

Gay Marriage Comes To Alabama

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Alabama's chief justice built his career on defiance: In 2003, Roy Moore was forced from the bench for disobeying a federal court order to remove a boulder-size Ten Commandments monument from the state courthouse.

On Monday, as Alabama became the 37th state where gays can legally wed, Moore took a defiant stand again, employing the kind of states' rights language used during the Civil War era and again during the civil rights movement.

He argued that a federal judge's Jan. 23 ruling striking down the Bible Belt state's gay-marriage ban was an illegal intrusion on Alabama's sovereignty. And he demanded the state's probate judges refuse marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

"It's my duty to speak up when I see the jurisdiction of our courts being intruded by unlawful federal authority," the 67-year-old Republican chief justice of Alabama's Supreme Court said in an interview Monday.

Gay marriage arrived in the Deep South state of Alabama to mixture of joy, calls for defiance and confusion, as some probate judges indicated they were uncertain whether to issue the licenses or not after Moore's directive.

Drew Peterson Charged In Murder Plot

CHICAGO (AP) — Drew Peterson, the former suburban Chicago police officer convicted of killing his third wife and suspected in the disappearance of his fourth, has been charged with trying to hire someone to kill the prosecutor who helped put him in state prison, authorities announced Monday.

Peterson appeared in court on charges that between September 2013 and December 2014, while behind bars, he solicited a person to find someone he could pay to kill Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow. Peterson did not enter a plea.

Peterson, 61, has been in prison since he was convicted in 2012 of first-degree murder in the 2004 bathtub drowning of his third wife, Kathleen Savio. Savio's death initially was ruled an accident, but after Peterson's fourth wife, Stacy Peterson, disappeared in 2007, Savio's body was exhumed and her death was ruled a homicide.

Glasgow's office charged Drew Peterson with murder and in 2012 the former Bolingbrook police sergeant was convicted and sentenced to 38 years in state prison.

The latest complaint was filed by both the Illinois attorney general's office and the prosecutor in Randolph County — the location of Menard Correctional Center, where Peterson is serving his sentence. In the two-page complaint, Peterson is charged with solicitation of murder for hire and one count of solicitation of murder, both felonies carrying a maximum sentence of at least 30 years in prison.

Health Insurance Forms Face Big Risk?

NEW YORK (AP) — Everyone worries about stolen credit cards or hacked bank accounts, but just visiting the doctor may put you at greater risk for identity fraud.

Those medical forms you give the receptionist and send to your health insurer provide fertile ground for criminals looking to steal your identity, since health care businesses can lag far behind banks and credit card companies in protecting sensitive information. The names, birthdates and — most importantly — Social Security numbers detailed on those forms can help hackers open fake credit lines, file false tax returns and create fake medical records.

"It's an entire profile of who you are," said Cynthia Larose, chair of the privacy and security practice at the law firm Mintz Levin in Boston. "It essentially allows someone to become you."

Social Security numbers were created to track the earnings history of workers in order to determine government benefits. Now, health care companies are, in some cases, required to collect the numbers by government agencies. They also use them because they are unique to every individual and more universal than other forms of identification like driver's licenses, said Dr. Ross Koppell, a University of Pennsylvania professor who researches health care information technology.

But once someone creates a stolen identity with a Social Security number, it can be hard to fix the damage. A person can call a bank to shut down a stolen credit card, but it's not as easy of a process when it comes to Social Security numbers.

Can NBC's Brian Williams Survive?

NEW YORK (AP) — A vigorous debate over Brian Williams' future is brewing as "NBC Nightly News" aired Monday without the decade-long anchor.

Some critics suggest that Williams, who apologized last week for falsely claiming that he was in a helicopter that had been hit by a grenade while in Iraq in 2003, should be fired. Others wonder if commerce will win out, since Williams has kept "Nightly News" at the top of the ratings while much of his news division crumbled around him. How much are the years of good work worth?

"This is one of the toughest calls that I've ever seen," said Paul Levinson, professor of communications and media studies at Fordham University. "On the one hand, the public is right to expect nothing but the truth from our reporters and our news anchors."

Williams announced Saturday he was stepping away from the show for a few days. NBC News, which launched an internal probe, hasn't given a timetable for how long its look into Williams' statements, coordinated by the division's investigative editor Richard Esposito, will take or if its report will be made public.

Daschle

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was unfair to voters of South Dakota.

"My question today is, what has changed from 2002?" she asked. "Why do we want to open up that loophole?"

Rep. Steve Hickey of Sioux Falls, one of the Republicans to vote against the bill Monday, said the problem is timing.

"That's smarmy to me. I'll vote for this in 2017," Hickey said. "This is a tactics deal... I see ruthlessness in this bill."

Rep. Lee Schoenbeck, R-Waterloo, said he initially thought Gosch's legislation was bad politics but has since come to a different point.

"It takes a lot of guts to get up and apologize," Schoenbeck said. "This party made a mistake in 2002."

