

The Florida Times-Union

Friday
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\$2

NCAA Tournament

MIAMI BOUNCED

Villanova breezes past Hurricanes 92-69 to advance to Elite 8

Sports, C-1



A YEAR LATER, 'I BLINKED; AND IT WAS OVER' OBITUARY LIVES ON

Metro, B-1

UF'S BASEBALL, SOFTBALL TEAMS SHARE NO. 1 RANKING

Sports, C-1



CHERISH PERRYWINKLE CASE

'I FEEL LIKE A FOOL'

911 calls reveal mother's panic after her 8-year-old daughter was abducted



Rayne Perrywinkle



Cherish Perrywinkle



By Larry Hannan
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The moment her child went missing, Rayne Perrywinkle knew she'd made a horrible mistake.

"I feel like a fool," Perrywinkle said in her 911 phone call to police after 8-year-old Cherish disappeared in June 2013.

She would never see her daughter alive again. Cherish's body was found near a creek off Broward Road the next morning after she'd been raped and strangled.

Struggling not to panic, Perrywinkle told police she got a bad feeling about Donald James Smith when she first saw him at the Dollar General on Edgewood Avenue West, at first fearing the unkempt man was going to rob her in front of her children.

"I had a strange feeling about him when I first met him," Perrywinkle said. "He took her [Cherish] to the dressing room twice. And I was hoping that she would be OK."

But she didn't want

CHERISH continues on A-3



SURVEILLANCE VIDEO

Top to Bottom: 8-year-old Cherish Perrywinkle is shown in a Wal-Mart with her mother Rayne and suspect Donald Smith in June 2013; the family is shown looking at clothing in Wal-Mart; Cherish is shown in the Dollar General store.



Donald James Smith

Brown faces challenges on 2 fronts

Questions have been raised before; expect her to fight, observers say

By Steve Patterson & Christopher Hong
The Times-Union



U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown faces questions from federal investigators, House panel.

U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown has been in trouble before, but this time might be different.

Heading into a Tallahassee court hearing Friday on redrawing her congressional district, the Jacksonville Democrat faces fights on two fronts.

As she tries to protect a Jacksonville-to-Orlando district she consistently wins, Brown also has to prepare to answer questions from a House ethics committee and federal investigators after she was subpoenaed in January for reasons she has refused to discuss.

But after 23 years in office, backers expect Brown to be ready for a struggle that could define her career.

"She's a fighter. No matter what the odds, she's

willing to go at it," former Mayor John Delaney said. "I think that what you're going to see is a fight to the death."

That may be a spectacle that never comes. There are no criminal charges against Brown now, not even generic findings of wrongdoing. There are, however, people who trust she can still command votes.

"I come from the school that people underestimate Corrine Brown at their own peril," said Democratic strategist Steve Schale, who led President Barack Obama's election efforts in Florida in 2008. "... I think that she would be an ex-

BROWN continues on A-3

Scottish company to bring 200 jobs

It is making its North American headquarters in Jacksonville

By Roger Bull
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Scotland-based City Refrigeration Holdings is opening its North American headquarters in Jacksonville, creating more than 200 jobs.

The company's first contract on this side of the world is managing the facilities at 750 Winn-Dixie, Bi-Lo and Harveys grocery stores.

Because the city often doesn't name a company it is recruiting to move here, City Refrigeration was called "Project Star" in

legislation Tuesday night when City Council approved the incentives.

Mayor Lenny Curry stepped onto a podium Thursday at Omni Jacksonville Hotel and made the announcement.

City Refrigeration does facilities management, meaning all the mechanical and electrical elements of a business. It already has operations in the United Kingdom, Australia and Malaysia, but this is its first move into North America, where it will be under the name City Facilities Management (FL).

The company already has its first big contract with Southeastern Grocers,

JOB5 continues on A-3

Hollywood turns up heat on Georgia's governor

Movie stars, executives join chorus targeting liberty bill seen as anti-gay

By Niraj Chokshi
The Washington Post

Nearly three dozen actors, directors, writers and producers said in a letter

addressed to Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal on Thursday that the state would lose their business if he signs a religious liberty bill into law.

