

*Charlie
Crist*

Guest Article from the Governor of Florida

Governor Crist Continues To Support Law Enforcement

Across our state every day, thousands of police officers, deputy sheriffs and state law enforcement officers make it their life's work to serve Florida communities and keep Florida a safe place to live and to visit. As one of them, you make noble and selfless sacrifices every day, often putting your commitment to public safety above your own safety. I am eternally thankful for all you do.

Already this year, two of your colleagues and fellow Floridians, **Deputy Sheriff James Louis Anderson** of St. John's County Sheriff's Office and **Captain Chad Reed** of the Dixie County Sheriff's Office, put their lives on the line while serving. Their sacrifice is a reminder of law enforcement officers' everyday heroism and valor. I join all Floridians in keeping the families of Deputy Sheriff Anderson and Captain Reed in our thoughts and prayers.

Without your service, our state would not be able to offer Floridians the quality of life they deserve. That is why last year I vetoed a mandatory two percent pay cut for state employees earning more than \$45,000, including law enforcement officers. Such courageous work and sacrifice deserve to be compensated and protected, especially during difficult economic times.

I remain committed to making sure our law enforcement officers are equipped to protect and serve the people of Florida. The good work of law enforcement officers is made possible by their having adequate resources. I was proud to sign a 2009-10 budget fully funding state public safety agencies at \$5.16 billion, including \$5 million in federal stimulus funding that will update radio equipment at Florida's correctional institutions. This investment will add to the safety and well-being of the officers who risk their lives each day at Florida's correctional facilities.

Last year, I was pleased to sign legislation that protects the integrity of law enforcement officers. Senate Bill 624 preserves the rights of officers under investigation. It was

also a privilege to sign legislation that reforms pension plans for state employees, including law enforcement.

As Governor, I believe one of my most important responsibilities is the safety of the people of Florida. At a time when many states are considering balancing budgets at the expense of public safety, I have been committed to avoiding massive pay and personnel cuts or releasing criminals from prison early. I am proud that Florida's 2009-10 budget included no broad-based tax increases, no plans for early release of inmates, and no drastic measures to layoff hardworking state employees, including law enforcement. Again, this year, I am committed to standing

with the law enforcement community and ensure that the protection of our state, our communities and our families is not jeopardized during challenging economic times.

Florida is a national leader in public safety and criminal justice reform. Fortunately, during the first half of 2009 Florida's crime rate was down almost eight percent and well below historical rates. While this rate is evidence our policies and programs are moving our state in the right direction, I still believe we must remain

vigilant. As we look forward to the 2010 legislative session, I intend to stand by law enforcement officers and work to preserve funding for law enforcement and public safety agencies. Public safety is a priority across the state, and I remain committed to ensuring that you have the tools and resources you need to continue to reduce crime in Florida.

Floridians are blessed to have such dedicated public servants working day-in and day-out to secure their safety. I am constantly in awe of your courage and bravery. For all you do to guarantee the well-being and security of our communities, residents, and visitors, I am forever grateful.

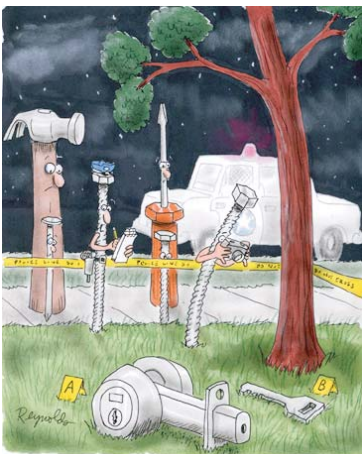
May God bless you and our great state, and keep our people safe.

"...I am committed to standing with the law enforcement community and ensure that the protection of our state, our communities and our families is not jeopardized..."

Editor's Note: PBA proudly endorsed Governor Crist for the U.S. Senate. ●

"Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein."

~ H. Jackson Brown



"Yes, folks, the victim **was** a bolt. Now, I'm afraid, he's a deadbolt."

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