

# The Florida Times-Union

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\$2

## ON THE FIELD

ALL 90 PLAYERS, INCLUDING ALBERT, REPORT FOR JAGS MINI-CAMP **Sports, C-1**



## LOVING LIFE

AT 111, AMERICA'S OLDEST VETERAN IS RIGHT WHERE HE WANTS TO BE **Life, D-1**



JUMBO SHRIMP TO GIVE OUT PREGNANCY TESTS DURING 'YOU MIGHT BE THE FATHER'S DAY' PROMOTION **Money, B-7**

# 49 Pulse victims honored on anniversary of massacre



Pulse nightclub owner Barbara Poma and Orlando city commissioners Patty Sheehan and Regina Hill sing during a ceremony that commemorated the one-year anniversary of the massacre at the club. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel)

By Mike Schneider & Terrance Harris  
Associated Press

ORLANDO | Church bells tolled 49 times, a giant rainbow flag hung from a county government building and the names of the victims of the Pulse nightclub attack were read aloud at various ceremonies Monday as people in Orlando and beyond remembered the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

At 2:02 a.m., survivors, victims' families, club employees and local officials were gathered for a private service at the gay club at the exact time Omar Mateen opened fire a year ago and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. He was eventually killed by police after a three-hour

PULSE continues on A-3



Artist Yuri Karabash hugs a family member of a victim at the Pulse nightclub in front of his mural that commemorates the one-year anniversary of the massacre. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel)

*"The true legacy of our community is going to be in our darkest hour we responded with love and compassion and unity."*

Teresa Jacobs,  
Orange County mayor

# Florida Health Choices might not be option

After Scott vetoes funding, insurance exchange could shut down next year

By Tia Mitchell  
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TALLAHASSEE | It was the brainchild of then-Speaker Marco Rubio: a health insurance exchange to help Floridians and small businesses find affordable health coverage.

The Florida Health Choices insurance exchange never quite lived up to Rubio's vision as it competed with a rival marketplace created under the Affordable Care Act. Now, the state-based exchange could fold after Gov. Rick Scott vetoed funding intended to keep it afloat another year.

Without the \$250,000 allocation, there is little money to pay Chief Executive Officer Rose Naff and keep the website maintained.

"We will have to close our doors and go to some sort of virtual office or contract it out to another entity," Naff said.

The Florida Health Choices board of directors has to decide what to do with the 3-year-old exchange, which has about 712 existing customers, far fewer than the 3,000 to 4,000 needed for the exchange to be self-sufficient. It has received more than \$2 million in state funding since its inception.

Floridians who purchased policies or coverage plans on the exchange won't lose their coverage in the short term, but new sales could be halted.

The FHC Board of Directors will meet via teleconference June 23. Among the options the group will discuss is dissolving the corporation sometime after the start of 2018.

Rubio has said little about Florida Health Choices since becoming a member of the U.S. Senate. His idea was part of a 2006 book, but the Affordable Care Act stole much of its thunder when it was signed into law in 2010. Florida's exchange had not yet launched because of vendor issues and other delays.

The GOP-controlled Legislature could have approved changes at Florida Health Choices so that it fit within the requirements of the new federal law, but mem-

HEALTH continues on A-3

## JaxPort details potential cost to city of dredging

River deepening project would need \$47 million to \$150 million from city

By David Bauerlein  
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The city's share of the cost for deepening the St. Johns River could be as high as \$150.7 million or as low as \$47 million, according to scenarios outlined by the Jacksonville Port Authority for how to finance the \$484 million

project. The range of costs hinges on how much federal support pours into the project. The more the federal government spends, the less JaxPort would seek from the city to cover the cost of the deep dredge, aimed at attracting jumbo-sized cargo ships.

Whatever the city's costs

might be, JaxPort won't request any funding from City Council until the 2019-20 fiscal year, which sets up an interesting political dynamic for the spring 2019 elections when voters will elect a mayor and 19 City Council members.

"Will it be an important issue? Sure," said University of North Florida political science professor Matt Corrigan. "I think if you talk about a major project for the future of the city, this is on the top-five list,

and whether people want to do it or not is an indication of where it might head."

