

# The Florida Times-Union

★  
Friday  
JANUARY 12, 2018  
\$2



**WINTER JAM**  
Christian metal band Skillet headlines Friday in Veterans Memorial Arena  
Life, E-1

**TRUMP PROFANELY SNUBS THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES**  
Nation, A-3

## Call to suspend issuing tickets

City Council leader cites state attorney bulletin on pedestrian citations

By Ben Conarck & Topher Sanders  
The Times-Union and ProPublica

The Jacksonville City Council president and other local lawmakers have called for suspending the issuing of pedestrian tickets in the wake of a state attorney's office bulletin, the substance of which suggests that hundreds of tickets had been issued in error in recent years.

Jacksonville Assistant State Attorney Andrew Kantor on Tuesday issued a bulletin to the Jacksonville

Sheriff's Office detailing the proper enforcement of Florida's pedestrian statutes — a document that supports a recent Times-Union/ProPublica analysis showing police have been issuing certain crosswalk violations in error, ticketing hundreds of pedestrians for failing to cross at formal intersections even when no such option was readily available.

"I'd like to make sure that we are enforcing the laws appropriately," City Council President Anna

Brosche said shortly after being made aware of the state attorney's bulletin. "I do support a pause to make sure that everything is being enforced that should be."

The Times-Union/ProPublica analysis published late last year found that more than 300 tickets over the last five years for pedestrians crossing streets outside a crosswalk resulted from mistaken interpretations of the applicable statute — errors that resulted in unwarranted

finances and suspensions of people's driver's licenses.

While the statute bars pedestrians from crossing streets outside formal crosswalks when they are "between adjacent intersections at which traffic control signals are in operation," officers nonetheless issued scores of tickets to people who had no reasonable access to such intersections. In short, people were being punished for failing to avail themselves of safety features that weren't easily accessible.

During the Times-Union and ProPublica's reporting on the tickets last fall, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office said it would seek guidance on pedestrian statute enforcement from the local state attorney. Kantor's bulletin was his answer to the sheriff's request. The office did not examine the tickets identified by the Times-Union and ProPublica, and the bulletin does not refer to the Times-Union/ProPublica findings.

TICKETS continues on A-3

**Committee formed to review deal for District**

By David Bauerlein  
david.bauerlein@jacksonville.com

City Council President Anna Brosche formed a special committee Thursday that she directed to dig into the complex proposal for building The District in downtown, including the ultimate question of whether it would be best to reopen the riverfront property to a fresh round of proposals from private developers.

In a memo announcing formation of the committee, Brosche said it will examine the proposed financing mechanisms and cost-sharing proposals, the fiscal impact on taxpayers "of both pursuing and not pursuing this deal as currently structured," the likelihood of successful completion of The District with the proposed deal, and the likely return on investment for the city and JEA, which owns the Southbank property.

The committee also will research "the potential costs and benefits to the city and JEA of abandoning The District proposal" and inviting other developers to submit proposals based on the financial framework for The District, according to Brosche's memo.

Elements of Jacksonville, the developer seeking to build The District, blasted Brosche's decision to appoint Matt Schellenberg, a vocal critic of the current proposal, to be chairman of the five-member special committee. Schellenberg has urged JEA to cut ties with Elements and reopen

COMMITTEE continues on A-3

## STEELY RESOLVE



Jaguars fans (from left) Clay Tribble, Eric Prisby, Brian Roberts, Jesse Jannette and Roshan Patel will be joined by three other friends for Jacksonville's playoff game in Pittsburgh on Sunday. The trip involves a complicated travel scenario of planes, cars and three travel hubs that do not include either city, but Orlando and Cleveland instead. (Bob Mack/Florida Times-Union)

## Jaguars fans plan extreme measures to get to Pittsburgh

By Drew Dixon  
drew.dixon@jacksonville.com

Brian Roberts has been a Jacksonville Jaguars fan since the NFL franchise was founded more than 20 years ago and there's no way he's going to miss the team's next playoff game Sunday against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Jacksonville native Roberts, 30, a paralegal, was so determined to get to the game, he even bought tickets to Sunday's divisional round before the Jaguars played the Buffalo Bills in Jacksonville last Sunday.

