



The Honorable Richard "Rick" Scott, Governor
Office of Governor
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 3239-90001

The Honorable Pam Bondi, Attorney General
Department of Legal Affairs
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050

The Honorable Jeff Atwater, Chief Financial Officer
Department of Financial Services
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0300

The Honorable Adam Putnam, Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0810

March 3, 2011

Members of the Florida Board of Executive Clemency:

Yesterday, Dale Landry, a Vice-president of the Florida Conference of the NAACP, and I had the pleasure of meeting with Attorney General Pam Bondi and members of her staff regarding her interest in making changes to Rules or Executive Clemency, specifically the procedures for restoring civil rights to ex-offenders. We had a cordial conversation and exchange of views.

I am delighted that Commissioner Adam Putnam and Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater have also responded to my request to discuss this important issue and I look forward to meeting both of you as soon as our schedules allow.

Unfortunately, I fear that the Board will act on clemency rules changes before I, or others, can accept your offer and have the needed in-depth and honest conversations this issue requires.



While I am happy to discuss the importance of restoring civil rights with each with each of you, I know my voice is not that should be considered on this issue. Many policy and criminal justice experts and civil rights leaders both within Florida and nationally should be heard as well – to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of Floridians who will be impacted by any proposed change.

The idea of changing the rules was made public only a week ago today and indications are the Board may act this coming Wednesday, March 9 – less than a week from now. Further, I understand no specific, written proposal has been made available for consideration. The combination of suddenness, speed and lack of details have created an environment in which needed input is locked out or sitting on the side waiting to review, analyze and offer suggestions and counsel.

I feel strongly that, as members of the Board of Executive Clemency, you should hear the experience and wisdom of experts and impacted Floridians before acting. There is no emergency that requires action at your meeting next week. Rule changes can be made at any time.

In consideration of the real time constraints and lack of clarity about potential changes, I ask that you delay any changes to the process for rights restoration until you can hear from those who could help create the best possible policy.

I strongly encourage you to use this delay to make specific proposals public, invite expert input and take public testimony. Any changes will impact Florida families and public safety for years to come. It's more important to get the process and policy right than to get it done quickly.

Please know how deeply I appreciate your efforts to hear from me on this issue and how faithfully and quickly I will work to share our views and suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard L. Simon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Howard L. Simon
Executive Director