



Notes from the Capitol

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Dear Friends,

Yesterday was a historic day for Florida. The Florida Board of Executive Clemency voted to restore the civil rights of certain ex-offenders. These people have paid their debt society and once that debt has been paid we do not have the moral right to add to it. Today's actions provide the people of Florida a fundamental fairness.

Under the new rule, certain ex-offenders who have committed less severe crimes qualify for approval without a hearing for restoration of rights to vote, serve on a jury, apply for an occupational license and to hold public office.

Ex-offenders who have completed their sentence and probation or supervision and have paid 100 percent of victim restitution deserve a second chance to be responsible and to make the right decisions for themselves and their families. Giving a person a meaningful way to re-enter society, make a living and participate in our democracy will encourage good behavior and will help thousands of Floridians restore their dignity.



It is significant that we visit this issue during Holy Week, a week about forgiveness. A fundamental belief of both Passover and Easter is that the debt for a person's wrongs can be paid in full. People can be forgiven by their Creator – the Creator who endowed each of us with certain unalienable rights – and we can do no less.

This week Jewish families in Florida and around the world gather for the traditional Seder, while Christians join together to renew their faith and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we celebrate with our family and friends, we remember our military men and women serving overseas, we pray for peace, take comfort in God's eternal love and pray for their safe and speedy return. I send you all my best wishes for a Happy Passover and Easter.

May God continue to bless the great state of Florida,

Charlie Crist