

Editorial: Cheers and jeers

By The Gainesville Sun Editorial Board

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A federal anti-lynching law should have been passed long ago but was blocked by Southern lawmakers, sometimes under the guise of defending “states’ rights.”

Now the measure is close to becoming law, despite opposition from a handful of lawmakers — including Gainesville’s congressional representative, who has shamefully revived the states’ rights argument.

Jeer: U.S. Rep. Yoho, R-Gainesville, for being [one of just four House members](#) to vote against legislation that would make lynching a federal hate crime.

The Emmett Till Antilynching Act, named after a black teenager who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955, passed the House by a 410-4 vote. Congress has [repeatedly failed to pass similar legislation](#) since the late 1800s.

Yoho [told CNN](#) that he voted against the bill because it’s an “overreach of the federal government” and tramples on states’ rights.

Even as he prepares to retire from Congress, Yoho has embarrassed his district with his vote and explanation for it — especially as Alachua County goes through a [“truth and reconciliation” process](#) that includes commemorating and recognizing local victims of lynching.

Cheer: Sen. Keith Perry, R-Gainesville, for sponsoring a bill that would help protect high school athletes from heat stroke.

The legislation would require high schools to have cold-water immersion tubs available during practices and games, as well as requiring they have defibrillators on hand and other safety measures.

Perry sponsored the Senate version of the legislation, [CS/SB 1696](#). He named the bill in honor of Zachary Martin, who died of heat stroke after running sprints in the heat at a southwest Florida high school football practice.

The measure, which passed the House and awaits a Senate vote, would hopefully prevent similar deaths in the future.

Cheer: Gov. Ron DeSantis, for the [launch of an \\$8 million initiative](#) for veterans providing assistance with down payments and closing costs to purchase new homes. The program is a good way to help ease veterans into civilian life and encourage home ownership.

But we would like to see the state do more on the housing issue, including working to increase the availability of affordable housing. A good start would be for the Legislature to [stop raiding money](#) from the Sadowski housing trust fund every year for other purposes.

Jeer: DeSantis and fellow Republicans in Tallahassee, for a disappointing lack of attention to climate change after suggesting the issue would be taken more seriously.

Ron DeSantis didn’t forward a climate plan to the Legislature but is [trying to take control](#) of the Office of Energy from Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, a Democrat. While legislation to move the office has passed the House, [modest proposals](#) such as a bill to assess the effects of climate change on Florida have gone nowhere.



Last year, DeSantis named Florida's first chief resilience officer, Julia Nesheiwat, to help prepare the state for climate change's impacts. After six months on the job, [Nesheiwat is now leaving](#) for a new Trump administration position.

State Sen. Tom Lee, a Thonotosassa Republican and former Senate president, said last November that [Florida "lost a decade"](#) in the climate-change fight. We hope that Republicans and Democrats will work together to ensure this isn't another lost decade.

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