

Dear Friends,

This week we celebrated those who have answered the call to protect, defend and preserve the freedoms and liberties that we as Americans enjoy today. We must always remember the nearly 1.8 million veterans who call the Sunshine State home. They have risked their lives to serve their country – and we are proud they have chosen to live in Florida.



This summer, I was proud to sign legislation that creates a preference in state contracting for small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. This law encourages veterans to start businesses and achieve their dreams after their service. By helping them rebuild their lives, we show them we are behind them 100 percent.



This week I was pleased to honor Lt. Colonel Alton Yates – from Jacksonville, Florida – with the Medal of Merit Award. The medal is the highest military honor I can bestow – and he is much deserving of it. Colonel Yates has dedicated his life to public service and to ensuring our freedom. He is an Air Force pioneer whose bravery helped advance our country's space exploration efforts.

His record of military and community service are a reminder of why Florida is so fortunate to have so many men and women who serve so that all of us can enjoy the freedoms we hold so dear.

God bless you and God bless Florida.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Photo Captions:

Top Right: Governor Crist (right) greets a Florida veteran as he celebrates Veterans Day at the Florida National Cemetery.

Bottom Left: Governor Crist (far left) joins Lt. Colonel Yates' wife, Gwen Yates, in congratulating Lt. Colonel Yates for the honor of receiving the Governor's Medal of Merit Award.