The letter's 34 signatories include Kristin Chenoweth, Lee Daniels, Anne Hathaway, Seth MacFarlane, Julianne Moore, Rob Reiner, Aaron Sorkin, Marisa Tomei, Gus Van Sant and Harvey Weinstein.

"We have deep concerns about H.B. 757," they write,

describing the Free Exercise Protection Act as anti-gay. "... We pride ourselves on running inclusive companies, and while we have enjoyed a positive partnership on productions in Georgia, we will plan to take our business elsewhere if any legislation sanctioning discrimination

is signed into state law."

Proponents say the bill, which passed the General Assembly last week, merely protects religious expression. It would defend religious leaders from being forced to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies and protect individuals from being forced

to attend such events. It also allows faith-based organizations to deny use of their facilities for events they find "objectionable" and exempts them from having to hire or retain an employee whose religious beliefs or practices differ

GEORGIA continues on A-3

Weather
Some thunderstorms
Forecast on A-2

83 Today's high

64 Saturday morning's low

DAILY DEAL!

Jacksonville Chiropractic & Acupuncture
Details, A-2

Classified D-4 Legals C-7
Comics E-6 Jack E
Crosswords D-7, E-6 Money D
Editorials A-8 Obituaries B-7

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NO. 85
151ST YEAR
5 SECTIONS
46 PAGES

6 5486 00100 4

BROWN

Continued from A-1

ceptionally strong candidate regardless.”

But months before voters have their say about Brown's future, ethics have already become topical in the campaign, said former state Sen. Al Lawson, who is challenging Brown in a district currently scheduled to stretch from Jacksonville west past Tallahassee.

“Every time you go to a forum, you're going to have to answer to it,” Lawson said. “And it's hard to run against that.”

The stakes seemed smaller when ethics questions were raised before.

The House ethics committee criticized Brown for poor judgment in 2000, but ultimately dropped an investigation into gifts to her family from an imprisoned African businessman.

Brown had urged the White House to release the Gambian businessman, Foutanga Dit Babani Sissoko, before he had completed his sentence for a 1997 bribery conviction.

The committee spent more than a year investigating whether Brown broke ethical rules by her or her family staying at a Miami condominium Sissoko owned and by her daughter, attorney Shantrel Brown, receiving a Lexus worth about \$50,000 from an associate of his.

In the end, the case went away because Sissoko returned to Africa and was “beyond the reach of the committee's subpoena power and could not be compelled to give testimony,” a committee report later said.

That problem seems unlikely this time.

A key figure in one of the latest controversies involving Brown lives just 40 miles from Capitol Hill, and agreed to help authorities when she signed a plea agreement this month admitting a role in conspiring to commit wire fraud with an unnamed public official and an employee of that official.

The person making that plea, One Door for Education president Carla Wiley, acknowledged the three raised about \$800,000 through a sham charity that prosecutors said only issued a



Mark Wallheiser Associated Press

U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown answers questions after speaking to the Florida House and Senate committees on redistricting in August. She's challenging the redrawing of the district that she consistently wins.

single \$1,000 charity scholarship.

The unnamed official in that plea agreement closely resembles Brown, but the ethics committee announcement didn't say whether that was the root of the claims it was investigating.

Unlike the relatively narrow questions posed about Brown in 2000, the committee said Wednesday it was examining “allegations that she engaged in improper conduct relating to certain outside organizations, including allegations that she may have conspired with other persons in connection with fraudulent activity, improperly solicited charitable donations, used campaign funds for personal purposes, used official resources for impermissible non-official purposes, failed to comply with tax laws, and made false statements, and/or failed to make required disclosures, to the House of Representatives and Federal Election Commission.”

That mouthful might all relate to the Leesburg, Va.-based One

Door — making false statements and failing to make disclosures might be as simple as not including money from One Door in yearly financial disclosure forms, for example — but there's no way to be sure now.

The committee agreed not to pursue its work until the Justice Department finishes a separate investigation involving Brown, a decision prosecutors requested. While that underscores a potential for criminal charges, it's also easier for the committee to just wait and see whether a member of Congress quits or is sent to prison, either of which would end the committee's jurisdiction.

“It's a wise allocation of their investigative resources,” said R. Blake Chisam, former chief counsel for the committee.

It's not uncommon for the committee's work to overlap with other investigations.