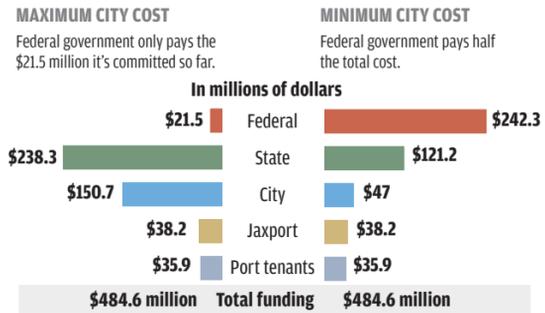
Mayor Lenny Curry, who has been involved in talks with the Port Authority, said Monday he backs the funding plan advanced by JaxPort Interim CEO Eric Green.

"Eric Green and his team laid out a plan to grow our port and local economy," Curry said in a statement.

RIVER continues on A-3

## Paying for river deepening

JaxPort's plan for deepening the St. Johns River would pull funding from several sources. The city's cost would depend on how much the federal government puts into the project.



Source: JaxPort

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Weather  
Heavy downpour  
Forecast on A-2

86 Today's high

73 Wednesday morning's low

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# Sessions to testify in public hearing

By Sari Horwitz & Karoun Demirjian  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON | Attorney General Jeff Sessions's appearance Tuesday before the Senate Intelligence Committee will be a high-stakes test for a Trump official who has become a central figure in the scandal engulfing the White House over Russia and the firing of James Comey as FBI director but has so far kept a low profile.

Sessions, a former Republican senator from Alabama, will face tough questions from his former colleagues on a number of fronts that he has never had to publicly address in detail.

Democrats plan to ask about his contacts during the 2016 campaign with the Russian ambassador to the United States, Sergey Kislyak, which the attorney general failed to disclose fully during his confirmation hearing.

They also want him to explain his role in the firing of Comey, despite the attorney general's recusal in March from the Russia investigation following revelations of his meetings with Kislyak.

"If, as the president said, I was fired because of the Russia investigation, why was the attorney general involved in that chain?" Comey said in testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee last week.

Sessions also is likely to face questions about Comey's cryptic assertion that the FBI knew of a "problematic" reason that Sessions should not oversee the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Democratic lawmakers are skeptical that Sessions will divulge any explosive new details, especially since the at-

torney general could assert executive privilege regarding any questions about conversations with the president.

But they hope the hearing offers a chance to at least get Sessions on the record as either answering or dodging answers about pivotal events related to Comey and the FBI's investigation.

"There are many unanswered and troubling questions, so the attorney general needs to be forthcoming," said Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y. "The Senate and the American people deserve to know exactly what involvement with the Russian investigation he had before his recusal, what safeguards are in place to prevent his meddling, and why he felt it was appropriate to recommend the firing of Director Comey when he was leading that investigation."

For the embattled attorney general, the hearing will be the first time he is questioned by senators since January, when he testified during his confirmation hearing that he did not communicate with Russian officials during the campaign, when Sessions acted as an adviser to Trump.

As the White House's political crisis over the Russia investigation has grown, the attorney general has laid low. While Sessions used to frequently answer questions from reporters discussing his criminal justice initiatives, he stopped in late April, just before Comey was dismissed.

Sessions had a remarkable path to the attorney general post. He was an early and vocal supporter of Trump during the campaign, when most Republican lawmakers dismissed the candidate.

## GOP senators unaware of health care policy details

By Joe Williams  
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON | Several Republican senators have no knowledge of the specific policy proposals GOP leadership is weighing for inclusion in the pending legislation to overhaul the U.S. health care system.

The lack of widespread knowledge among members about the exact policy under review calls into question whether Republicans will be able to advance a bill before the Fourth of July recess, the timeline that GOP aides say Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is operating under.

While there have been thrice-weekly meetings on the legislation to repeal and replace the 2010 health care law, those have mostly focused on broad policy.

And while complete legislative text has not yet been drafted, leadership has begun initial conversations with the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office on several proposals.