Roberts and seven of his friends demonstrate a hardcore football fan's commitment to a team and a study in an elaborate personal finance model.

"I love to travel and I love the Jags. So, you're combining two of my favorite things," said Roberts, who lives in Riverside. "To be frank, not knowing



**MORE INSIDE**  
**Ramsey rematch:** Jaguars' young cornerback gets another shot at Steeler's All-Pro WR Antonio Brown. C-1

**The play:** An oral history of David Garrard's legendary playoff run in Pittsburgh, 10 years later. C-1

**Party at home:** City hosting "Sack the Steelers Send-Off" Friday. A-4

when we will potentially be in this situation again or look as good as we do now in terms of competitively or when I think

we could win again, it's about cashing in on an opportunity." Roberts pulled off several financial maneuvers to pay for

his part of the trip and to front his friends — six of them are leaving with him from Jacksonville, while another who lives in Washington, D.C., will drive to meet the group in Pittsburgh on Saturday.

Roberts' plan started by buying as many tickets for the Jaguars game against Buffalo as he could. As a season ticket holder, he could buy up to 10 tickets at \$76 each to the home game. He bought all 10, then sold seven of them for about \$300 to \$350 each on StubHub — an internet ticket retailer — for a total of \$2,200 in revenue and a net profit of about \$1,500.

"I made a bunch of money off of it. So, I took some of my profit and bought tickets for Pittsburgh thinking if we won, I would go. If we lost, I would just sell them for money," Roberts said. "Then, for my friends who didn't just make \$2,000 like me selling tickets, all

FANS continues on A-4

**Weather**  
Fog, showers  
Forecast on A-2

78 Today's high

42 Saturday morning's low

Saturday morning's low

Follow us on Facebook  
facebook.com/FLTimesUnion/

Twitter  
@jaxdotcom

Classified	C-4	Life	E-1
Comics	E-6	Sports	D-1
Crosswords	C-7, E-6	Money	C-1
Editorials	A-6	Obituaries	B-4

COPYRIGHT 2018  
NO. 12  
153RD YEAR  
5 SECTIONS  
36 PAGES

6 65486 00100 4

**INVENTORY OBTAINED FROM**

## SEIZED & FORFEITED ASSETS AUCTION

### SUNDAY JANUARY 14TH

**PREVIEW-12:30PM, AUCTION-1:00PM**  
**Info regarding auction: (561)877-4890**

**HOSTED AT:**  
**RAMADA HOTEL,**  
**3130 HARTLEY ROAD**  
**JACKSONVILLE FL 32257**

*Jewelry and Fine Art SEIZED by police and federal agencies. Property from seized and forfeited assets auction. Bankruptcies and liquidation of Rolex, large diamonds, fine art, and jewelry together with general order merchandise which constitutes the majority to be liquidated piece by piece. All Art and Jewelry Authenticated and Certified. Over 2 Million Dollars!!*

Gentique LLC Licence # AB3520  
Auctioneer: Gary Getz Licence # AU 4662/OR 192  
(Not affiliated with any govt. agency)  
Free Admission • 18% Buyers Premium  
Terms: Cash, Charge, Check

# Trump profanely snubs Third World countries

By Alan Fram & Andrew Taylor  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON | President Donald Trump questioned Thursday why the U.S. should permit more immigrants from “s---hole countries” after senators discussed revamping rules affecting entrants from Africa and Haiti, according to three people briefed on the conversation.

Trump made the remark in the Oval Office as two lawmakers described details to him of a bipartisan compromise among six

senators that would extend protections against deportation for hundreds of thousands of young immigrants and strengthen border protections.