“An Ethics Committee review often mushrooms into all sorts of avenues of inquiry. My read is that's what has happened here,” said Elliot Berke, a Washington attorney who has represented

clients in committee investigations.

For Brown, ethics complaints started even before she entered Congress.

Months before she won a seat in Congress in 1992, a rival candidate, Andy Johnson, told the Florida House of Representatives that Brown used staff she employed as a member of the Legislature to operate a travel agency she ran in the same Springfield building as her legislative office.

“It is illegal — and unethical, wicked, even reprehensible — that this representative uses her public office for private gain,” Johnson wrote in a complaint that the Florida Commission on Ethics eventually settled. Brown stipulated to misusing a public position and agreed to pay the state \$5,000 as compensation.

Reporter Tia Mitchell contributed to this story.

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JOBS

Continued from A-1

Jacksonville-based parent company of Winn-Dixie, Bi-Lo and Harveys grocery stores. The contract starts 7 a.m. Monday morning, said Gerry Phimister, CEO of City Refrigeration.

He said 160 Southeastern Grocers employees have moved over to his company. In addition, City Refrigeration hired 140 administrators and technicians, with another 75 positions, mostly technicians, still open.

Some of those will be based throughout the southeast where the stores are, but most will be in Jacksonville, he said. The average salary is \$67,000 a year.

The company leased 17,100 square feet at Cypress Point Business Park on the Southside.

Phimister said his company would have moved to Jacksonville even without the Southeastern Grocers contract. They've talked about expanding to the United States for years, he said, but began talks in earnest with the city in April 2015.

“It's a statement about the trips overseas, the trips to London and what they mean to the city,” Curry said.

The company will receive \$353,000 in incentives, including a \$30,600 grant and \$200,000 tax credit from the city along with \$122,400 from the state.

The contract with Southeastern Grocers is for five years with a five-year option.

Phimister said the company is looking to add more customers once it gets settled.

As for Southeastern Grocers, Holly Agell, senior vice president of store development, said it's the first time the company has entered a contract like this.

In the past, she said, it has relied on in-house employees and contracts with a variety of other companies. Even if and when City Refrigeration adds more customers, she said, the employees that service the grocery stores will remain dedicated to just those stores.

That arrangement isn't common in the U.S., she said, but is more common elsewhere in the world.

Roger Bull: (904) 359-4296



Newly released evidence from the State Attorney's Office includes surveillance video that shows 8-year-old Cherish Perrywinkle in a Dollar General and Wal-Mart on the day of her disappearance. Cherish was abducted from Wal-Mart in June 2013 after Donald James Smith offered to buy the family clothes.

CHERISH

Continued from A-1

Smith to think she was an over-protective mother who was freaking out, Perrywinkle said in the 911 call that was released Wednesday with other materials as part of ongoing public records requests in the case.

Smith told Perrywinkle that his name was Don and he was waiting for his wife. He then convinced Perrywinkle to let him drive the family to Wal-Mart on Lem Turner Road by offering to buy them clothes and food.

“He saw that I was struggling to buy them some clothes,” Perrywinkle said about Cherish and her two other children. “He drove us here [to the Wal-Mart] to buy us some clothes and the only reason I went with him was he said his wife was going to be here. Because I told him I don't take rides with strangers.”

It was a lie. Smith, 59, isn't married, and Perrywinkle didn't know he was a registered sex offender with a long criminal record who'd been released from prison the month before.

Through her panic, Perrywinkle struggled to remember basic details during her call. She told the 911 operator she couldn't remember what her daughter was wearing, what Smith was

wearing or much detail of what Smith's white van looked like, beyond that there was carpet in it.

Perrywinkle said she shopped at the Wal-Mart for over an hour with Smith, filling up a cart with clothes that he told her he would buy for her with a \$100 gift certificate.

“I had a bad feeling. I thought well, I feel like pinching myself because this is too good to be true,” Perrywinkle said. “So I got to the checkout and he wasn't here.”

While Perrywinkle was shopping, Smith offered to go to the McDonald's in the Wal-Mart and get everyone some food. Perrywinkle agreed, and Cherish went with him before they vanished.

