



Charlie
Crist

A Guest Article from the Governor of Florida

Governor Crist Signs Laws To Protect, Aid Law Enforcement

Checking Your IQ

Mensa is an organization whose members have an IQ of 140 or higher.

A few years ago, there was a Mensa convention in San Francisco and several members lunched at a local cafe.

While dining, they discovered that their salt shaker contained pepper and their pepper shaker was full of salt. How could they swap the contents of the bottles without spilling anything and using only the implements at hand? Clearly, this was a job for Mensa!

The group debated and presented ideas and finally came up with a brilliant solution involving a napkin, a straw and an empty saucer.

They called the waitress over to dazzle her with their solution.

"Ma'am," they said, "we couldn't help but notice that the pepper shaker contains salt and the salt shaker..."

"Oh," the waitress interrupted. "Sorry about that." She unscrewed the caps of both bottles and switched them.

"Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance towards the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point."

~ Harold B. Melchart

There is no doubt that we are facing a period of economic challenge and sacrifice for all of Florida's families. However, these times also provide a unique opportunity to make government better, more efficient and more accountable to its citizens. Now more than ever, it is important that government spend taxpayers' money wisely by investing in the programs that will help grow our economy and maintaining our commitment to the services Floridians depend on for their safety and well-being.

As law enforcement officers, you make sacrifices every day and often put your commitment to the public's safety above your own safety. On behalf of all Floridians, I am so grateful for all you do. And I believe that we must continue to make public safety a priority by giving our law enforcement officers the necessary resources.

That is why I recently signed a balanced budget for 2008-09 that retains our investment in public safety and crime prevention programs. In deciding which of the proposed budget items to restore, I was guided by my desire to maintain public safety, protect Florida's most vulnerable, strengthen our economy and education system, and preserve our environment. The budget I signed on January 27, 2009, restores \$16.2 million for public safety — **including \$7.1 million for the state probation program** [emphasis added], saving the jobs of 118 probation officers. The money also includes \$6.1 million for substance abuse treatment and educational programs in state correctional facilities; \$1.3 million for services to abused, abandoned and neglected children through the Guardian ad Litem Program; and \$1.4 million for programs to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system.

Many of you, like the Floridians you work to protect, are homeowners who worry about the cost of property taxes. I remain committed to reducing the tax burden on Florida homeowners and business property owners, and I believe we must continue the kinds of efforts that led to the largest property tax cut in state history. We must continue to encourage homeownership by making the American dream affordable for working families like yours. Law enforcement officers and other hardworking professionals including firefighters, teachers and nurses should be able to afford to live in the communities they serve.

My administration continues to address the mortgage and foreclosure problems affecting so many Floridians. In December, I joined representatives of the banking and mortgage lending industry to announce a voluntary

agreement to provide 45 days of foreclosure relief to Florida homestead property owners. I encouraged lenders to continue their efforts to actively negotiate with struggling homeowners during the coming months to help people stay in their homes. And Florida has received nearly \$11.5 million to continue providing statewide foreclosure prevention counseling and legal assistance to homeowners in foreclosure. The boost will enable 77 counseling agencies

and organizations across the state to provide foreclosure counseling. The funds also will allow legal services groups to counsel area homeowners at risk of foreclosure.

Our schools also continue to make strides, an issue of importance to many of you. Florida's education ranking jumped from 14th to 10th in the nation, and its

overall grade improved from a C-plus to a B-minus, according to the *2009 Quality Counts: Portrait of a Population* report released in January. This improvement builds on last year's drastic improvement that took Florida from 31st in 2006 to 14th in 2007. Also, Florida's graduation rate reached its highest point ever last year at 75.4 percent, according to results released recently by the Florida Department of Education. This rate exceeds the previous year's rate by three percentage points and represents an overall improvement of 15.2 percentage points since the 1998-99 school year. The results indicate that rising numbers of minority graduates continue to play a significant role in the improvement of Florida's overall graduation rate. I am proud of our students and teachers, and will continue working to give our schools the resources they need to provide your children and grandchildren with a world-class education that prepares them for the global marketplace.

Moving forward, I am committed to strengthening Florida's economy for current and future generations. The result will be more jobs, and more resources for our law enforcement agencies, our schools and our most vulnerable citizens. I recently directed administration and agency leaders to begin reviewing the best use of Florida's share of the federal stimulus dollars from Congress' American Recovery Act. It is imperative that we stand ready to accept these federal dollars across state government and put them to work for our economy quickly.

May God bless you and our great state and keep us safe.

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"On behalf of all Floridians, I am so grateful for all you do."

IRS TAX TIP: TT-2009-08

What Tax Records To Keep

You probably already keep records in your daily routine. This includes keeping receipts for purchases and recording information in your checkbook. Keeping these and other records will help you avoid headaches at tax time. Good recordkeeping will help you remember the various transactions you made during the year, which in turn may make filing your return a less taxing experience.

Records help you document the deductions you've claimed on your return. You'll need this documentation should the IRS select your return for examination. Normally, tax records should be kept for three years, but some documents — such as records relating to a home purchase or sale, stock transactions, IRA and business or rental property — should be kept longer.

In most cases, the IRS does not require you to keep records in any special manner. Generally speaking, however, you should keep any and all documents that may have an impact on your federal tax return:

- Bills
- Credit card and other receipts
- Invoices
- Mileage logs
- Canceled, imaged or substitute checks or any other proof of payment
- Any other records to support deductions or credits you claim on your return

Good recordkeeping throughout the year saves you time and effort at tax time when organizing and completing your return. If you hire a paid professional to complete your return, the records you have kept will assist the preparer in quickly and accurately completing your return.

For more information on what kinds of records to keep, see IRS Publication 552, Recordkeeping for Individuals, which is available on IRS.gov or by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

Links: Publication 552, Recordkeeping for Individuals (www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p552.pdf) ■