But GOP senators say they don't know what those are.

"While I haven't seen the language, I am hoping that it stays within the confines of what we've discussed within the caucus," Sen. Jodi Ernst of Iowa told Roll Call.

That echoes comments from other Republican members, like Sens. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, Ted Cruz of Texas and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana.

Johnson said he is "curious" what will be in the bill, before telling reporters "it's not a good process." Cassidy also said he was "not confident" in the process so far.

"As we go along, we hear more and more details as to what's being considered and so this week I do expect to hear more details," he said on Monday.



People attend the "Hugs Not Hate" heart memorial outside Pulse nightclub in Orlando. Local leaders said the hateful act caused an outpouring of love from Orlando and the wider world. (Photos by Kayla O'Brien/Orlando Sentinel)

## PULSE

Continued from A-1

standoff on June 12, 2016.

"I realize that gathering here in this place, at this hour, is beyond difficult," Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer said. "But I also know that the strength you've shown over the past year will carry you through today and in the future."

The service began what would be almost 24 hours of solemn remembrances. During a midday service, the Orlando Gay Chorus performed Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors" and speakers talked less about the tragedy and more about how Orlando area residents came together in the aftermath.

Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs said the city will only partly be remembered for the shooting. Most of the patrons killed were gay Latinos.

"That will be a part of the history books, but the true legacy of our community is going to be in our darkest hour we responded with love and compassion and unity," Jacobs said.

At noon, church bells throughout the Orlando area rang 49 times. Gov. Rick Scott ordered U.S. flags around Florida to be flown at half-staff and a gay-pride flag was unveiled at the Orange County government building. In the evening, rain didn't deter thousands of people from showing up at a remembrance in downtown Orlando in front of an amphitheater that was painted in gay-pride rainbow colors after the massacre.

Pulse owner Barbara Poma said when people ask her what has changed in her life since the tragedy, she tells them "everything." But she said she is grateful for the outpouring of support. She plans to build a



Lizbeth DaVila touches a painted rock at the "Hugs Not Hate" heart memorial outside Pulse nightclub in Orlando. Hundreds of people dropped off flowers, drawings and cards outside the night club to honor the victims of the massacre.

memorial at the site of the nightclub, which has been closed since the tragedy.

"I miss Pulse," she said. "I miss everything it stood for."

President Donald Trump tweet out a photo of the victims and said: "We will NEVER FORGET the victims who lost their lives one year ago today in the horrific #PulseNightClub shooting. #OrlandoUnitedDay."

Local leaders said Mateen's hateful act caused an outpouring of love from Orlando and the wider world.

"What a terrorist tries to do is divide us," U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson said. "Isn't it interesting it had the opposite effect? It brought us together in unity and love."

Outside Pulse, hundreds of people dropped off flowers, drawings and cards.

"It still hurts, it's still very raw," said Erin Anderson, a friend and former co-worker of Pulse victim Xavier Serrano Rosado.

Jeannine Williams used to live within walking distance of Pulse and was a frequent visitor. She had made plans to be there the night of the shooting but decided to go another night club.

"A year later I think the thing that is most important is this community and why I live here and why I'm so happy to live here," Williams said through tears. "The support we not only have from our city government, it's not fleeting support, it's not support on certain days. It's the way the community is. This is Orlando. This is why I just love living here."

Next door to the club, an anti-gay protester was pushed to the ground by an officer and handcuffed as the crowd chanted "love conquers hate." Local television stations showed police officers talking to two protesters with an anti-gay sign and wearing anti-gay slogans on their shirts, as the men argued with the officers that they had a right to be there.

An officer can be seen holding out his hand to keep one of the men from walking any further as the man pushes back against his hand. Moments later, the officer pushes the man back and the man falls down. Spokeswomen for the police and city didn't return an email or phone call, and it was unknown if the man was taken into custody or charged.

A steady stream of visitors came by the Orange County Regional History Center to see an exhibit of memorial items, including 49 crosses with the victims' names and photos attached.

