

MEMORANDUM

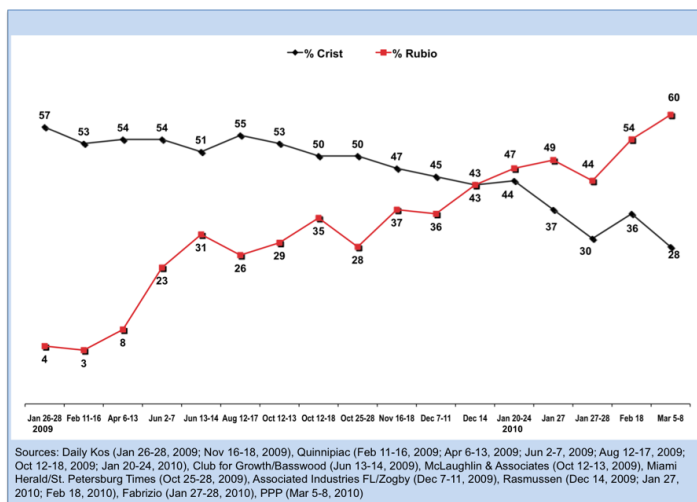
**TO: Pat Shortridge
Rubio for Senate Campaign**

FROM: Whit Ayres

DATE: March 9, 2010

RE: Primary Polling Trends for the Florida U.S. Senate Race

The following chart summarizes publicly released survey data that tracks the Florida U.S. Senate race between Marco Rubio and Charlie Crist. The trend is obvious and striking: Marco Rubio, without running a single television ad, has gone from low single digits to a majority of the vote on the primary ballot, in the process passing a sitting governor. In almost thirty years of polling for Republican candidates, I have never seen a comparable phenomenon.



This trend presents Charlie Crist with a significant strategic dilemma. How does an incumbent governor who currently stands at about one-third of the primary vote grow his support? By becoming better known? He is already universally known. By trumpeting his record? That record is already familiar to primary voters, and it is a large part of his problem. Consider these facts:

1. The Obama “hug” as well as Crist’s repeated and continual reinventions of himself and his record have left him with almost zero credibility among GOP primary voters.
2. Without the ability to sustain a credible (i.e. believable) positive rationale for himself, Crist’s campaign will have one single focus: attack Marco Rubio. This effort has already begun in earnest.
3. Crist wants this election to be about small things (haircuts, the fact that Marco is from Miami etc...). But Republican voters see this election as transformational, something that

happens once-in-a-lifetime. Marco's message about fundamental conservative change is resonating. While we must be prepared for all Crist attacks, we must resist their efforts to drag us into the mud.

As we approach the 2010 election, Republicans are united on the major issues, and Independents look a lot more like Republicans than Democrats on those issues. In other polling we have done, primarily for Resurgent Republic (all available at www.resurgentrepublic.com), we see that Republicans and Independents:

- Oppose the Obama-Democratic out-of-control spending bills, including the auto bailout, the budget with a \$1.3 trillion dollar deficit, and the bloated \$787 billion stimulus bill.
- Are scared to death that President Obama and the Democrats are going to spend the country into bankruptcy and saddle the country with unsustainable debt.
- Oppose the Obama-Reid-Pelosi health care takeover with tremendous intensity.
- Want Republican candidates who will be a check and balance on the liberal Democrat agenda, not be co-opted by it.

These fundamental realities present huge problems for Charlie Crist. There is one and only one strategy for him to survive a Republican primary: by making Marco Rubio an unacceptable alternative, less acceptable than Charlie Crist himself. That means running a relentlessly brutal negative campaign.

This is a dangerous strategy for Charlie Crist. I have strong doubts about it succeeding because of Marco's compelling conservative message and the grassroots support that has propelled him. Moreover, this approach will destroy the one thing Charlie Crist still appears to have: his image as a decent, likeable politician. Even when Jeb Bush was calling Crist's support for the Obama stimulus "unforgivable," he went out of his way to praise Charlie as "about the nicest person I have met in politics."

Regardless, you should prepare your supporters for non-stop negative attacks. It may be the only chance Charlie Crist has if he stays in the Republican primary.

As the race progresses, polls will fluctuate and ballot numbers will change. The fundamentals of this race and the electorate, however, will not. You do not have to match Crist dollar for dollar. But regardless of the attacks, if you can raise enough money to communicate effectively, Marco Rubio has an excellent chance to become the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate.