



Three takeaways from first practice of Florida fall camp

SPORTS, 1C

Here are the details of proposed youth curfew

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Pensacola Mayor D.C. Reeves’ proposed city-wide youth curfew ordinance is set to go to the City Council on Aug. 14.

The ordinance largely follows provisions of a state law that allows local governments to enact curfews for minors, including the hours and exceptions created by that state law.

Reeves is proposing the ordinance

following a downtown mass shooting as people were still gathered downtown for the July 4 holiday at 1:20 a.m. on July 5. The shooting left Phillip Sheppard, 19, dead and injured six others ages 16-26. Pensacola Police’s subsequent investigation blamed Sheppard’s death on Trevon Bradley, 20, who killed himself in his home on July 16 as PPD, U.S. Marshals and State Attorney’s Office investigators were attempting to serve an arrest warrant.

Police responded to several other incidents that night, including 20 fights,

and many of those involved minors. Pensacola Police Chief Eric Winstrom said that some unaccompanied minors in the crowds that night were as young as 10 or 11.

Reeves said it was the police accounts of young children out at night without adult supervision and not the shooting itself that spurred the city into putting forward the ordinance, and that it was a broader trend across the state.

“It’s why there is already a state statute that codifies what these times are; it just needs to be codified here for us to be

able to enforce it,” Reeves said. “So obviously, this is a growing conversation around our state, around our country.”

Reeves said no one at the city wants children to be permanently impacted over a bad decision to stay out late, but it is asking parents to take basic responsibility for their children.

“We’re going to really deliver the message of the old PSA: it’s 10 o’clock, or it’s midnight. Do you know where your kids are?” Reeves said.

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Florida residents revolt against Flock Cameras

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Police call them an indispensable crime-fighting tool. Critics call them an unfettered, unregulated, unconstitutional dragnet. Municipalities are feeling the heat from constituents, and they are reshaping election-year politics.

It’s a full-on revolt against automated surveillance cameras, also known as LPRs (license plate readers), especially those manufactured by industry leader Flock Safety.

Pensacola has seen organized opposition to the technology at City Council meetings since January, with citizens urging the city to cancel its two-year contract with the company, which was funded using settlement money from national opioid litigation. In June, City Council members voted to ensure there couldn’t be a repeat of the Flock contract without their vote.

In other communities, there have been other acts of resistance to the technology large and small.

- In St. Petersburg, a senior citizen who has dubbed himself The Flock Blocker stands vigil in the brutal Florida summer sun with a 10-foot pole to protest the cameras.



ABOVE AND TOP: Flock camera in use near the intersection of E and Jackson streets on March 3. PHOTOS BY TONY GIBERSON/PENSACOLA NEWS JOURNAL

- A Jacksonville Beach teen was arrested July 21, accused of spray-painting lenses of LPRs in three municipalities.
- In Tallahassee, like in Pensacola, local officials are withholding earmarked funds for the ubiquitous devices.

And it’s hardly just in Florida. Social media is full of stories about how the cameras have been misused by law enforcement and how some citizens are cutting them down. Websites provide atlases to the locations of LPRs and U.S. Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Kentucky, proposed a bill that would withhold federal dollars from municipalities that deploy them.

The country may be hopelessly divided, but hatred of automated surveillance cameras that employ artificial intelligence crosses party lines, uniting civil libertarians and the don’t-tread-on-me crowd.

“They just symbolize sort of the zeitgeist of the moment,” Miami activist Thomas Kennedy said. “The cameras are reflective of the AI infrastructure that’s being deployed, like the data centers.”

U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds, a Republican gubernatorial candidate, has been endorsed by 40 Florida sheriff departments. Still, he is calling for a pause on the cameras, emphasizing the need to ensure that protections for Floridians’ 4th Amendment right to privacy are upheld.

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Appeals court sides with Florida on anti-drag show law

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Florida’s law meant to prevent children from attending “sexually explicit” drag shows doesn’t violate the First Amendment, according to a majority of federal appellate judges who weighed in on the contentious measure.

The case now heads back to a trial court in Orlando; the appeals court struck down what’s called a preliminary injunction that prevents enforcement of the law while the case is pending, saying that the plaintiff, the Hamburger Mary’s restaurant of Orlando, “failed to establish a substantial likelihood” that it would ultimately win its case.

On Aug. 4, an 8-5 majority in the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed that the state law was constitutional; critics had warned its enforcement imperiled the free expression of LGBTQ+ and drag communities.

The crux of the argument is whether the law violated the First Amendment by threatening the free speech rights of patrons and of venues who wish to host drag performances. Hamburger Mary’s further argued that the law was vague on what performances were prohibited.

Although the law does not name drag shows, critics have widely viewed it as a law meant to combat drag – a recognized art form that’s roughly defined as “dressing up as the opposite sex,” but also has a history of political commentary and activism.

“In any event, the Act is consistent with a legislative intent to target drag shows that are obscene for children, not drag shows writ large,” wrote Circuit Judge Andrew Brasher, a Trump-appointed judge who authored the majority’s opinion.

The opinion comes after oral arguments in June, and months after the federal appeals court struck down the lower court order which suspended enforcement of the law in question for years. On Dec. 1, the court said, without reasoning, that it would take up arguments on the constitutionality of the state law.

Some judges who sided with the majority still noted arguments they

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