



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 6, 2008

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Florida TaxWatch Announces New Executive Director of Florida TaxWatch Center for Competitive Florida

TALLAHASSEE — Florida TaxWatch announced today that **Dr. Stephen Morrell** is the new Executive Director of the Florida TaxWatch Center for Competitive Florida (CCF), a Florida TaxWatch Center of Excellence that has been complimenting the tax and fiscal policy research of Florida TaxWatch since its creation in 1997. Dr. Morrell has been a Florida TaxWatch Senior Research Fellow since 2004 and is also the Chair of the Florida Council of Economic Advisors at Florida TaxWatch. In addition to his work with Florida TaxWatch, Dr. Morrell is a Professor of Economics and Finance at the Andreas School of Business at Barry University in Miami Shore, Florida.

Dominic M. Calabro, President and CEO of Florida TaxWatch, explained “These are unprecedented times for Florida. Between the budget cuts, the economic downturn, and the recent problems experienced by the global financial markets, the Florida TaxWatch Center for Competitive Florida is more important now than ever. Dr. Morrell is absolutely the right person to lead the CCF. His experience, energy, and leadership skills are among the many outstanding qualities that he will bring to CCF at this vital time in our state’s history.”

In his new role as Executive Director, Dr. Morrell will oversee CCF, which evaluates state government fiscal policies; researches economic, demographic and other trends that affect economic competitiveness; and makes policy recommendations that enhance Florida's ability to compete successfully to assure Florida's continued economic growth, security, and sustainability. Current Center research includes studying the potential for streamlining state regulations – which involves examining entities and policies that discourage economic growth by unnecessary fees, duplicative regulation, and burdensome bureaucracy.

Dr. Morrell received his B.S. degree from Virginia Commonwealth University, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in economics from Virginia Polytechnic Institute where he studied under Nobel Prize winners James M. Buchanan and James E. Meade. Prior to joining the Barry faculty in 1993, he served as Senior Vice President and Chief Economist for Southeast Banking Corporation, and as a Financial Economist for the Federal Reserve System. He also served as a member of the Council of Economic Advisors to Governor Jeb Bush.

Dr. Morrell will remain the Chair of the Florida Council of Economic Advisors at Florida TaxWatch (FCEA). The mission of FCEA is to provide professional, nonpartisan public policy advice and recommendations to all appropriate branches and units of Florida state government including the Executive, Legislative, and Cabinet branches that is designed to promote the maximum, long-term sustainable growth of the Florida economy.

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Florida TaxWatch is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 29 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida state and local government. Its support comes from homeowners and retirees, small and large businesses, philanthropic foundations, and professional associations. On the web at www.FloridaTaxWatch.org.