Schoenbeck said his mind was changed by Gosch's willingness to openly say the law was wrong.

"That's as good as we can

square anything," Schoenbeck said.

House Democratic leader Spencer Hawley of Brookings said he accepted the apology and thanked Gosch. But Hawley didn't buy it.

"Timing of the apology is everything," Hawley said.

Daschle at the time was the Democratic leader of the U.S. Senate and the most influential national politician in South Dakota history. Republicans nationally did everything they could to defeat him in 2004 and succeeded.

Gosch sounded offended when he stood to give the debate's final remarks. He noted that Bartling had voted against the Republican bill in 2002. He hoped she would vote for the repeal too.

She didn't.

HOW THEY VOTED

Here are the tallies Monday from the South Dakota House of Representatives on repealing the 2002 law that prohibits seeking a South Dakota office and a national office of president or vice president in the same election year. The measure, HB

Obama, Merkel Rally Behind Diplomacy In Ukraine Crisis

BY JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel rallied behind efforts to reach a long-shot diplomatic resolution to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine Monday, but they offered no clear path for how the West would proceed if talks this week fail.

During a joint White House news conference, Obama dangled the prospect that the U.S. could for the first time send anti-tank weapons and other defensive arms to Ukraine. While no decision has been made, the president said he had ordered his team to consider "whether there are additional things we can do to help Ukraine bolster its defenses in the face of Russian aggression."

Merkel staunchly opposes arming Ukraine's beleaguered military. The German chancellor, who has perhaps the most productive relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, made clear she had not given up on the possibility that diplomatic negotiations could produce an elusive peace plan.

"It has always proved to be right to try again and again to sort such a conflict," Merkel said through a translator.

Later Monday, during a joint news conference with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Ottawa, Merkel reiterated, "I hope that we shall be able to solve this conflict by diplomatic means because I think by military means it cannot be solved."

Harper said he admires the efforts by Germany and France to bring about a peaceful solution but added: "Unfortunately at this time Mr. Putin has rejected diplomatic means. He seems to move his agenda through military violence."

The U.S. and Europe have focused on economic sanctions in their punitive actions against Russia. The penalties, along with plummeting oil prices, have caused significant damage to Russia's economy.

The European Union decided Monday to temporarily hold off on ordering more sanctions on the Russians and Ukrainian separatists while awaiting the outcome of this week's peace talks.

The U.S. and Europe have largely been in agreement on their response to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, raising the possibility that a public split over lethal aid is merely a tactic to push Putin to strike a deal to end the fighting. Obama and Merkel both repeatedly said Monday that the U.S. and Europe would



OLIVIER DOULIERI/ABACA PRESS/TNS
German Chancellor Angela Merkel speaks at a press conference in the East Room of the White House Monday in Washington.

stay united in efforts to stop Russian provocations.

The White House meetings followed German and French-led talks last week with Putin and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. The parties will meet again Wednesday in the Belarusian capital of Minsk. The United States has not been at the table for either set of discussions.

In eastern Ukraine on Monday, a powerful explosion rocked a chemical plant and set it on fire outside the separatist stronghold of Donetsk. Rebels said government shelling had hit the plant, which lies in the middle of Ukraine's industrial heartland.

More than 5,300 people have been killed since fighting in eastern Ukraine began in April, according to a United Nations tally. On Monday, Ukraine said about 1,500 Russian troops had crossed the border into Ukraine via rebel-controlled border posts over the weekend, but military spokesman Andriy Lysenko did not provide any proof.

Russia has denied supplying the rebels with either troops or heavy weapons, but Western military experts say the sheer amount of new heavy weapons in eastern Ukraine belies the Russian denial.

Ukraine and the rebels reached a peace deal last fall, but it has repeatedly been violated by both sides. The bloodshed in eastern Ukraine has markedly increased over the past two weeks, leading to both the new diplomatic maneuvering and Obama's re-evaluation of sending Ukraine military aid.

New England Braces For Next Big Storm

BY BOB SALSBERG AND DENISE LAVOIE

Associated Press

BOSTON — More than 2 feet of fresh snow piled up in parts of New England on Monday, breaking records set during the Blizzard of 1978 and testing the patience of officials and commuters as forecasters warned of more winter misery later in the week.

The latest onslaught forced the cancellations of hundreds of flights, tested transit systems and tempers and collapsed roofs straining beneath the weight of 5 feet or more of snow in less than two weeks.

"It's awful. I'm done with it. It's ridiculous," said Priscilla Medina, a sandwich shop worker in Westborough, Massachusetts, suffering from a nasty case of snow fatigue.

Here's the latest on the winter that just won't quit:

• **ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS:** Boston and areas south were hardest hit, with

the National Weather Service reporting unofficial measurements of 26.5 inches in Weymouth, 26 inches in Sharon and 24.9 inches in Norwell. Forecasters expected more than 20 inches on the ground in Boston before the storm winds down early Tuesday.

