



**CHARLIE CRIST**  
GOVERNOR

June 27, 2007

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

Dear Secretary Browning:

By the authority vested in me as the Governor of Florida, and under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby transmit Committee Substitute for I do hereby withhold my approval of and transmit to you my objections to, Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1758, enacted during the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the Legislature of Florida, convened under the Constitution of 1968, during the Regular Session of 2007 and entitled:

An act relating to hospitals ...

This bill places a moratorium on the licensure of off-site hospital emergency departments until July 1, 2009, except for hospitals that are currently in the process of establishing a freestanding emergency department.

Florida's emergency departments face many challenges, including overcrowding and long wait times for patients. I am firmly committed to ensuring better access to quality health care, and I believe that a competitive marketplace is the cornerstone for improving these services. This bill creates a moratorium on the building of off-site emergency departments, thus reducing competition and consumer options in the marketplace.

The Agency for Health Care Administration has strict requirements for licensing emergency departments at hospitals to ensure patient safety, but does not currently have standards that are unique to off-site emergency departments. Accordingly, I direct the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Department of Health to assess additional standards, including patient transportation protocols and distance requirements between off-site emergency departments and full service hospitals, as well as standards for other aspects of emergency care including access to specialty and ancillary services. The Agency will work with Florida's health care providers and the Legislature to accomplish these goals.

For these reasons, I withhold my approval of Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1758, and do hereby veto the same.

Sincerely

Charlie Crist

CC/dmm

THE CAPITOL

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399 • (850) 488-2272 • Fax (850) 922-4292

RECEIVED  
JUN 27 10 27 AM '07  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR