

# Chief

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used excessive force. Investigators also raised concerns about biased policing.

In an interview this month, O'Toole told The Seattle Times it

lic safety positions in Massachusetts, including as the state's secretary of public safety.

She returned to serve as Boston's police commissioner from 2004 to

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was crucial to bring a sense of urgency in reforming the department and that she believed doing so was a top priority for Murray.

"I have a passion for this stuff. I have a passion for public service and a passion for policing," she said.

O'Toole, 59, joined Boston Police as a patrol officer in 1979 and worked her way up through the ranks. She later worked in other pub-

2006 before completing a six-year term as chief of an oversight body responsible for reforms in the Irish national police force.

She has since focused on consulting work, including helping to monitor whether police in East Haven, Connecticut, are complying with a federal mandate to curtail false arrests, discriminatory policing and excessive force.



Interim Seattle Police Chief Harry Bailey, Kathleen O'Toole and Mayor Murray after press conference.

# Marriage

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Kelly and Patty Reagan of Washington County took the day off to get married, taking along their kids 11-year-old Kaelan and 7-year-old Sophia. The couple has been together for nearly eight years.

"It's important for our kids to be part of this," Kelly Reagan said. "It's the final validation for them; this is the official stamp."

Added Patty Reagan: "It's the final step to be truly a family. Everyone else takes for granted that they have this right."

Oregon law has long prohibited same-sex marriage and McShane's opinion came a decade after Oregon voters amended the state's Constitution to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

Four same-sex couples challenged the ban last year. In February, state Attorney Gener-

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al Ellen Rosenblum said she would not defend the ban in court, citing last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down key parts of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

Not everyone celebrated the ruling. The Oregon Catholic Conference issued a statement saying "authentic marriage remains what it has always and only been according to God's design: the loving union between

one man and one woman for the mutual benefit of the two who have become one flesh and any children born of their union."

In Portland, Jeana Frazzini, executive director for Basic Rights Oregon, simply told the crowd gathered at the group's headquarters: "We won!"

The tightly packed room of gay and lesbian couples and their supporters filled with cheers, fist pumps, and hugs.

One of the plaintiffs in the case, Chris Tanner, embraced her partner and wiped away tears as the decision was announced.

"I'm speechless," she told the crowd. "I've anticipated this moment for at least 10 years. So I'm thrilled."

McShane's opinion was then read aloud to the audience by lead attorney for the plaintiffs, Misha Isaak.

"It's a surreal, exciting moment, and not just for Oregon but for our nation," said Ben West, while leaning on the shoulder of his long-time partner Paul Rummell. The two men, who were also plaintiffs in the case, and their 8-year-old son Jay then went to the county office to get their marriage license. They were married later that day.

# HOA

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Kraft also has to cover the HOA's attorney costs - bringing her total to almost \$20,000, on the house she paid \$30,000 in cash for in 2009. She will be charged 9 percent interest on that debt for every year it takes to pay it off.

How many other Northwest home and condo owners have lost all their property through HOAs? It's impossible to know, because unless states act to tighten up their laws, the homeowner- and condominium owner associations don't have to report that to anyone. In fact, the Freedom of Information Act doesn't apply here at all, nor does the U.S. Constitution.

Kraft, like HOA residents around Oregon, Washington and many other states, is being nickel-and-dimed out of her property, while elected officials and government bureaus turn a blind eye to basic consumer complaints.

"I have gone my whole life without a home, and this was going to be the best thing that ever happened to me and my family," Kraft says of her little house in Snoozy's Hollow.

"I put everything I had into this house, and now I'm going to lose everything."

## From Wacky to Tragic

Homeowner associations are a form of private government. They involve local governing boards set up by developers, with official approval from the local municipality, to run their communities based on

Say the words 'homeowners' association' and eyes tend to roll. The steady stream of news about the privatized neighborhoods, run by resident boards of homeowners, ranges from mafia takeovers to boards demanding DNA tests on dog poop.

In our two-year look into homeowner associations and their affiliated businesses, The Skanner News heard many stories about simple disputes that led to eye-popping legal costs; some residents have even lost their homes. Because the industry is "self-regulating," many of these homeowners have nowhere to turn for consumer protection.

"CC&R's," which are "covenants, conditions and restrictions," contracts homeowners must sign to live there.

Although the roots of rule-enforced communities are ancient around the world, HOAs really started popping up in larger numbers in the United States back in the mid-1960s, with the advent of planned housing subdivisions, especially condominiums.

The heart of any homeowner association is its board of directors, which is an all-volunteer panel elected by the homeowners to run the community based on the rules contained in the contracts they signed as a condition of property ownership.

The point of such rules and governing boards, in theory at least, is to protect the equity of homeowners and make sure the community's property is well-kept in the

estimated 350,000 such developments nationwide.

It sounds simple enough - and it is for sure that many HOA boards are well-run and appreciated for their efforts. But all over the country, these boards have made headlines over controversies, both wacky and tragic.

In March of last year a scandal erupted in Florida over a board that voted to ban skateboards, roller blades, bicycles, scooters, toys and ball playing inside the gates of its condo development.

In Las Vegas, Nev., a rash of alleged suicides

was followed by more than two dozen arrests alleging organized crime figures enlisted straw buyers to rig HOA elections, take control of nearly a dozen boards and steer construction, management and legal work the conspirators' way between August 2003 and February 2009.

More recently, the Sanford, Fla., homeowner association governing the condo development where Trayvon Martin was killed by George Zimmerman settled with Martin's parents for \$1 million in a sealed judgment.

Observers there say the incident has made some associations re-examine their neighborhood watch programs.

Read the rest of this story online at [www.theskanner.com](http://www.theskanner.com)

