



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

October 26, 2007

Mr. Kurt S. Browning
Secretary of State
R. A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Secretary Browning:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby transmit Senate Bill 2-C, with my signature, enacted during Special Session "C" of the 39th Session of the Legislature convened under the Constitution of 1968, and entitled:

An act making special appropriations; providing appropriations and reductions in appropriations for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, to pay salaries, and other expenses, capital outlay - buildings, and other improvements, and for other specified purposes of the various agencies of state government; providing an effective date.

Several months ago, we received information from our economic forecasters that Florida's tax revenues were less than previously anticipated.

In light of this information, the Legislature convened a special session to address the budget shortfall. The executive agencies and I offered suggestions for reducing state expenditures to maintain the priorities of the state. In many cases, the reductions suggested were decreases to increased funding appropriated in the regular session. The Legislature responded during the special session and passed a plan that followed many of the principles outlined in those suggestions. The Legislature is to be commended for their thoughtful work during these challenging times.

Though fully aware of the state's revenue projections and the need to reduce expenditures, I have specific concerns with some of the reductions. For example, salary surpluses anticipated to occur in the Department of Corrections, are typically transferred annually to eliminate a year-end health services deficit. I am concerned that eliminating these funds will deprive the Department of Corrections the ability to provide adequate health care to inmates. During the 2008 Legislative Session, additional funding in health services will likely be required for the current fiscal year.

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In addition, I am also troubled by the staffing reductions to the Office of Supplier Diversity in the Department of Management Services. These staff perform important work by encouraging agencies to diversify spending and help minority and women-owned businesses compete for government contracts. I will be monitoring the activity of the office to ensure its important mission is being accomplished. I also direct my agency heads to work diligently to help place dedicated staff affected by this budget reduction into other available positions.

Finally, I express my concerns with the reduction to the college-related expense allowance provided under the Bright Futures Academic Scholarship. I am troubled that this budget reduction may introduce uncertainty for a large number of Floridians counting on these additional funds to pay for college expenses including textbooks, housing and food. I appreciate the need to make reductions in the budget to address revenue shortfalls; however, to the extent some of these measures make long-term changes in higher education policy, I invite the Legislature, State Board of Education, and Board of Governors to work with me to address these issues in the long term.

I hereby sign into law, Senate Bill 2-C, and strongly encourage the Legislature to consider the concerns identified herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Charlie Crist