Perrywinkle lost custody of her two other children not long after Cherish was killed. She has declined to speak about her efforts to regain custody of her children or the criminal case against Smith, but has been to almost every hearing in the case.

The batch of materials released this week also includes video footage of Perrywinkle and her family interacting with Smith at both the Wal-Mart and the Dollar General and several phone calls other people made to 911 after Cherish was reported missing.

In one phone call, a man tells police he rented a room from Smith's mother and helped him

remove seats from the van the day before the abduction happened.

In a second phone call, a woman tells police she thought she saw the van parked behind a church on Rutgers Road, near where Cherish's body was eventually found.

Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for Smith, who is charged with first-degree murder, kidnapping and sexual battery. The trial was recently delayed with a new date not yet set.

The case led to the tightening of civil commitment laws in Florida.

Several officers involved in the case also were disciplined for not responding quickly enough and doubting Perrywinkle's story at first.

Police were concerned she was trying to keep her daughter from a visit and trip to California the next day with the girl's biological father. Cherish was seen on video surveillance walking out of the Wal-Mart several feet behind Smith, creating doubt as to whether she was actually being abducted.

That doubt evaporated several hours later once Smith was identified from the video and police realized he was a registered sex offender.

Larry Hannan: (904) 359-4470

“Disney and Marvel are inclusive companies, and although we have had great experiences filming in Georgia, we will plan to take our business elsewhere should any legislation allowing discriminatory practices be signed into state law.”

Walt Disney Co. statement

GEORGIA

Continued from A-1

from those of the organization.

The Thursday letter, facilitated by the gay rights group Human Rights Campaign, is the latest volley in a nationwide effort to defeat the bill by economic threat.

A day earlier, Disney and its studio subsidiary Marvel issued a similar threat.

“Disney and Marvel are inclusive companies, and although we have had great experiences filming in Georgia, we will plan to take our business elsewhere should any legislation allowing discriminatory practices be signed into state law,” the Walt Disney Co. said in a statement, which was issued just days after HRC President Chad Griffin called on Hollywood leaders to wield their influence to defeat the bill.

Time Warner — parent company to HBO, Warner Bros. and Atlanta-based CNN — urged Deal to veto the bill in its own Thursday statement.

AMC Networks, which films its hit show “The Walking Dead” in Georgia, reportedly said the same.

Film production is big business in the state, whose capital Atlanta is known as the “Hollywood of the South.”

One 2014 study of 106 feature films found that Georgia was home to more film production than every state but California and New York. The state itself reported \$1.7 billion in in-state spending on film and television productions in the 2015 fiscal year.

Georgia has served as home to the recent movies “Ant-Man,” “Captain America: Civil War,” “Lila & Eve,” “Vacation,” “A Walk in the Woods,” “Goosebumps” and “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2,” according to the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

Production of “Ant-Man” helped to employ 3,579 Georgians and generated more than

\$106 million in in-state spending, the department reported. “Ant-Man” and “Captain America: Civil War” are Marvel movies.

Hollywood is far from the only industry to oppose the measure.

The National Football League last week suggested the bill's passage could jeopardize Atlanta's Super Bowl bid and several sports teams joined the league in weighing in on the bill. At least 20 Fortune 500 companies — including Delta Air Lines, Google, Home Depot, IBM, Marriott, Microsoft, Nordstrom, Coca-Cola, Dow Chemical, UPS and Verizon — belong to a “Georgia Prospers,” a coalition urging the bill's veto. The coalition has several hundred corporate members in all.

Proponents of the measure say it merely defends religious rights.

All Georgia citizens, organizations and businesses need protection from adverse legislation that would infringe upon their religious beliefs regarding marriage, defined in the Bible as the union of one man and one woman,” J. Robert White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, said in a statement last month, urging passage of an earlier version of the measure.

Deal has walked a careful line in his public statements on the bill. He opposed an earlier version and vowed to veto any measure that legalized discrimination, but then said he was “pleasantly surprised” by the compromise that led to the bill's passage last week, according to local reports.

“I have heard from both sides, and I'm sure I'll continue to hear from both sides,” he said, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. “I will take their opinions into consideration, and I'll do what I'm required to do, which is to make the difficult decision on a very difficult subject.”

He plans to make his decision next month, according to the paper.