

Opinion

Give us your feedback! Check us out at SunSentinel.com/news/opinion

Embarrassed, insulted, and much more



Gary Stein

How should you feel about Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, Gov. Rick Scott, that their well-publicized fight against same-sex marriage?

So glad you

asked.

No. 1, you could be insulted.

Insulted one of the top elected officials in the state has the nerve to say same-sex marriage could cause great harm.

Insulted that she hides behind the line of "just following the law of the state" that bans same-sex marriage, when other attorneys general have seen fit to ignore the bans or not get involved, because they know its unconstitutional.

Insulted because Bondi had the nerve to say that Florida's ban on same-sex marriage increased "the likelihood that children will be born to and raised by the mothers and fathers who produced them in stable and enduring family units." Every same-sex couple that has adopted a child and

raised it in a loving family should be insulted by that. Every heterosexual couple that simply doesn't want children should be insulted by that.

Bondi, by the way, has been divorced twice. Not sure what she knows about stable and enduring family units, but that is her personal, private business. Just like same-sex marriage should be.

No. 2, you could be disgusted.

Disgusted that Bondi and her boss, Gov. Rick Scott, continue to fight for the right to discriminate.

Disgusted that they both say they must following the law when it comes to same-sex marriage, which is a truly amazing statement. The Affordable Care Act — Obamacare — is the law of the land, and Scott has been fighting it from day one. He even has tried to stop Floridians who need Obamacare advice from getting it. Scott continues to file costly lawsuits to get welfare recipients drug tested, even though the courts keep throwing them out — and throwing out our tax money with it. And how can we forget how Bondi, who supported the Timely Justice Act aimed at



Should Pam Bondi really be a spokesperson for good parenting?

speeding up executions, was following her own law when she caused an execution to be delayed so she could go to a fund-raising bash?

Disgusted that Scott keeps talking about how he is so family-oriented. Is that why he supports every pro-gun law that makes its way through Tallahassee? Because he thinks guns are pro-family? Is that why he obviously feels gay families are not worthy of being treated as well as "real" families with a man and a woman?

Disgusted that Scott could talk out of both sides of his mouth,

saying that he believes in traditional marriage but "does not believe anybody should be discriminated against for any reason." Earth to Gov. Scott: If you are fighting against same-sex marriage, you are in favor of discrimination. It's that simple.

No. 3, you could be embarrassed.

Embarrassed that so much of the rest of the nation realizes same-sex marriage is a matter of equality and dignity, but Florida continues to live in the dark ages.

Embarrassed that even though 19 other states now allow same-

sex marriage, Florida continues to fight against it as if it is doing something noble and worthwhile, instead of disgusting (see No. 2).

Embarrassed that a supposed cutting edge state like Florida can't understand that two people who love each other and want to get married should have that right, instead of having road-blocks and indignity thrown in front of them.

Embarrassed that when the governor and attorney general fight so hard against same-sex marriage, that gives more fuel to all the bigots out there, and you know who you are.

Embarrassed that too many people in Florida — from the very top on down — really don't understand what equality and dignity are all about.

And insulted, disgusted and embarrassed that in 2014, we even are having this discussion.

Gary Stein can be reached at gstein@sunsentinel.com, or 954-356-4616. On Twitter @SSEditorial.

Cartoon roundup

MIKE LUCKOVICH

Trying to choose between serial flip floppers

June 2, 2014

Used with permission of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, copyright (2014). No endorsement by the Sun-Sentinel is made or implied.

State wrong in fight against same-sex marriage

Marriage equality is sweeping the country with staggering speed, a wave destined to hit Florida.

Yet Florida leaders — starting with Attorney General Pam Bondi — continue to fight the inevitable, keeping our state on the wrong side of history.

In the latest salvo against same-sex marriage, the Associated Press reports that Bondi argued in court documents last week that recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other states would disrupt existing marriage law and “impose significant public harm.”

Bondi is asking a federal judge to throw out a lawsuit by eight gay couples that argues that Florida is discriminating against them by not recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other states. The lawsuit is scheduled to go to court July 2 in Miami.

