

For Immediate Release

April 21, 2009

Contact: Eric Schultz, 202-485-3129

CRIST AWOL: MISSING 62 WEEKDAYS OF WORK

As Governor Contemplates Senate Run, Scrutiny Gets Hotter - In Addition To Abysmal Economic Record, Crist Now Completely AWOL for 62 Weekdays Since Taking Office

New reports out of the state of Florida show that Governor Charlie Crist has been enjoying his time in office – at the expense of Floridians hit hard by the economic crisis. *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel* [reported](#) that Crist has had no events or appointments set on 62 weekdays since taking office – all while the state of Florida has been brutally hit by the economic and housing crisis.

“Given the how badly Floridians have been hit by the housing crisis and the recent jump in unemployment, it’s surprising - to say the least – that Governor Crist affords himself so much time off,” said DSCC Communications Director Eric Schultz. “At a time when Floridians expect their elected officials to work around the clock on the dire economic problems plaguing the state, Governor Crist may want to think twice about continuing such a lackadaisical schedule.”

The South Florida Sun-Sentinel [wrote](#) **“As Floridians struggle with job reductions, home foreclosures and dwindling bank accounts, Crist has enjoyed a jet-setting lifestyle, mixing with celebrities, attending charity balls, staying at grand hotels and relaxing in his new wife's \$4 million condo on Miami's Fisher Island.”**

A closer look at the figures reveal more,

- Crist had no events or appointments on 62 weekdays -- the equivalent of three months
- On another 74 weekdays -- or nearly four months -- his schedule shows him working only part of the day
- Crist rarely spends weekends in the state capital, preferring instead his hometown of St. Petersburg or South Florida. His calendar shows events scheduled in those areas on more than 40 Fridays. He typically flies back to Tallahassee on a Monday or Tuesday
- On 53 Fridays since taking office, Crist's calendar was empty or showed commitments for only part of the day. He had no events scheduled on 10 of 13 major holidays

Even more shocking is that during his gubernatorial run in 2006, Crist skewered his opponent, U.S. Rep. Jim Davis, for missing votes in Washington. In a TV ad, he

portrayed Davis as an empty chair, rolling around the U.S. capital. Now, as Governor, Crist has devoted considerable time to politics: stumping for John McCain for president, entertaining talk of his own vice presidential nod and more recently contemplating a run for U.S. Senate next year - all while running away from the duties of office.

Florida Has 9.7% Unemployment Rate. In March 2009, Florida's unemployment rate rose to 9.7%, significantly higher than the national 8.5% rate. Since a year prior (March 2008), Florida has lost 424,300 jobs. [Bureau of Labor Statistics, Regional and State Employment and Unemployment Summary, [4/17/09](#)]

Florida Has Second Highest Foreclosure Rate. Florida is currently ranked second in home foreclosure activity. Florida recorded 18,946 foreclosures in March, a 33 percent increase from February. [[Orlando Business Journal](#), [4/15/09](#)]

Florida Facing Cuts, Tax Hikes to Deal With \$3 Billion Budget Deficit. State economists recently informed lawmakers that Florida's revenue fell this year for the fourth year in a row - a 24 percent drop over that time. The Legislature is facing a budget deficit of about \$3 billion next year, even after using federal stimulus money. Among the budget reductions being considered, reported Lloyd Dunkelberger of The Ledger's Tallahassee bureau, are further cuts in education spending, "layoffs for the Florida Highway Patrol, cuts in services for thousands of frail elders, and the elimination of eyeglasses and hearing aids for the state's poorest citizens. The state Department of Transportation suggested turning off highway lights could save some money." [Ledger, [4/07/09](#)]