

Dear Friends,



During the 2008 Legislative Session we accomplished many great things. I want to personally thank Senate President Ken Pruitt and House Speaker Marco Rubio for their hard work and tremendous service to the people of Florida.

We are facing challenging economic times with fewer dollars coming in. Our Legislature passed a budget that does not raise taxes, yet ensures top tier issues – public safety, education, protection for our environment and the most vulnerable among us.

I am grateful to the Legislature for taking action to help the 3.8 million Floridians who do not have health insurance. The *Cover Florida* plan will give Floridians affordable options that will free them from worrying about health care. And we are able to do so at no cost to taxpayers.

As early as January of next year, Floridians ages 19 to 64 who have not had coverage for at least six months will be able to purchase coverage for about \$150 a month. During the next several months, we will be working with the health insurance industry to develop the best benefits packages possible. Benefits will include, at the very least, coverage for preventative services, screenings, office visits, outpatient and inpatient surgery, urgent care, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, and diabetic supplies. Also included will be catastrophic and hospital coverage. It could include supplemental coverage for vision, dental and cancer care. Employers will have the opportunity to cost-share with employees.

What we are doing is a model for the nation. By negotiating with health insurers – and allowing them to compete for our business – the people of Florida will be the winners.

We will also be able to continue reducing the number of uninsured children throughout Florida. The Florida KidCare Program will provide access to quality, affordable health care for more than 38,000 additional children. By removing the 10 percent “full pay cap” in KidCare – we are allowing more than 548,000 uninsured children to access coverage. Thank you very much and may God bless Florida.

Photo Caption:

Governor Crist and Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp (far right) congratulate House Speaker Marco Rubio (left) and Senate President Ken Pruitt on a job well done during the 2008 Legislative Session.