"You can't change it. The snow is there," said Helen Ferullo, a social worker in Weymouth. "You can't do anything about it."

Much of Connecticut and parts of upstate New York braced for 6 to 12 inches, and southern Maine was in for about 8 by the time the storm tapers off Tuesday.

• **TRANSIT TROUBLE:** Boston-area subways, trolleys and commuter rail trains ground to a halt at 7 p.m. Monday and were scheduled to remain idle on Tuesday, with only limited bus service continuing. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority said it needed the break to clear snow and ice from tracks and to assess equipment damaged by the storms.

Boston's transit system, the nation's oldest, has been particularly hard hit this winter. The buildup of snow and ice on trolley tracks combined with aging equipment has stalled trains, delaying and angering commuters. Fifty commuters were rescued Monday from a train that became disabled between stations in Quincy, south of Boston.

Amtrak canceled portions of its passenger train service linking upstate New York to New York City because of the storm. Hundreds of flights were canceled at Boston's Logan International Airport, Connecticut's Bradley International Airport and Maine's Portland International Jetport and Bangor International Airport.

• **90 FOOTBALL STADIUMS FULL:** In Massachusetts alone since last month's blizzard struck, state workers have removed enough snow to fill Gillette Stadium 90

times over, Gov. Charlie Baker told reporters, calling the situation "pretty much unprecedented."

Boston set a record for the most snow recorded in a 30-day period, with 61.6 inches by Monday morning, breaking the record of 58.8 inches set in February 1978. Bangor, Maine, tied its own 30-day snowfall record with 53 inches, which hasn't been seen in such a short period since 1969, the weather service said.

• **SNOW PLOW DEATH:** A man who had just finished work at a supermarket bakery in Medford, Massachusetts, was struck in a parking lot by a private snow plowing truck and died after being taken to a hospital, authorities said.

Police interviewed the driver of the snow plow, but no charges were immediately filed in the death of 60-year-old Cesar Moya.

1176, passed 50-17 and now goes to the Senate.

• Yes — David Anderson, R-Hudson. Arch Beal, R-Sioux Falls. Jim Bolin, R-Canton. Thomas Brunner, R-Nisland. Blaine Campbell, R-Rapid City. Kristin Conzet, R-Rapid City. Scott Craig, R-Rapid City. Justin Cronin, R-Gettysburg. Fred Deutsch, R-Florence. Lynne DiSanto, R-Rapid City. Dan Dryden, R-Rapid City. Mary Duvall, R-Pierre. Brian Gosch, R-Rapid City.

Don Haggart, R-Sioux Falls. Michele Harrison, R-Mo-bridge. Steven Haugaard, R-Sioux Falls. Leslie Heinemann, R-Flandreau. Thomas Holmes, R-Sioux Falls. Roger Hunt, R-Brandon. Alex Jensen, R-Sioux Falls. Timothy Johns, R-Lead. Joshua Klumb, R-Mount Vernon. Kris Langer, R-Dell Rapids. Isaac Latterell, R-Tea. Sam Marty, R-Prairie City. Elizabeth May, R-Kyle.

Mark Mickelson, R-Sioux Falls. Scott Munsterman, R-Brookings. Herman Otten, R-Tea. Jeff Partridge, R-Rapid City. Lee Qualm, R-Platte. Nancy Rasmussen, R-Hurley. Fred Romkema, R-Spearfish. Tim Rounds, R-Pierre. Tona Rozum, R-Mitchell. Lance

Russell, R-Hot Springs. James Schaefer, R-Kennebec. Lee Schoenbeck, R-Waterloo. Kyle Schoenfish, R-Scotland.

Jacqueline Sly, R-Rapid City. Roger Solum, R-Waterloo. Jim Stalzer, R-Sioux Falls. Mike Stevens, R-Yankton. Burt Tulson, R-Lake Norden. Dick Werner, R-Huron. Steve Westra, R-Sioux Falls. John Wiik, R-Big Stone City. Matthew Wollman, R-Madison. Larry Zikmund, R-Sioux Falls. Dean Wink, R-Hoves.

• No — Julie Bartling, D-Gregory. Shawn Bordeaux, D-Mission. Dennis Feickert, D-Aberdeen. Peggy Gibson, D-Huron. Lana Greenfield, R-Doland. Spencer Hawley, D-Brookings. Steve Hickey, R-Sioux Falls. Jean Hunhoff, R-Yankton. Dan Kaiser, R-Aberdeen. Kevin Killer, D-Pine Ridge.

Patrick Kirschman, D-Sioux Falls. Steve McCleerey, D-Siseton. Kent Peterson, R-Salem. Ray Ring, D-Vermillion. Dean Schrempf, D-Lantry. Karen Soli, D-Sioux Falls. Mark Willadsen, R-Sioux Falls.

Excused — Paula Hawks, D-Hartford. Al Novstrup, R-Aberdeen. Mike Verchio, R-Hill City.