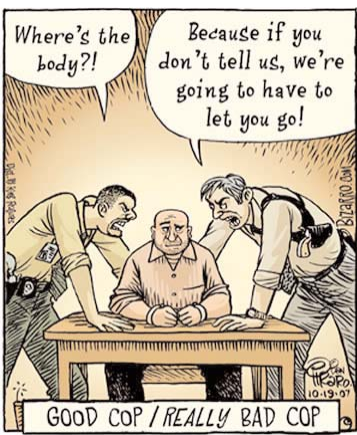




*Stephanie  
Womble,  
Dade County  
PBA Director  
of  
Communications*

**“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”**

*~ Harold McAlindon*



**Florida PBA endorsed Charlie Crist for the U.S. Senate on October 19, 2009 on the steps of the Florida Capitol Building.**

# *PBA's Endorsements* **Guest Editorial**

## **PBA Endorses Charlie Crist The Man, Not the Party**

Last year, we endorsed one of law enforcement's greatest friends for US Senate—that friend is **Governor Charlie Crist**. Much has been made of Gov. Crist running as a NPA instead of a Republican. Here is where the PBA stands on the issue, “We endorsed Charlie Crist the man, not the party,” said **PBA President John Rivera**.

As we have stated before, our endorsement is not handed out freely or lightly. It is one of the toughest and most sought endorsements and it carries significant weight with voters. Our endorsement of a candidate comes after interviews and analysis of track records. It is not based on party affiliation or positions on issues other than law enforcement. When it comes down to who the PBA will support, we aren't concerned about anything other than who will be the best advocate for public safety. If this makes us a “special interest” group, then so be it, because to us, there is no greater “special interest” than that of you, our members, who risk your lives to keep our community safe.

What we are looking for in a candidate is someone who will stand tall and solid for public safety, even if it means going against the party. This legislative session we saw too many “friends,” as they like to call themselves, abandon what was right, at times even change their votes under pressure to vote with “The Party.” We will remember who they were, trust us, we took names. There were some who had backbone and were not afraid to stand with us—and we will remember them as well. Loyalty matters. One of those people with courage and conviction is Charlie Crist, and he has the track record to prove it.

Governor Crist believes in the words of the U.S. Constitution that state government's first priority is to provide “domestic tranquility.” Whether it was sponsoring pro-law enforcement legislation as a State Senator; issuing strong rulings that protected the rights of officers as Attorney General; or not hesitating to use his red pen to veto bills that were harmful to public safety as Governor—Charlie Crist has always remained solid in his commitment to public safety and providing law enforcement officers the tools and resources necessary in order to protect all Floridians.

Throughout his public career, Governor Charlie Crist has supported common sense measures to crack down on criminals who prey on Florida's families. As Governor, Crist supported and signed into law numerous bills increasing benefits and the safety of law enforcement officers. He's vetoed State Correctional Officer, Correctional Probation Officer position cuts and pay cuts for state employees. In his first legislative session as governor, Charlie Crist fought for passage of the Anti-Murder Act. This legislation ensures violent felony offenders who violate probation return to jail. Since becoming law, nearly 100 violent probation violators have been locked back up. Governor Crist has cracked down on sexual predators. In June 2009, under the leadership of Governor Crist, Florida law enforcement arrested 77 individuals on charges ranging from possession of child pornography to sexual battery during a 10-week effort to crack down on child pornography. Governor Crist has also made it a priority to appoint a number of pro-law enforcement candidates to boards and commissions. As Attorney General, Crist issued an opinion against Citizen Review Boards limiting their powers. He also created the state's first Child/Predator/Cyber Crime unit in August 2005. This important decision was a direct result of several tragic murders of young children in Florida. While in the Senate, Crist sponsored “Stop Turning Out Prisoners” legislation which requires criminals to serve at least 85 percent of their sentences and legislation that brought chain gangs back to Florida. This led Governor Crist to receive the nickname, “Chain Gang Charlie.” Governor Crist is a man who is not afraid to stand up for what is right at the cost of personal peril.

It is this unwavering stance and values that have earned him the respect, support and friendship of the Florida Police Benevolent Association and law enforcement officers across the State. We will remain with Gov. Crist because we care about our members and making sure that we elect leaders into office who put public safety at the top of their list. It is imperative that we elect into office leaders who understand the challenges and risks you face everyday on the job, and who will then, once in office, give you the resources you need to do that job. Charlie Crist will and has done that. ●

