as held a candidate forum on January 31.

Three city commission races are up for grabs: City Commission District 2, District 3, and the At-Large 2 seat. Election Day is March 15, with a runoff election on April 12 in any race where no candidate garners more than 50 percent of the vote.

Of the 13 candidates running, 11 candidates returned written HRCNCF questionnaire responses, which are provided below. Nine of the candidates attended the January 31 HRCNCF forum, which was open to the public.

In District 2, incumbent commissioner Lauren Poe is running for re-election against three opponents: Todd Chase, James Ingle, and Robert Krames. Poe has a proven track record of support for LGBT issues and supported adding transgender individuals to the city's antidiscrimination ordinance prior to his 2008 election. Robert Krames, who ran unsuccessfully against Commissioner Jeanna Mastrodicasa in 2009, supported the city charter amendment which would have eliminated LGBT rights protections.

"Commissioner Poe could have just as easily stayed out of the fray over transgender rights," said HRCNCF Secretary Abby Goldsmith. "As a teacher of civics, among other subjects, he has a deep and abiding knowledge of the concept of fairness — that we are all created equal." Goldsmith said that District 2 candidate James Ingle, whose campaign focuses on advocacy for working people, provided favorable answers at the forum and in questionnaire responses. A fourth candidate, Todd Chase, did not attend the HRCNCF forum nor did he submit questionnaire responses.

### **You're invited to a very special fundraiser reception**

to benefit the educational programs of the Human Rights Council of North Central Florida.

Your support is vital to help HRCNCF continue to work on our anti-bullying education initiative.

### **"A Night to Remember"**

**Saturday, February 19, 2011  
7 to 9 PM**

At the home of Bob & Lisa Jerry  
**2374 NW 28<sup>th</sup> Street**  
Gainesville, Florida

For more information contact Abby Goldsmith at 352-339-3092 or [HRCNCF@gmail.com](mailto:HRCNCF@gmail.com).

HRCNCF has been your Hometown Human Rights Advocacy Organization since 1993 – leading the fight for Gainesville gender identity protections (2008), domestic partner registry (2007), domestic partner benefits for city employees (1999), and sexual orientation protections (1998). HRCNCF conducts candidate questionnaires and forums to keep you informed where candidates stand on LGBT issues.

*Directions: From NW 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, turn north into Brywood neighborhood at NW 27<sup>th</sup> Terrace; turn left at NW 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue; turn right at NW 28<sup>th</sup> Street; house is on left.*

**Gainesville Election Day is March 15; Early Voting is March 7-12**

In District 3, commissioner Warren Nielsen is not running for re-election. Five candidates have entered the race: Ozzy Angulo, Susan Bottcher, Jimmy Harnsberger, Ramon Trujillo, and Rob Zeller. Susan Bottcher stands out as a long-time friend and advocate of the LGBT community. She has donated money, stood on street corners, written letters to the editor, and worked to oppose the 2009 anti-gay charter amendment. Some of the other candidates in this race had good answers, such as Ozzy Angulo and Jimmy Harnsberger, but they had little to no history of working locally on LGBT issues. Rob Zeller did not attend the HRCNCF forum nor did he submit questionnaire responses.

In the At-Large race, incumbent commissioner Thomas Hawkins faces three opponents: Jeffrey Fiedler, Don Marsh, and Richard Selwach. Hawkins was an outspoken opponent of the 2009 charter amendment that would have eliminated LGBT rights in Gainesville, and gave favorable answers at the forum and on his questionnaire responses.

Don Marsh, who was defeated last year by Craig Lowe in the runoff election for mayor, supported the 2009 anti-gay ballot measure and has been a fixture among local Tea Party activists.

All Gainesville registered voters may cast a ballot in the At-Large race. However, only registered voters in District 2 and District 3 may also cast ballots for their respective district commissioner in each of those races.



*HRCNCF Treasurer Tim Martin and President Susan Eichner participate in the 2011 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial March in downtown Gainesville. (Photo courtesy of Erica Brough and The Gainesville Sun.)*

Remember, there are three ways to vote: Absentee ballots can be mailed to you by calling the Supervisor of Elections at 352-374-5252. Early

voting is available from Monday, March 7, to Saturday, March 12, from 9 AM to 5 PM at the County Administration Building, 12 SE 1<sup>st</sup> St. On Election Day on Tuesday, March 15, voters must cast ballots at the polling precinct in which they reside. For more information, go to [www.VoteAlachua.com](http://www.VoteAlachua.com).