"The crosses were incredibly impactful," said Monique Stewart, an Orlando resident. "I feel like every piece that they collected was deliberate and serves a point and it just ties back to remembering those 49 people and spreading love."

## HEALTH

Continued from A-1

bers resisted because they disagreed politically with former President Barack Obama. Florida Health Choices began selling policies in 2014 but had relatively few takers. Unlike the Obamacare exchange, Florida's marketplace could not offer subsidies to help customers afford coverage.

To attract more customers, Florida Health Choices began offering discount plans as an alternative to comprehensive coverage. The Legislature provided more dollars to keep it afloat, largely in the hopes the Affordable Care Act would be struck down by courts or dismantled by a Republican-led Congress.

"I don't know if it's an idea that was before its time or maybe just too late for its time," said Sen. Anitere Flores, a Miami Republican and chairwoman of the Florida Senate's health care budget committee.



Gov. Rick Scott talks to legislators at the end of the special session. Florida Health Choices CEO Rose Naff said Scott's veto message on blocking the funds made it sound like he didn't understand the program. (AP Photo/Steve Cannon)

In vetoing the \$250,000 contained in the 2017-2018 state budget, Scott said he did not approve of spending public dollars on marketing the exchange at the expense of direct client services. He also described Florida Health Choices as a private venture, even though the Legislature has always said it is a public-private initiative.

Naff said the governor's

office did not request any information ahead of the veto or let her know the funding was in jeopardy.

"The veto message sounds like they don't actually understand the program or the value they have for small employers," she said.

Since Rubio's exit, the biggest voice in the Legislature for Florida Health Choices has been Sen.

meeting with City Council members this week about the funding scenarios. Green said the meetings are aimed at bringing City Council members up to speed on where the project stands.

"We're not asking the city to commit a dime today to the project," he said. "We're just giving an update as we move forward."

He said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's decision last month to give the first dose of federal funding to the deepening while designating it a "new start" project is a huge step forward from the federal standpoint. The "new start" designation doesn't guarantee future funding, but the federal government selects a limited number of projects with an eye to-

ward being able to finish what gets started.

"The financial model from a year ago is totally different from what it is today," Green said. "I think that's something the city leadership deserves to know, and I think it's something the community deserves to know. We're in a much better place."

The Army Corps could start the first phase of dredging by the end of the year. The corps would use a combination of federal funding, state Department of Transportation dollars, and JaxPort funding.

To keep the project moving forward, the state and JaxPort would continue to spend on dredging in the 2018 fiscal year, and then the state and port tenants would join together for

Aaron Bean, R-Fernandina Beach. He is the one who submitted paperwork requesting the \$250,000 and fought for funding to be included during budget negotiations with House members during the regular session that ended in May.

He said the money was the first step to reaching three goals: keeping the state exchange alive, increasing the number of customers and serving as a backup plan in case changes to Obamacare are made at the federal level.

"I feel so strongly about keeping them as a health care option," Bean said. "It's that important."

The Senate likely won't take another shot at restoring funding for Florida Health Choices until the 2018 session begins in January. That could be too late. Naff said there is only enough cash to keep the office open for another month or two.

"We'll have to make some pretty big changes this summer," she said.

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## RIVER

Continued from A-1

"That plan includes federal, local and state funding. I support their plan."

The federal government has put up \$21.5 million so far for the deepening. The federal government potentially could pay for as much as half of the dredging, which would amount to a total of \$242 million from Washington.

JaxPort spokeswoman Nancy Rubin said the port authority is confident the deepening won't require the high-water mark of \$150.7 million from the city because the federal government will add funding as the multiyear project moves forward.

JaxPort officials are

financing the deepening in the 2019 fiscal year. It's rare for port tenants to pay for harbor deepening, but TraPac and SSA, which operate at JaxPort terminals, signed a joint statement pledging to support the dredging.

The city's funding would begin in the 2020 fiscal year and continue in installments for another three years.

In the run-up to 2020, all eyes would be on whether the federal government will continue shelling out money for the project.

In the case of deepening Savannah's ship channel, which is already underway, the corps put in about \$43 million last year and will spend another \$45 million this year.

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