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**Contact:**

Travis Flinn

Office of Senator Carlos G. Smith

(407) 893-2422

[Flinn.Travis@flsenate.gov](mailto:Flinn.Travis@flsenate.gov)

**Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith recognizes 10-year Pulse Nightclub Remembrance**

*A decade after the tragedy that changed Central Florida, 'the spirit of Orlando United lives on'*

**Orlando, FL** - Florida State Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith (D-Orlando) issued the following statement in recognition of the 10-year mark of the tragedy at Pulse Nightclub:

*"Ten years ago, our community experienced an unimaginable tragedy that took our 49 angels and forever changed Orlando. The Pulse nightclub shooting struck at the heart of Orlando's LGBTQ and Latino communities, devastating spaces where people gathered to celebrate their freedom, and be with the people they loved. As we pause to remember the 49, we also honor the survivors, victims' families, first responders, and an entire community whose lives were touched by that horrific night. For many, the pain did not end on June 12, 2016. A decade later, survivors and loved ones continue to carry grief and trauma while working every day to heal."*

*"This year's remembrance also comes at a time when many in our LGBTQ community are concerned about the direction our state has taken. In the years since Pulse, Florida has weakened gun safety protections and unleashed a wave of policies that have made many LGBTQ people feel targeted and unwelcome. That reality makes it even more important that we remember the lessons of Pulse. Hate has consequences, gun violence leaves lasting scars, and our responsibility to protect one another never ends."*

*"Yet despite these challenges, there is hope. Earlier this year, the Pulse nightclub building was finally demolished to make way for a long-overdue permanent memorial that will honor the 49 angels and ensure their legacy endures for generations to come. And the spirit of "Orlando United" lives on today. We saw it when community members responded to the removal of the Pulse rainbow crosswalk by showing up in love, solidarity, and support for one another. Ordinary people came together to send a powerful message: our community will not be erased. Ten years later, that same spirit continues to guide us forward. As we mark this solemn day and remember the 49, let us reaffirm our commitment to #HonorThemWithAction. May we honor their memory not only in how we remember, but in how we choose to show up for one another and build a safer, more just, and more inclusive future."*

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