## **HRCNCF Launches Major Effort to Fund Local Anti-Bullying Initiative at Saturday, February 19 Gala Event**

The Human Rights Council of North Central Florida was formed by a group of local activists in 1993 as a response to two Alachua County citizens' referenda which sought (successfully) to repeal the county's hard-fought sexual orientation antidiscrimination ordinance. And just a year before in 1992 the Gainesville City Commission passed a hateful anti-gay resolution associating gay people with pedophilia, necrophilia and bestiality.

Since that time, the Human Rights Council has worked to inform Gainesville and Alachua County residents about where local candidates stand on LGBT issues through candidate forums and questionnaires. As a 501(c)(4) organization, we also provide candidate endorsements to our members.

At the same time we have lobbied our elected officials on issues such as adding sexual orientation and gender identity antidiscrimination protections, domestic partner benefits, domestic partner registries, and other human rights issues. When the city's antidiscrimination ordinance was threatened by the 2009 charter amendment, HRCNCF worked to educate the public and mobilize its members to vote "no" against this discriminatory ballot issue.

Now HRCNCF is launching an initiative to educate the public and lobby the School Board of Alachua County to strengthen its anti-bullying policies. This advocacy work is essential to create a safe environment for all students regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We cannot afford to lose one more young person because he or she was humiliated or assaulted over his or her gender identity or sexual orientation. So, we come to ask you for help in funding this critical initiative. Please join HRCNCF at our first major fundraiser on Saturday, February 19 and help us help our children.

For more information contact Abby Goldsmith at 352-339-3092 or [HRCNCF@gmail.com](mailto:HRCNCF@gmail.com).

## HRCNCF 2011 Gainesville City Commission Candidate Questionnaire Responses

### 1. The city of Gainesville prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the areas of housing, employment, public accommodation, and credit. Do you support or oppose Gainesville's antidiscrimination protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity?

#### City Commission District 2:

JAMES INGLE: I definitely support these anti-discrimination protections. The idea that someone could be denied housing or credit because of their sexual orientation or other personal life choices is abhorrent.

ROBERT KRAMES: I support them and the individuals they are intended to protect. I do feel some of the current ordinances may be too open ended in the way an individual's gender identity is quantified and these policies could be better. I only take this stance because I do not want to see an ordinance with good intentions be abused by an individual with ill intent and potentially reflect poorly on the groups it is designed to protect.

LAUREN POE: Yes. I do support Gainesville's antidiscrimination protections as indicated by my vote to add "gender identity" to the ordinance while in office.

#### City Commission District 3:

OZZY ANGULO: I support Gainesville's antidiscrimination protection based on all the included criteria such as sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity.

SUSAN BOTTCHE: I am a strong supporter of Gainesville's anti-discrimination policies which protect people from wrongful dismissal based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Gainesville secured a great victory for equality when the community voted to reject the Charter Amendment which would have removed these protections in 2009. I was proud to work actively for that defeat by writing letters to the editor, changing the minds of misinformed neighbors, making contributions to the cause and volunteering in Gainesville to take a stand against prejudice.

JIMMY HARNSBERGER: I support (and have supported) Gainesville's antidiscrimination protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. During the runup to the 2009 Amendment 1 vote, I shared my views with my neighbors, many of whom were undecided at the time.

RAMON TRUJILLO: I support them for the main part. In the case of the bathrooms situation however I am opposed. I feel it discriminates against straight people by creating special rights.

#### City Commission At-Large:

JEFFREY FIEDLER: Yes!

THOMAS HAWKINS: I believe everyone in Gainesville should have equal access to places of public accommodation, housing, credit and employment without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. I was very proud of Gainesville residents when, in voting on the

proposed charter amendment that would have repealed these protections, our community showed we value equal opportunity for every one of us.

DON MARSH: Yes, in principle, although the city's ordinance is badly written. Gender identity is defined ambiguously, allowing anyone to use their "inner sense" to qualify themselves.

RICHARD SELWACH: Yes, I support.

### 2. Do you support the city's domestic partner registry which allows same-sex and opposite-sex couples to officially recognize their relationships? By registering as domestic partners, couples are able to obtain documentation that could be used to provide, for example, visitation rights for partners at hospitals, potential access to private sector domestic partner health insurance, as well as to document relatedness in city ordinances.

#### City Commission District 2:

JAMES INGLE: I think this is a great idea. It falls short of real equality; there are some benefits that only come from a recognized marriage, such as social security benefits and most family health insurance. But I think it is a great step we as a city can take to help ALL our citizens get the benefits that come with having a recognized committed relationship. Families are the cornerstone of our society, and to restrict some people from having a family because it does not fit into a preconceived idea of what a family looks like hurts us all and is fundamentally un-American.