Florida voters banned same-sex marriage with a constitutional amendment in 2008. In the years since, however, the courts and public sentiment have been moving deliberately toward the side of equality.

In the last month alone, federal judges have struck down bans on same-sex marriage in four states, declaring them unconstitutional. It seems every month, leaders in another state are giving up the fight against marriage equality. Same-sex marriage is now legal in 19 states, with Illinois coming on board June 1.

Most importantly, the U.S. Supreme Court last year struck down a key part of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, granting federal recognition to same-sex couples. According to the Human Rights Campaign, no state bans have since survived a court challenge.

Yet Florida continues to fight for the right to discriminate.

In court papers, Bondi said, “Florida’s marriage laws, then, have a close, direct and rational relationship to society’s legitimate interest in increasing the likelihood that children will be born to and raised by the mothers and fathers who produced them in stable and enduring family units.”

Bondi’s definition of family is nothing short of insulting to the same-sex couples who have adopted and raised children. It also makes you wonder how she feels about heterosexual couples who marry, but don’t have children. Does the state frown upon them, too?

According to the AP story, Bondi believes the state’s pension and health insurance programs would face significant financial and logistical problems if same-sex marriages were recognized.

You have to wonder whether Bondi, or Gov. Rick Scott, or anyone in state leadership read the heart-wrenching story earlier this year in the Sun Sentinel about the end-of-life problems faced by Deerfield Beach partners Chris MacLellan and Bernard Richard Schiffer. The financial and bureaucratic obstacles placed in front of the couple — as Richard faced the cancer that would take his life — showed how the marriage ban deprives gays of the legal rights afforded heterosexuals.

Floridians understand the concepts of fairness and dignity for all. That’s why, in a recent Quinnipiac poll, 56 percent of those polled supported allowing same-sex marriage, with 39 percent opposed. Polling nationally shows similar results.

The fight against equality and same-sex marriage is a battle the state of Florida is destined to lose, with good reason. The highest court in the land has ruled. Rather than spend more tax dollars fighting to enshrine a discriminatory policy, Bondi and our other leaders should listen to the people and work harder to represent us. All of us.

Monroe Udell



ANOTHER VIEWPOINT

From troubled foster kid

By JAMEEL MCCLINE



McCline

Anthony Man’s May 18 story about my McCline for Congress candidacy gave me reason to pause.

“Jameel McCline isn’t anything like an ordinary congressional candidate,” wrote Man, adding that I thought past mistakes made me “more relatable to the electorate.”

I agree with the first assessment, and I’m proud of it. But the second one’s not quite right. Let me explain. The troubles I’ve known and mistakes I’ve made give me firsthand understanding of what it is to struggle in poverty, with too little help and too few options.

As I travel the 20th congressional district, I’m struck by how many residents are still stuck in that same situation.

I’m not more relatable to these

good people because of the mistakes I’ve made. I think they relate to struggles. And they know I can relate to theirs.

When I tell struggling residents Belle Glade, Pahokee and other communities in crisis that I’m running Congress to bring them help and options, they know I mean it.

If I had more help and options when I aged out of foster care as a poor New York teenager, I don’t think I’d have ended up serving 5 years in prison for gun possession. I fought my way back from that, all way to fame and fortune as a top professional prizefighter and a heavyweight champion.

But in transitioning out of boxing I ended up with a substance abuse problem and money troubles that led to bankruptcy. I lost everything I worked so hard for. Then, I came back again, beat drug addiction, straightened out my finances and built a successful sports consulting business.

Now, I want to be an inspiration to others, a champion for struggling

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to lawmakers for taking stand on climate change

Recently, Congressman Ted Deutch and Congresswoman Lois Frankel joined more than 30 senators and representatives who rallied to wake up Congress and sound the alarm for action on climate change. It’s a wake-up call that Washington needs to hear following the recent National Climate Assessment, which details the real threats of climate change on our way of life. It is a message that will resonate as the EPA prepares to make major progress in the coming weeks.

Florida is taking important steps to invest in clean energy, prepare for rising sea levels and build more resilient communities. However, we know there is more work to be done. This state is particularly at risk from the impacts of more extreme storms, including the flooding and coastal erosion that come with increased precipitation. The views of the