The senators had hoped Trump would back their accord, ending a months-long, bitter dispute over protecting “Dreamers.” But the White House later rejected their proposed agreement, plunging the issue back into uncertainty just eight days before a deadline that threatens a government shutdown.

During their conversa-

tion, Dick Durbin of Illinois, the chamber’s No. 2 Senate Democratic leader, was explaining that as part of that deal, a lottery for visas that has benefited people from Africa and other nations would be ended, the sources said, though there could be some other way for them to apply. Durbin said people would be allowed to stay in the U.S. who fled here after disasters hit their homes in places including El Salvador, Guatemala and Haiti.

Trump specifically ques-

tioned why the U.S. would want to admit more people from Haiti. He also mentioned Africa and asked why more people from “s---hole countries” should be allowed into the U.S., the sources said.

The president suggested that instead, the U.S. should allow more entrants from countries like Norway. Trump met this week with Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg.

The president’s comments immediately sparked outrage, especially from critics in Florida, which is

home to more Haiti-born residents than any other state.

“If this report is true, it is absolutely wrong to say or think this. I do not think this way, nor do I agree with this kind of sentiment. I represent Florida, and we are an amazing melting pot where over 250 languages are spoken,” Scott said in a statement.

The sources spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to publicly describe the conversation.

Asked about the remarks,

White House spokesman Raj Shah did not deny them.

“Certain Washington politicians choose to fight for foreign countries, but President Trump will always fight for the American people,” he said.

The Trump administration announced late last year that it would end a temporary residency permit program that allowed nearly 60,000 citizens from Haiti to live and work in the United States following a devastating 2010 earthquake.

## COMMITTEE

Continued from A-1

bidding for the property for other developers to submit proposals.

Michael Munz, a partner in Elements, said it appears from Brosche’s memo and her appointment of Schellenberg as committee chairman that the goal is to “kill this project.”

Munz said Elements welcomes “any and all conversations and public debates about this project because we feel it is in the interest of moving Jacksonville forward” by bringing a “catalytic project to downtown” in a deal that protects taxpayers’ interests.

He said Brosche’s charge to the special committee “is neither balanced nor fair, and it would lead anyone who reads it to believe that the intent of the committee is to kill this project. That’s disappointing and illogical all at the same time.”

Munz said that it’s ironic that the chairman of the committee will be “somebody who obviously is not going to look at this with an open mind and a fair and balanced point of view, but somebody who has already publicly stated he is fully against this without having even read the first piece of legislation to support the project. As I read her [Brosche’s] memo,

it reads as if he [Schellenberg] wrote the memo himself.”

Schellenberg said he isn’t “looking to kill the deal” but he has grave concerns about it, particularly since the terms have changed since Elements got the nod from JEA to buy the property in 2014 when the firm offered \$18 million for the land.

Brosche said she appointed Schellenberg because he serves on the city council Finance Committee, he asked for the council to have a way to examine the deal more closely, and he is not acting alone in the special committee.

“I have no predetermined answer or intent

other than to fully understand what the council is being asked to approve,” Brosche said. “If Matt asks questions that the taxpayers should have the answers to, that can only benefit the process of making sure we are approving a good project and a good deal for the city.”

A proposal approved Wednesday by the Downtown Investment Authority would have the DIA pay to purchase the land rather than Elements buying it. The city also would pay about \$26 million for public improvements on the property, while Elements would pay \$18 million.

Schellenberg said if JEA doesn’t rebid the property

to test whether other developers can come forward under the terms being considered for Elements, then the city should add provisions to the deal ensuring the city shares in the profits from the development in exchange for its financial support.

“I can appreciate Michael Munz’s comments and he’s a P.R. guy and makes it sound like I’m against them,” Schellenberg said in a reference to Munz’s work in the field of public relations. “No, I’m for the taxpayers and making sure the city doesn’t get caught in a bind and doesn’t get repaid and JEA doesn’t get repaid.”