ROBERT KRAMES: Yes.

LAUREN POE: I whole-heartedly support the registry.

#### City Commission District 3:

OZZY ANGULO: I fully support the city's domestic registry, which allows same-sex and opposite-sex couples to officially recognize their relationship.

SUSAN BOTTCHE: It is shameful that in some parts of our country a person cannot visit their loved one in a hospital because of their sexual orientation or that same-sex couples are ineligible for domestic partner health insurance programs that heterosexual couples enjoy. I absolutely support the city's domestic partner registry and the good it provides for same-sex couples in our community. Whether as a private citizen or an elected official I will continue to work towards full civil and equal rights of the LGBT community.

JIMMY HARNSBERGER: Yes, I have supported the city's domestic partner registry.

RAMON TRUJILLO: Yes. I see this as a fairness issue and am in support of this ordinance.

#### City Commission At-Large:

JEFFREY FIEDLER: Yes!

THOMAS HAWKINS: I support Gainesville's domestic partner registry.

DON MARSH: Yes.

RICHARD SELWACH: Yes.

**3. Do you support diversity training for city employees to include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues?**

City Commission District 2:

JAMES INGLE: I think it is a good idea to have city employees, especially ones who deal with the public, to have as much training as possible for dealing with any group of people. Having some idea of issues facing the public that they are serving can only be helpful. The better trained our workforce is, the better we can serve the city. In general any training we can do is an investment that pays dividends, giving us a better, more efficient workforce.  
ROBERT KRAMES: Yes. It is important that professional behavior be required of all employees, and that behavior should be clearly defined.  
LAUREN POE: I do.

City Commission District 3:

OZZY ANGULO: I do support diversity training which includes LGBT issues for all city employees. Education is vital for greater tolerance and equality.  
SUSAN BOTTCHE: True issues of diversity do not end where an individual's ignorance on specific issues begins. The city is right to understand this and to provide diversity training which includes LGBT issues.  
JIMMY HARNSBERGER: I support diversity training for city employees concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals. From my perspective, all training programs should incorporate materials and approaches that have been shown to significantly change attitudes or behavior.  
RAMON TRUJILLO: No, this to me is crossing the line and bordering on discrimination of straight people.

City Commission At-Large:

JEFFREY FIEDLER: Yes!  
THOMAS HAWKINS: I support diversity training for city employees that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.  
DON MARSH: Having never gone through it, I have no idea if I support it.  
RICHARD SELWACH: Yes.

**4. Do you support city proclamations for Gainesville's annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Days?**

City Commission District 2:

JAMES INGLE: City proclamations are a good way for the city to recognize different groups that help make this a wonderful and diverse town. It costs very little and helps remind everyone of the different communities that come together to make up Gainesville. If you get societal benefits at low costs then I don't see a downside, or how anyone can reasonably be opposed.

ROBERT KRAMES: Yes, but only if other common cultural, religious, and social events are equally recognized (i.e. Christmas, Hanukkah, and The National Day of Prayer). If this cannot be done I suggest the city stay out of these events entirely.  
LAUREN POE: I do.

City Commission District 3:

OZZY ANGULO: I support city proclamations that celebrate diversity and equality for all. This, of course, includes Gainesville's Pride Days.  
SUSAN BOTTCHE: Government should be an advocate for the establishment and preservation of the equal rights of all people based on our common humanity and should be able to recognize special actions in the struggle for these rights. By making a proclamation concerning LGBT Pride Days, our city government is taking a stand in recognizing the struggle undertaken by courageous individuals and organizations in an effort for social progress.  
JIMMY HARNSBERGER: I support city proclamations for Gainesville's Pride Days. City proclamations express our community's values of diversity and tolerance for all of our citizens.  
RAMON TRUJILLO: No, this is bending over backwards to grant special rights.

City Commission At-Large:

JEFFREY FIEDLER: Yes!  
THOMAS HAWKINS: The City of Gainesville frequently makes proclamations as a show of support for various issues and events, regardless of whether those issues and events receive the support of a majority of Gainesville residents. I generally support all such proclamations because they recognize the work of community groups and organizations and foster a spirit of civic inclusiveness.  
DON MARSH: I am against city proclamations in general. They are political grandstanding and divisive.  
RICHARD SELWACH: Yes.

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
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— MISSION STATEMENT —  
*HRCNCF opposes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the interest of civic betterment and social welfare. HRCNCF also seeks to work in coalition with other organizations working to end discrimination based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, age, religion, national origin, or disability.*

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE HRCNCF BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2011, AT 7:00 PM AT PRIDE COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA, 3131 NW 13<sup>TH</sup> STREET, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

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