

# GUARDIAN

October 2024

Volume 30 Edition 2

## 2024 General Election: HRCNCF Queries Candidates for Alachua County Commission, Sheriff & State House on LGBTQ+ Issues & Shares Amendment Recommendations

### **Vote NO on State Amendment 1**

The Human Rights Council of North Central Florida urges a **NO vote on State Amendment 1**, which would make school board elections partisan. If the amendment is passed by 60% of voters, parties would nominate candidates through a primary election and party affiliation would appear on ballots. This change would exclude voters without party affiliation from primary elections.

Partisan school board elections will lead to more extreme candidates seeking to win their party's primary. This guarantees that culture wars – particularly those targeting LGBTQ+ and trans youth – become a permanent fixture in school board races. School board candidates should focus on what's best for students. In the current political climate in Florida, partisan elections in school board elections would only escalate political polarization and push candidates to cater to extreme positions rather than broader student-focused solutions.

Ultimately, Amendment 1 risks school boards across the state falling under the control of regressive movements like Moms for Liberty, putting vulnerable students in harm's way. Vote NO on Amendment 1 to keep the focus on education, protect our kids, and stop extreme party politics from taking over our schools.

### **Vote YES on State Amendment 4**

Access to safe and legal abortion ensures that anyone capable of becoming pregnant can make their own choices about their bodies and their futures, aligning with central fights for LGBTQ+ equality: the rights to bodily autonomy and self-determination.

Furthermore, reproductive healthcare is an intersectional issue. LGBTQ+ individuals who are also people of color or from marginalized backgrounds experience compounded challenges in accessing reproductive health services. Marginalized people are the most affected by the state's current 6-week abortion ban.

Supporting abortion access is part of the fight for equality. It affirms that individuals, and not politicians, have the fundamental right to make informed personal choices about their bodies. For these reasons, HRCNCF recommends voting **YES on State Amendment 4**, the proposed state constitutional amendment to limit government interference with abortion in the state of Florida, on your November ballot.

If approved by 60% of voters, Amendment 4 will enshrine into the state constitution the right to abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider.

## Candidate Responses to HRCNCF Questionnaires

### **Alachua County Commission**

*District 1 Candidates: Mary Alford & Lizabeth Ann Doebler.*

*District 3 Candidates: Jenn Garrett & Anna Prizzia*

#### 1. Do you support policies banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, public accommodations and other vital areas?

*District 1 Candidates:*

**Mary Alford:** Yes! I have openly supported these policies, and the county is currently reviewing our comprehensive plan and land use policies to make sure that equity for all is addressed as we do the work of managing the county.

**Lizabeth Ann Doebler:** *Did not respond to questionnaire.*

*District 3 Candidates:*

**Anna Prizzia:** Yes.

**Jenn Garrett:** *Did not respond to questionnaire.*

#### 2. Do you support full marriage equality for same-sex couples?

**Alford:** As a lesbian I fully support marriage equality. Ultimately the government is in the business of enforcing contracts. Marriage is a contract between consenting adults. Religions can decide if they want to bless those contracts or not, but religious belief systems should not dictate government rule of law.

**Prizzia:** Yes

#### 3. What is your understanding of the state's current policy on the use of bathrooms by LGBT citizens as it affects county government buildings?

**Alford:** While the state has dictated that people must utilize bathrooms that

correspond with the sex listed on their birth certificates, there are not bathroom police watching and challenging people's sex in restrooms and asking for birth certificates. The law may lead to harassment of individuals that may not look "masculine enough" for the men's room or "feminine enough" for the women's room but ultimately the law is not enforceable in any practical way (and the county has done nothing to enforce it). My understanding of this law is that HB 1521 is a dead letter law, despite the vigilantes that sometimes challenge people. However, because some individuals are worried about being challenged, we are working to make sure that gender neutral or "family" restrooms are available for everyone. I know of a library employee that quit their job because they did not feel safe using the restroom in one of the branch libraries. I find this abhorrent and am glad to say that the Alachua County Library is adding gender neutral restrooms at all their locations.

**Prizzia:** Last year, the Florida legislature passed a law that makes it criminal to not leave a restroom that does not align with an individual's sex assigned at birth after being told to do so by a government employee. Fla. Stat. § 553.865.

The law is confusing, and vague, but it does not apply to uni-sex bathrooms, and this we have worked to ensure there is a unisex option in our facilities along with gender specific restrooms

#### 4. Do you support annual county proclamations recognizing our area's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Days?

**Alford:** YES! I look forward to those requests being submitted each year, to supporting and reading those proclamations and to participating in Pride activities. I feel lucky to live in a community with a vibrant LGBTQ+

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community.

**Prizzia:** Yes. I try to attend and support all events and programs hosted to celebrate, recognize, and/or LGBTQIA efforts and individuals in our community. I am endorsed by Equality Florida.

