



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

January 28, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Welcome back to the Sunshine State. Your comments last evening regarding the challenges before our country demonstrate the need to focus on the critical issues facing Floridians and Americans across this nation – jobs.

Here in Florida we are focused on providing the necessary resources and incentives to create jobs. Your visit today announcing Florida's share of federal rail money will begin the process of establishing an alternative mode of transportation to the nearly 20 million residents of this state. The immediate impact of today's announcement is the creation of thousands of jobs resulting from the money coming to Florida. As Governor, I was proud to join my Republican and Democratic colleagues in Tallahassee supporting our state's high speed rail project. Today's announcement will provide much needed jobs in Florida. I encourage full funding of Florida's rail project.

As to education, we are proud of our students' learning gains in recent years, which is enabling us to prepare the world-class workforce of tomorrow's innovation economy. According to new information provided by *Education Week*, Florida ranks 8th in the nation in education. We are committed to accountability, increased student performance and rewarding quality teachers within our public school system. Florida is an active candidate for federal Race to the Top funding that will enable us to increase our gains while continuing to focus on accountability measures within the classroom and rewarding teachers with increased pay. I urge Secretary Duncan to approve Florida's application.

Another issue important to Florida is our leadership in our nation's space program. NASA is critical to the economic vitality of the Space Coast and the thousands of jobs on the Cape and within the surrounding communities. I am concerned about reports that the administration is considering elimination of the Constellation Program, lunar landers and moon bases. The retirement of the shuttle fleet and the transition period is causing concern among employees and families along Florida's storied Space Coast. I urge you to fully fund NASA programs, including the Constellation Program, and keep our national commitment to advancing human space flight.

I agree with your words last evening that this country needs bi-partisan leadership. Here in Tallahassee, I am proud of our record of doing just that. The American people are looking to their elected leaders to solve the challenges facing our country both immediate and long term. Our nation no longer needs rhetoric. Our children and grandchildren need results. Results that will ensure them of an America that provides for a college education, homeownership, the ability to open and create a small business and the peace of mind to have a job. I encourage you to reach across the political aisle and work with Republicans. Our firm held belief in less taxes, less government and more personal freedom would be valuable input as we debate public policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Charlie Crist