Besides Schellenberg,

other members filling out the committee are Lori Boyer, whose council district contains the JEA property, along with Finance Committee Chairman Garrett Dennis, Bill Gulliford and Sam Newby.

Brosche’s memo calls for the committee to reports its findings and recommendations “as soon as reasonably possible,” assuming the development proposal gets approved by the JEA board on Tuesday and the Mayor’s Budget Review Committee on Jan. 22.

The memo does not set a deadline for the committee to issue its report.

David Bauerlein: (904) 359-4581

## TICKETS

Continued from A-1

It is unclear what steps, if any, Sheriff Mike Williams will now take. In an interview Thursday evening, Patrick Ivey, the sheriff’s office second in command, maintained that the state attorney’s position was not a legally binding opinion. Ivey added that the state attorney’s review would not retroactively apply to tickets already issued by sheriff’s officers.

Brosche’s call to temporarily halt all pedestrian ticket writing echoed similar calls by several other council members, as well as the Jacksonville public defender.

“I applaud the sheriff for seeking guidance from the state attorney’s office so that we can clarify the rights and responsibilities of motorists and pedestrians, not only for those charged with enforcement, but also for pedestrians and motorists themselves,” said Lori Boyer, a senior council member who has led a variety of efforts aimed at improving Jacksonville’s pedestrian safety record. “This guidance now gives us an opportunity to correctly educate everyone in our city about the proper use of our roadways. It is a big step in the right direction.”

Of the 17 other City Council members, six said they are in favor of suspending pedestrian ticketing. Those members are Matt Schellenberg, Katrina Brown, Garrett Dennis, Reginald Brown, Joyce Morgan and Jim Love. Another five said they needed to review the state attorney’s legal bulletin, which Boyer’s office sent to all members. The remaining either couldn’t be reached or said they would need time to review the matter.

A spokesperson for Mayor Lenny Curry said the mayor had not seen the state attorney’s bulletin.

“While we welcome the opportunity to review the State Attorney’s report, please know that the mayor relies on Sheriff Williams, his team, and the State Attorney’s office for enforcement and prosecution decisions,” said the spokesperson, Tia Ford. Ford did not say whether the mayor supported the idea of suspending ticketing temporarily.

Eboni Dekine, who had her driver’s license suspended after she failed to pay the fine for one of the erroneous citations in 2016, said people like her who didn’t pay the fines should have their records cleared and those who did pay the fines should have their money returned.

“I’m glad that they were able to admit it and hope they do the right thing,” Dekine, a mother of two who is still without her license, said in an interview

Thursday.

The Times-Union and ProPublica have identified 132 instances in which erroneous tickets led to driver’s license suspensions.

The flawed crosswalk tickets are not limited to Jacksonville, according to a Times-Union-ProPublica review of pedestrian tickets statewide. The Times-Union and ProPublica reviewed more than 2,600 such tickets throughout the state, and determined that at least 60 percent of them were given in error. Law enforcement agencies in Broward, Dade, Hillsborough and Orange counties all issued erroneous tickets to pedestrians.

Billy Hattaway, considered by many to be the state’s top expert on pedestrian safety and enforcement, was not surprised by the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office’s confusion when asked by reporters last year. He said there is widespread lack of understanding about the statutes statewide — among officers, citizens and legislators. He said many of the pedestrian statutes need to be rewritten.

The Times-Union/ProPublica examination of pedestrian tickets in Jacksonville found that the sheriff’s office issued hundreds a year, a disproportionate number of them going to blacks. Indeed, all categories of pedestrian tickets — typically costing \$65, and given for jaywalking, walking on the wrong side of the road, crossing the street at other than a right angle, and other violations — were disproportionately issued to blacks, almost all of them in the city’s poorest neighborhoods. In the last five years, blacks received 55 percent of all pedestrian tickets in and around Jacksonville, while only accounting for 29 per-



Eboni Dekine, who had her driver’s license suspended after she failed to pay the fine for one of the erroneous citations, said, “I’m glad that they were able to admit it and hope they do the right thing.” (Dede Smith/Florida Times-Union)

cent of the population.