5. How will you vote on Florida Amendment 4, the constitutional amendment to limit government interference with abortion, and why?

**Alford:** Amendment 4, the Right to Abortion Amendment has my full support. A woman's medical decisions are between her and her health care provider, period. A woman has a right to bodily autonomy and reproductive health care.

**Prizzia:** I will vote yes because a woman has a right to make her own choices and all people deserve to have control over their health care.

6. Describe efforts you have taken locally to support or advocate for LGBT rights.

**Alford:** Twenty-five years ago, I served as the editor of Mama Raga, the local lesbian newsletter/magazine. Since that time, depending on where I was in life, I have been involved in LGBTQ efforts at some level – as a corporate diversity instructor, as a member of PCNCF, Equality Florida, HRC, and other organizations. If you scroll through my Facebook feed, you will find a picture of me at the county commission meeting speaking out in support of the county's human rights ordinance when it was passed. I have more recently been involved in issues with the Alachua County Library. They have limited books with LGBTQ+ characters in a high school reading program, had employees told that Pride displays were "too gay", have cancelled programs aimed at gay crafters, and have not had bathroom accommodations for transgender employees. This is an ongoing battle and one where I appreciate the support of HRCNCF. I am currently the secretary in the National Association of Counties LGBTQ+ Leadership Group, whose membership is

almost 100 and is composed of both elected and appointed county officials from around the United States. While this is not local, I feel it is important to highlight the battles that we are fighting here in Florida and help others be aware of what their states may be fighting. I have also provided our county's excellent human rights ordinance as a template for other counties to model.

**Prizzia:** I have pushed for more mental health support and options for our LGBTQIA community, particularly our youth in light of the state's efforts to reduce support and make schools an unwelcoming space. I have been vocal that we need to preserve and focus on enforcing and upholding our human rights ordinance, especially with regards to housing discrimination. I have supported our local pride center, Equality Florida, and other local efforts to recognize the contributions of our LGBTQIA community. As a bisexual individual, I try to provide representative leadership and offer support and mentorship for others interested in office.

### ***Alachua County Sheriff***

***Candidates: Emery Gainey & Chad Scott***

1. Does ASO accurately reflect the make-up of our community as to openly LGBT citizens? If so, please explain. If not, what would you do?

**Emery Gainey:** The Alachua County Sheriff's Office is an Equal Opportunity Employer, where individuals in protected classes, minorities, veterans, and those with disabilities are welcome to apply for employment without discrimination. We do not ask our applicants or employees to identify their sexual orientation, nor does their sexual orientation play any part in their employment or our hiring processes. We are unable to accurately respond to the question; "Does ASO accurately reflect the make-up of the community as to openly LGBT citizens", because the ACSO does not intrude into the personal choices of our employees by

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seeking to ask questions that have no bearing on one's abilities to serve in this agency. We are well aware that we have members who identify as LGBT and/or as alternative lifestyles by self-identification, or because we have met or been introduced to their partners/spouses. In fact, we have had staff members self-identifying since the early 1980's, many of which went on to spend a full and successful career at the ACSO.

**Chad Scott:** The Alachua County Sheriff's Office does not reflect the make-up of our community when it comes to the LGBT community. I believe that we should expand the Community Relations Bureau to better reflect the diversity of Alachua County and include outreach to the LGBT+ community, which is something I commit to do if elected. I believe this could demonstrate a commitment to serving and protecting all residents, including those in the LBGT community, something that is not happening under the current sheriff.

I also believe we should also make a greater effort to hire LGBT+ individuals to wear a uniform. Increasing diversity within the Sheriff's Office can lead to a better understanding of the unique needs and concerns of different populations, ultimately improving the quality of service provided to the community.

### 2. Do ASO officers participate in anti-bias training specific to gender expression and sexual orientation?

**Gainey:** The sworn members of our agency are required to attend Human Diversity Training, Discriminatory Profiling and other training courses. ACSO Directive 354 also instructs and directs employees on our anti Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment policy.

**Scott:** To my knowledge, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office does not participate in an anti-bias training specific to gender expression and sexual orientation. As Sheriff, it would be a goal of mine to implement training, not just to

help understand the communities that we are sworn to protect, but to hopefully attract LGBT+ individuals to work at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office.

Considering that domestic violence calls are some of the hardest calls we get, we need to make sure that when LGBT+ individuals call when there is violence in the home, they are met with the same treatment as straight couples. Because we know that LGBT+ couples are more afraid to call the police because they face bias from officers, we have a lot to do in our community to make sure all our individuals feel safe

### 3. Describe efforts you have taken locally to support or advocate for LGBT rights.

**Gainey:** It is and will continue to be my policy and that of the ACSO to support all citizens' rights to equality and fairness. Just this past Saturday, my ACSO recruitment team and I attended the Gainesville Pride Festival to recruit interested and qualified individuals to apply for open jobs at the ACSO.

