

Inside the Bar

Find a Lawyer

George Stephen LeMieux

Member in Good Standing

**Eligible to practice in
Florida**

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Circuit: 2
Admitted: 09/28/1994
Board **Year Area**
Certification: 2004 Business Litigation
Sections: Government Lawyer
10-Year Discipline **None**
History

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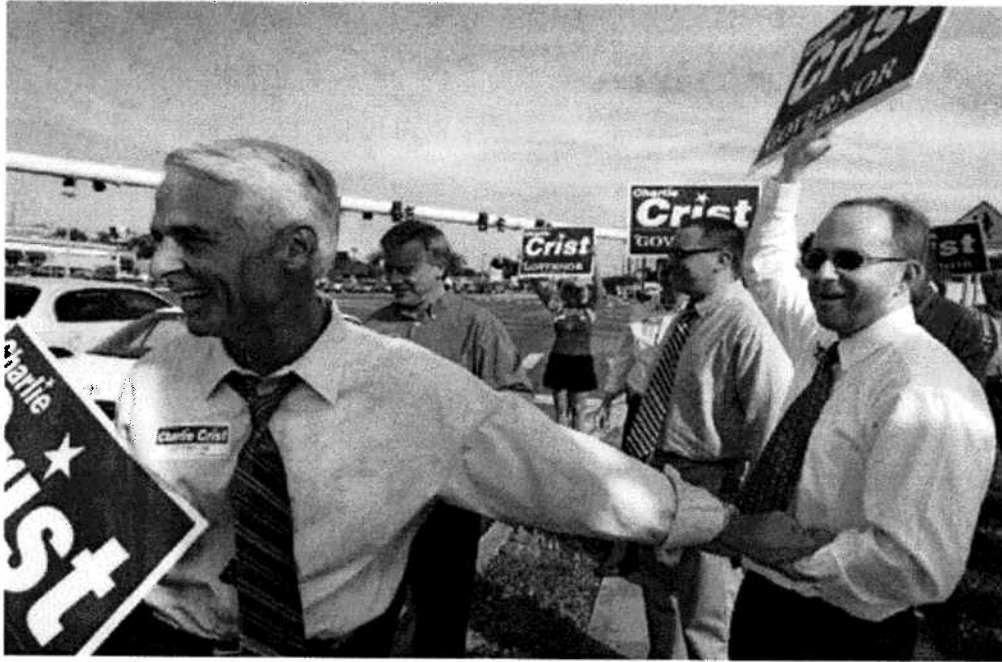
Part Two to complaint against George LeMieux, member #16403.

I accuse this member of violating Rule 4-1.7(a) (1) in that, while practicing with the firm of Gunster, Yoakley at a time when it had as a current client Florida East Coast Industries, the parent company of the Florida East Coast Railway Company, the member accepted as a client and represented the State of Florida in negotiations to purchase the Florida East Coast Railway Company from Florida East Coast Industries.

This took place from December 2007 to March 2008, and is well documented in the attached news article.

George LeMieux For Senate? No Way

August 24th, 2009, Author: Andrew Perez, Categories: Politics



Gov. Charlie Crist cannot seriously be considering the appointment of George LeMieux to the Senate seat vacated by Mel Martinez. Such a move would undoubtedly bring new scrutiny to LeMieux's improper business dealings with the state that Crist, despite his supreme confidence in his own invincibility, cannot afford.

No one has profited off of the Crist administration quite like George LeMieux and the law firm he chairs, Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart. LeMieux's influence in the Governor's office has afforded the Frenchman endless opportunities to double-dip and he has capitalized, managing to get paid by the state of Florida and by clients of his firm for doing the same job.

LeMieux, who worked at Gunster Yoakley from 1994-2002, announced his resignation as Crist's Chief of Staff on Dec. 6, 2007. Two weeks later, The Transportation Department handed Gunster a one-year contract worth \$500,000 to advise the state as it pursued the purchase of Florida East Coast Railway, just 11 days before LeMieux officially left Crist's office to return to Gunster Yoakley.

The contract between the DOT and Gunster listed LeMieux as one of eight lawyers working on legal matters at \$500 an hour. LeMieux claimed he was charging a discounted rate for his services and that he had played no role in Gunster's obtaining the contract.

Florida East Coast Industries, which was the parent company of the Florida East Coast Railway Company from October 2000 until March 2008, is a client of Gunster Yoakley. That's right, the DOT paid Gunster half a million dollars to advise the state on the potential purchase of a railroad owned by the firm's client. The conflict could not possibly be more blatant.

FEC Industries and FEC Railway Company have since been bought by private equity funds managed by affiliates of Fortress Investment Group. LeMieux has continued lobbying the state to purchase the rails in order to get Amtrak involved.

Last month, the Miami Herald reported that “[t]he Florida Department of Transportation has applied for federal stimulus money for railroad projects to bring Amtrak service to the Florida East Coast Railway.”

LeMieux is not registered to lobby in the state of Florida. Additionally, appointing LeMieux could bring even more scrutiny to the Republican Party of Florida's financial records. LeMieux has been a paid consultant to RPOF Chairman Jim Greer since February 2008, when Greer said that LeMieux would be paid \$10,000 a month for his services. No such payments have been disclosed in State Party filings.

It's not Charlie's fault for believing he's untouchable or for thinking he could get away with appointing LeMieux to the Senate, despite the numerous conflicts of interest that the move would pose.

The media has watched over Crist's administration with an unskeptical eye. The St. Pete Times report which first published word of the contract between the DOT and Gunster failed to mention that Gunster lists FEC Industries as a client, even though it only requires a quick Google search to find this out.

Might the media reverse course if Crist appoints LeMieux? Yes, if only because they'll need a horserace to cover next summer, and there won't be a race at all if Charlie's free ride continues.