The crosswalk statute accounts for more tickets in Duval County than any other. Of the more than 300 bad tickets issued for crosswalk violations, 48 percent of them went to blacks.

Williams has maintained that his office’s enforcement of pedestrian statutes does not target blacks. His office has insisted that blacks have simply violated the statutes in greater numbers than others. But Williams’ office said it would not discuss the Times-Union/ProPublica findings in greater detail until the state attorney had done his review. His office added that anyone who felt they were issued a ticket in error could contest the matter in court.

The analysis by the Times-Union and ProPublica sparked upset among a number of local legislators and civil rights leaders. There have been calls to suspend the issuing of pedestrian tickets and some moves toward enact-

ing legislation to limit the impact of such tickets on recipients’ driver’s licenses. One meeting of the City Council late last year was consumed by angry testimony about the ticketing effort.

The sheriff’s office has said the ticketing is designed to protect lives in a city that is notoriously unsafe for pedestrians. Yet the Times-Union/ProPublica analysis showed there was no great correlation between where tickets were being written and where pedestrian deaths were occurring.

Ben Frazier of the Northside Coalition, a community advocacy group, seemed grateful for the state attorney’s interpretation, but also repeated his call for a halt to ticketing.

“The Northside Coalition is renewing its call for the Sheriff to impose a moratorium on the writing of pedestrian tickets,” Frazier said in a statement. He added, “We are now asking the Mayor and the City

Council to hold the sheriff accountable. The sheriff should be called before the council to explain why he is still allowing the civil rights of black residents to

be violated.”

Jacksonville’s public defender, Charlie Cofer, said he welcomed the legal review by the state attorney’s office, saying it was consistent with his interpretation of the law, which he first voiced in November. Cofer said he too now believes that the sheriff’s office should stop writing pedestrian tickets and pause to examine the effects of the enforcement on the city’s more marginalized communities.

Cofer said the disproportionate ticketing in poorer neighborhoods “creates a perception within that community that they are being treated differently by law enforcement.”

“That is something I think that law enforcement has to consider,” Cofer said. “There are other collateral consequences of using statutes like this.”

ben.comarck@jacksonville.com; (904) 359-4103  
topher.sanders@propublica.org; (917) 512-0267

**GET YOUR MEDICAL MARIJUANA CARD**

**MARIJUANA TREATS OVER 200 DEBILITATING CONDITIONS**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pain</li> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Cancer</li> <li>Fibromyalgia</li> <li>Arthritis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insomnia</li> <li>Eating Disorders</li> <li>Multiple Sclerosis</li> <li>Parkinson’s</li> <li>Sickle Cell And More</li> </ul>
--	---

**Marijuana is excellent medicine for chemo patients with side effects that help you drink water and eat during cancer treatment.**

Fast, friendly certification by experienced marijuana doctors.  
Buy pure, organically grown marijuana directly from licensed Florida growers to see if you qualify.

Call us for a quick phone evaluation of your condition  
**904-299-5300**  
RXPO.com

DESIGN ELEMENTS

ALL CHRISTMAS

80% OFF\*

All Home Décor  
50% Off This Weekend Only

10950 San Jose Blvd., Suite 48  
Jacksonville, Florida 32223

Located in Mandarin, South of 295, next to Bonefish Grill

904.292.1619

\*Excludes Tyne

N.E. FLA’S LARGEST NURSERY & GARDEN CENTER!

HALL’S NURSERY

and  
ACE Hardware

Visit Us and See our Red Hot Ace Buys!

WEBER GRILLS

BIG GREEN EGG

TYLER

YETI COOLER

5645 Blanding Blvd.  
771-6330

We are your Westside neighborhood ACE

Rye Grass

Now is the time to put out Rye Grass

Camellias

Large selection of Camellias now in stock!