**Scott:** Last year, my oldest son died in a drug overdose. While I always loved my son, I did not know how to support him in the ways he needed to be supported as an LGBT+ individual. In the wake of Chad Jr's passing, and even more so now, I want to express my unwavering support for the LGBTQ+ community. Chad Jr. was a free spirit who embraced who he was wholeheartedly. He never cared about the opinions of others and lived authentically. That is something I deeply respected about him and continue to admire in the LGBT community.

I believe that everyone deserves love, acceptance, and respect, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. I do not pass judgment on anyone; instead, I stand in solidarity with those who are happy with who they are and at peace with themselves. It is essential to me to spread a message of love and understanding. I want to ensure that everyone feels safe, supported, and celebrated for being their true selves, just as

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Chad Jr. did! The strength and resilience of the LGBT community inspires me, and I am committed to being an ally in any way I can.

### **Florida House District 22**

**Candidates: David Arreola & Chad Johnson**

1. Would you support non-discrimination legislation that would make it illegal to fire someone or deny them housing because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression?

**David Arreola:** I would absolutely sponsor and/or co-sponsor this important legislation. Florida must be a fair state to work and live in by being free of discrimination of any kind towards basic human and civil rights.

**Chad Johnson:** Did not respond to questionnaire

2. Do you support marriage equality for same-sex couples?

**Arreola:** Yes, I have unequivocally supported marriage equality my entire life.

3. Would you oppose any attempts to reinstate Florida's ban on LGBT adoption?

**Arreola:** Absolutely not. That type of legislation is an attack on civil and public life.

4. How will you vote on Florida Amendment 4, the constitutional amendment to limit government interference with abortion, and why?

**Arreola:** I will be voting yes because pregnant Floridians have a right to adequate medical care and that includes abortion.

5. Describe efforts you have taken locally to support or advocate for LGBT rights.

**Arreola:** I have personally supported LGBT rights in word and deed. As a Gainesville City Commissioner I enthusiastically voted for Commissioner Helen Warren's motion to ban harmful so-called 'conversion therapy' in the city.

I also supported the placement of Gainesville's downtown rainbow crosswalks. These crosswalks are personal to me as they are a memory of my friend Terry Fleming, God rest his soul.

I have enjoyed attending Gainesville's many Pride month events including the pride parade, the spirit of pride awards, and fundraisers for Equality Florida, who has endorsed my campaign to flip HD-22.

I'm a proud ally to my LGBT family members, friends, and neighbors. I will continue to champion the LGBT community and defend LGBT rights as human rights.

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### **Support HRCNCF in Informing Voters and Representing Equality**

Founded in 1993, HRCNCF works to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the interest of civic betterment and social welfare.

Donations from supporters like you allow HRCNCF to mail issues of The Guardian to members and supporters to inform them about important elections and issues affecting LGBTQ+ rights. You can support the work of HRCNCF in educating voters and representing equality at community events by donating online or by mail.

Visit [hrcncf.net](http://hrcncf.net) to donate online, find our donation form to print, or fill out the form in the newsletter and return it with your mailed donation. You can use the form or go online to update your contact information so that you continue to receive the newsletter by mail or email. Members receive candidate endorsements with their newsletters.

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### Important Dates and Voting Information for the General Election

Election Day is Tuesday, November 05, 2024. Polling places are open 7 a.m to 7 p.m. Early voting takes place October 21- November 3, 2024 at eight early voting locations in Alachua County from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Locations can be found on the supervisor of elections website.

Haven't received your vote-by-mail ballot? You may need to renew your request. To request or track your ballot, visit the supervisor of elections website at: [www.votealachua.com](http://www.votealachua.com) or call 352-374-5252. After completing your ballot and signing the envelope, you can return it by mail (postage is

paid), in secure drop boxes at early voting sites during early voting, or to the supervisor of elections during office hours. The deadline for ballots to be received is 7 p.m. on election night.

Whether by mail, early, or on election day, prepare your voting plan today. For sample ballots, precinct locations, voter ID requirements and other important voting information, visit [www.votealachua.com](http://www.votealachua.com) or call the supervisor's office with questions about voting.

### HRCNCF Board Meets Monthly

HRCNCF board of directors meets every second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Pride Community Center of North Central Florida, 3850 NW 83rd Street, Unit 201. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Officers:  
Tracy Moorman, President  
Diane McDilda, Vice President  
Tim Martin, Treasurer  
Kristen Young, Secretary

Board members: Linda Bassham, Sue Eichner, David Juras, Rachel LaCombe, Alton McDilda

### Find HRCNCF at Coming Events

**November 2nd:** Spirit of Pride Community Awards Dinner

**November 5th:** Election Day

**November 14th:** HRCNCF monthly meeting at Pride Community Center at 7 p.m.

**November 16th:** HRCNCF adopt-a-road clean-up. Meet at 9 a.m. at Westside Park.

*Thank you for your support!*



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