

Charlie Crist

Empty Chair Charlie Jets to Europe as Florida Suffers

Florida Taxpayers Shell Out \$255K for European Junket for Crist; Fiancé. The Miami Herald reported: “At a cost to taxpayers of \$255,000, Gov. Charlie Crist embarks with staff and dozens of corporate executives Saturday on an 11-day European trade mission in the hope of striking business deals to spark Florida's flagging economy. The group will travel to London, Paris, Madrid and Russia's St. Petersburg to meet with top government officials and business leaders to talk insurance, alternative energy, and aerospace contracts. Crist is also meeting with Britain's Prince Charles and his brother, Prince Andrew. The governor's fiancée, Carole Rome, is going as one of the business "delegates," who pay for their own hotel and airfare. The Fisher Island resident is a consultant to her family's Halloween costume business.” [Miami Herald, 7/11/2008]

Crist Returned for Birthday Party; Found Bad Economic News. Gov. Charlie Crist returns from his European trade mission next week in time to celebrate his 52nd birthday at Palm Beach's historic Breakers hotel, where donors can pay \$5,200 to get their names engraved on his birthday candles. But the governor is coming home to an electorate clearly in no mood to party. While Crist was touring a nuclear plant in France and meeting with aerospace firms and Prince Charles in London, Florida's job loss numbers were moving to the front of the pack nationally. Home foreclosures ranked second in the country last month. Population growth has slowed, from 500,000 a year two years ago to a projected 117,000 this year. [Sun-Sentinel, 7/19/2008]

Florida Lost More Jobs Than Any Other State. Florida's lost more jobs than any other state in the nation and ranks second in foreclosures. A report released today shows a drastic increase in the state's unemployment rate. The news comes as the governor is overseas on a 10 day trade mission. [Capitol News Service, 7/18/2008, <http://www.flanews.com/?p=2336>]

Crist's Hidden Energy Company Support

Crist Received Backing From Shady Group Funded By Energy Companies. According to the Tampa Tribune in October 2002, Attorney's General Charlie Crist was the beneficiary of television ads purchased by a group called American Taxpayers Alliance touting Crist's "tough on crime" record. While state and federal laws did not require disclosure anything beyond its name on the ad, Time magazine and others reported energy companies funded the group. While Crist said he knew nothing about the ads or the group that paid for them, his opponent, Buddy Dyer wanted information. Dyer: "Charlie needs to tell us who this secret organization is. They're buying more ad time for Charlie than Charlie is." American Taxpayers Alliance, according to the article, was headed by Scott Reed, a Republican lobbyist who ran Bob Dole's unsuccessful 1996 presidential campaign. [Tampa Tribune, 10/26/02]

Crist Said Identities of Donors Not Important. According to the Orlando Sentinel in October 2002, Attorney General candidate Charlie Crist said the identity of the American Taxpayers Alliance's donors were not important. Crist: "We have free speech in this country and this is allowed. People who contribute to my campaign get two things. They get a thank-you note and they get good government. I don't know where to send the thank-you note, but they'll get good government." In addition, according to the article, "According to news reports, big energy wholesalers such as Reliant Energy based in Houston helped bankroll a nearly \$2 million ad campaign by a group called the American Taxpayers Alliance in California against Democratic Gov. Gray Davis" [Orlando Sentinel, 10/26/02]

Crist As A Bush Supporter

Crist: Not Concerned About Being Linked to Bush; Proud of Bush. "Crist said he has no reservations about standing side-by-side with a president whose popularity has slipped substantially because of the growing public opposition to the war in Iraq... 'I'm not concerned with being linked with him at all,' Crist said. 'I'm proud of my president. I'm proud of the commander in chief.'" [St. Petersburg Times, 9/18/06]

Ethical Problems

Crist Accepted Contributions Over Legal Limit; Failed to Disclose Pertinent Information. According to the Miami Herald, Charlie Crist's July 2005 reporting of financial contributions for his campaign for governor was questioned. According to the article, records showed at least two-dozen contributions that exceeded the legal amount of \$500. As well, records failed to show the required occupations of more than 1,800 contributors who give more than \$100. According to the article, Crist's campaign advisor Mac Stipanovich said they returned the funds that exceeded the limits and volunteers at the campaign were still contacting contributors to determine their occupations. Stipanovich: "There will be meticulous compliance with the law and you will see that reflected in the next report." [Miami Herald, 07/14/05]

