



Charlie
Crist

A Guest Article from the Governor of Florida

Governor Crist Lauds Florida Law Enforcement Officers For Exceptional Public Service

While these are certainly challenging times for our economy, I am pleased we are seeing positive signs for Florida. Home sales are up, and the unemployment rate for the Sunshine State is changing direction – going down, instead of up. While we do not know if these are significant signs of a turnaround in our economy, it is certainly good news for the people of Florida, especially those who are struggling during this challenging time. I pray that these signs are the first of many more indicating we are on the road to recovery.

The state budget I recently signed builds on these positive trends. While at least a dozen states have raised taxes on sales, income and gas—or are considering doing so—I am proud that Florida’s budget includes no broad-based tax increases, no plans for early release of inmates, and no drastic measures to layoff hardworking state employees. In fact, I was pleased to veto the mandatory salary reduction for state employees. While I appreciate how the Legislature worked to limit the impact as much as possible, so that it affected as few employees as possible, it has been my hope that we would not have to take millions of dollars out of the pockets of 28,000 people throughout our state—including our state law enforcement officers. Now is not the best time to reduce state employees’ pay, especially as we are seeing many indications that our economy is beginning to turn around.

In spite of the economic challenges we face, government’s first priority continues to be ensuring “domestic tranquility,” as our nation’s Constitution instructs. I understand that now more than ever, our law enforcement officers must be equipped with the necessary resources to protect and serve Floridians. No one is more important to ensuring the protection of our state than you, Florida’s law enforcement officers.

As law enforcement officers, you make noble and selfless sacrifices on a daily basis. Often putting your commitment to protecting the public above your own safety, your dedication to Florida is inspiring. On behalf of every Floridian, I am so thankful for all you do. Despite economic uncertainty, I believe public safety must continue to be of the utmost importance, and I am committed to continuing to meet the needs of law enforcement officers statewide.

Florida’s share of the federal stimulus dollars from Congress’ American Recovery and Reinvestment Act promises to sustain Florida during these uncertain times. A total of \$81.5 million is expected to be awarded to Florida through Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Of this sum, \$28.2 million is allocated for state spending, and \$53.4 million is pass-through funds to local governments. Of the \$28.2 million in state funds, the Florida Legislature has chosen to support three main projects: courts, state attorneys and public defenders for drug court programs; radio equipment upgrades at correctional institutions facilitated by the Department of Corrections; and a Seaport Access Database through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. In addition,

Florida Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task forces in Broward and Polk counties and the City of Gainesville received \$2.4 million that will also support four positions within the Attorney General’s Child Predator Cybercrime Units. These essential dollars will provide vital resources during a tough budget year.

You are the first line of defense when it comes to protecting Florida’s families and communities. That is why I recently signed a bill that will help you to continue to save the lives of Floridians and visitors who travel our roadways. Senate Bill 344, sponsored by **Senator Nan Rich** and **Representative Rich Glorioso**, requires Florida’s drivers and passengers to wear a seat belt or be cited for a nonmoving violation. Prior to the signing of this legislation, a seat belt citation was a secondary offense and could only

be issued if a driver first committed a moving violation. Primary enforcement of Florida’s safety belt requirements will prevent 142 Floridian fatalities annually, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Over 1,200 drivers and passengers were killed in 2007 because they did not wear a seatbelt. This good bill becomes

effective June 30, 2009, and will help save lives.

As first responders, you know that safety belts help reduce the risk of fatal injury. Every Floridian should wear a seatbelt regardless of where, when or how far they are traveling. No matter what, our number-one responsibility is to secure the safety of our people. I will continue to support and partner with the Legislature to promote good public safety policy. One of my highest priorities will continue to be enacting legislation that strengthens Florida’s existing public safety laws.

Maintaining the safety of our roadways gives residents and visitors alike confidence and ensures that our communities are open for business. The sense of safety you give Floridians and visitors encourages them to confidently travel our roadways and enjoy all that our state has to offer. Thank you for remaining vigilant about the education and enforcement efforts that help keep our neighborhoods safe.

Educating Floridians is also a substantial part of your service to your communities. The information you share is one of the greatest ways to keep our communities safe. Every day law enforcement officers puts their lives on the line in order to protect the people of Florida and visitors to the Sunshine State. Serving the people of this great state is a high calling, particularly during these challenging times. Moving forward, I am committed to strengthening Florida’s economy for current and future generations. Florida is on the road to recovery and though government must continue to be fiscally responsible, Florida’s law enforcement agencies must continue to have the resources they need to keep our people safe.

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

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Growing Old

Have you ever been guilty of looking at others your own age and thinking, surely I can’t look that old?

Well...A lady was sitting in the waiting room for her first appointment with a new dentist. She noticed his DDS diploma, which bore his full name.

Suddenly, she remembered a tall, handsome, dark haired boy with the same name had been in her high school class some 30-odd years ago.

Could he be the same guy that she had a secret crush on, way back then?

Upon seeing him, however, she quickly discarded any such thought.

This balding, gray haired man with the deeply lined face was way too old to have been her classmate. After he examined her teeth, she asked him if he had attended Morgan Park High School.

“Yes, yes I did. I’m a mustang!” he gleamed with pride...

“When did you graduate?” she asked.

He answered, “In 1975. Why do you ask?”

“You were in my class!” she exclaimed.

He looked at her closely. Then that ugly, old, balding, gray haired, wrinkled, fat butt, decrepit dentist asked her...

“What did you teach???”

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