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To: jtfiorito@comcast.net
Subject: A Special Message from Governor Charlie Crist, November 20, 2008
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November 20, 2008

Dear Friends,

This week I unveiled a comprehensive proposal to reform our state university system in a way that provides access for you and your families while giving Florida's 11 institutions the resources and governance they need to prepare a strong workforce for our many businesses and industries.

Every Floridian should have access to a high-quality and affordable higher education. As Governor, and as a graduate of Florida State University, I am committed to supporting Florida's public colleges as they prepare graduates for the increasingly competitive global marketplace.

For decades, we have looked to Florida's universities to make our great state better by educating future doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, scientists and entrepreneurs. Many of you are graduates of this system. Your success in life is proof of how important these universities are to our quality of life here in the Sunshine State. As Governor, I am committed to giving our universities the resources and support they need to excel.

That is why I am proposing a set of reforms that will strengthen Florida's universities now and for decades to come. By establishing clear lines of governance at the individual institution and the state level -- and by balancing universities' financial needs with affordability for families -- our universities and our students can flourish.

I remain as committed as ever to keeping our universities affordable. But I also understand that our institutions must be able to set tuition at levels that enable them to maintain the strength and competitiveness of their faculty and degree programs by recruiting the best professors. My proposal balances these two ideals.

Under this proposal, the boards of trustees at each of our 11 state universities would have the option to establish, with final approval from the Board of Governors, a tuition plan that is higher than the base rate charged to in-state undergraduates. This could not exceed 15 percent each year.

Base tuition would continue to be covered by the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. Also, the tuition changes would not affect families that have purchased contracts through the Florida Prepaid College Plan. To help families with financial needs, 30 percent of the differential tuition would go toward need-based aid. The remainder of revenues would be used to retain and recruit professors and researchers, programs that improve graduation and retention rates, and other areas identified by the individual schools. The result will be stronger Florida universities that prepare graduates for the increasingly global marketplace.

My proposal also would clarify governance of the universities, by giving individual boards of trustees the authority to oversee daily operations and university-level matters including the selection of presidents, budgets, and growth planning. The Board of Governors would have authority to approve trustees' tuition requests, as well as their requests for curriculum changes, program expansions, and long-term strategic plans.

A well-educated workforce opens the door to endless opportunities for every Floridian, and for the Sunshine State. I look forward to working with the Legislature and the higher education community to make our universities stronger than ever.

God bless you and God bless Florida.

Receive Regular Updates from Governor Crist

I would like to keep you informed about actions my administration is taking on education issues, as well as many other topics, if you are interested. I invite you to click the link below and select the issues you want to learn more about. Feel free to select as many topics as you like.

Thank you and God bless. It is a privilege and honor to serve you as Governor.

<http://www.flgov.com/issuesignupform>



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