A Crist Fundraiser Created "Some Embarrassment for Crist" When One of the Attendees Was an Individual Who Crist Was Supposed to Investigate and Another Was a Foreign Government Official Illegally in the US. "A \$500-a-plate fundraiser hosted by Donald Trump at the New York billionaire's West Palm Beach estate... turned up a couple of potential contributors that have created some embarrassment for gubernatorial candidate Charlie Crist's campaign. One is a former Ukrainian government official once charged with corruption in his home country who was in the U.S. illegally, and the other is a businessman being investigated on complaints of deceptive advertising by the attorney general's office headed by Crist. A campaign spokeswoman told The Tampa Tribune that neither man, Volodymyr Shcherban of Ukraine or Cape Coral businessman Russell Whitney, made contributions at the fundraiser. However, two of Whitney's companies previously had made \$500 contributions, the maximum allowed. The newspaper was then told by the campaign that those contributions would be returned." [Associated Press, 2/12/06]

Crist Accepted Money From Company Being Investigated By State. According to the Palm Beach Post in August 2002, attorney general candidate Charlie Crist accepted cash contributions and transportation assistance from Advance America, a payday loan company that was under investigation by Florida's Office of Attorney General. According to the article, "Advance

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America, which has for two years fought subpoenas by retiring Attorney General Bob Butterworth seeking information about its lending practices, on March 7 received a \$57.60 reimbursement from Crist for 'travel,' according to state campaign records. James Blosser, a lobbyist for the company, hosted a money-raiser for Crist at his Fort Lauderdale home last year, from which Crist received \$47,000 in contributions, including \$1,500 from Advance America and two other companies that share its Spartanburg, S.C., address." Advance America was under investigation for its practice of "rolling over" short-term payday loans--using post-dated personal checks as collateral against an expected paycheck. [Palm Beach Post, 08/31/02]

Crist's Budget Problems

Florida is Facing \$2 Billion Shortfall. Florida was facing a \$2 billion dollar short fall from 2007. [Tallahassee Democrat, 2/1/08]

Crist is Using Half of the State Budget Stabilization Fund to Patch Holes in Current Budget. "Seeking to avoid a grim, budget-cutting session while they're running for re-election, legislators earlier this year gave Crist authority to use half of the state's budget-stabilization fund -- or about \$700 million -- to patch holes in the 2008-09 spending plan." [Orlando Sentinel, 7/6/08]

Crist's Budget Relied on \$338 Million in Increased Local Property Taxes. "Crist's budget relies on \$338 million in increased local property taxes to pay for schools, a move that could mean higher tax rates in some counties and potentially offset about 40 percent of the \$876 million in savings voters were expecting in 2009 because of the increased homestead exemptions required after Tuesday's passage of Amendment 1." [Miami Herald, 2/1/08]

Political Lightweight

April 2008 Poll Showed Crist's Job Approval at Its Lowest Point -- Down 14 Points since July 2007. "Crist's job performance as governor has the approval of 59 percent of Floridians, according to a poll released Thursday by the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute in Connecticut. The poll surveyed 1,215 Floridian voters and had a 2.8 percent margin of error. Crist's approval rating is the lowest it has been since he took office in January 2007. That February, he had an approval rating of 69 percent, and it topped out in July 2007 at 73 percent, according to polls by the same institute." [Independent Florida Gator, 4/11/08]

March 2008: Poll Says Crist Would Not Help McCain's Chances in Florida. A March 2008 poll of Florida voters showed Crist on the Republican ticket as having no effect on 87% of Floridians. The Tampa Bay Times The Buzz blog reported, "Three percent (of Floridians) said Crist as running mate would make them "much more likely," 6 percent said "somewhat more likely," and 87 percent said it would have no effect. The telephone survey of 600 registered and frequent Democratic voters in Florida was conducted March 15-17 for the St. Petersburg Times, Bay News 9 and the Miami Herald." [Tampa Bay Times the Buzz blog, 3/19/08]