



# NEWS

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## **ADVICE TO THE NEW GOVERNOR** ***Manual Offers Lessons from Past Failures and Successes***

**TALLAHASSEE** — “The Campaign is over. Make sure that your staff understands that fact. The tone needs to be less partisan and more gubernatorial.”

“Review Florida ethics laws and make sure each team member knows them and limits the potential for situations that can reflect poorly on the Governor’s Office.”

“Avoid threatening to veto a bill. You just relieve the legislature of responsibility for sound legislation.”

This is some of the advice being offered to Florida’s new Governor Charlie Crist and his transition team staff by people who’ve “been there and done that”. The advice comes from past Governors, legislators and their staffs in a “*Governor’s Transition Decision Handbook*” produced by Florida TaxWatch. The 64-page handbook provides a sampling of thought-provoking strategic advice and observations from those men and women – both Republican and Democrats alike – who have endured the monumental tasks of gubernatorial transition.

“This handbook is certainly insightful on a number of levels,” said **Allison DeFoor**, who chaired a steering committee that provided guidance and input on the publication. “It’s offered as a gesture of goodwill and partnership to help make the transition smoother and make Florida an even greater state.”

It follows a previous edition that the non-profit state government watchdog group presented to Governor Bush in 1998 after he was elected.

The handbook also contains thoughts from other distinguished Floridians and scholars who offer a unique high-level look at current and emerging government trends that the next governor and his team will face once in office this January. These include growth management, increasing public spending and tax burdens, rising property taxes and property insurance, public education, affordable housing, and privatization of government services.

“The transition helps set the tone for a governor’s first legislative session and the tenor of his first term, said **Dominic M. Calabro**, President and CEO of Florida TaxWatch. “Considering the advice offered here will help him build the machinery to put the right people in the right place to best serve the needs of the people of Florida.”

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“It’s not only a collection of topics for consideration by the new Governor but also a depository of historical knowledge from former governors and government officials,” said **Michael A. Jennings**, Florida TaxWatch Chairman and Vice President of Government Relations for Prudential Financial.

Among the gems of sage advice offered in the handbook:

“Don’t throw out talent just because you have the right to do so.” – Governor Reubin Askew

“Never, never have a “one-on-one” discussion without your own security witness.” – Governor Claude Kirk

“Don’t forget the memories of meeting people just because you won the election.” – Governor Bob Martinez

“You’ll be surprised at the pressure of other people’s priorities.” – Governor Buddy MacKay

“The Governor’s closest advisors and staff should not be ‘yes’ people.” - Senate President Phil Lewis

“In the long run, the many things you accomplish will be much more important to the people of Florida than the few things you do not.” – Speaker of the House Allan Bense

“Be bold but make sure people understand what you are trying to do.” – Governor Jeb Bush

“Many of the comments are extremely personal and heart-felt and all of it is useful to the Governor-elect and his team,” said **April Herrle**, who served as Governor Chiles’ Communications Director and contributed her insights to the handbook as well as serving on its steering committee. “It provides a fascinating insight into the minds of the movers and shakers past and present in state government service,” said Herrle, who now heads the Tallahassee-based Herrle Communications Group.

The handbook also offers advice on making appointments, putting together a first budget and legislative agenda, addressing technological and emergency management plans, understanding ethics laws, and the growing powers of the governor in Florida. It states that over the next four years, the Governor will make approximately 6,000 appointments to executive agencies, departments, and boards, in addition to appointments to fill vacant elected offices.

“It can be a daunting task most certainly,” said **Jim Apthorp**, Director of the LeRoy Collins Institute at Florida State University, who contributed to the handbook in part from his experience as a Chief of Staff for Governor Askew. “Governing is quite different from campaigning, and there’s a tendency by new governors to try to solve all the state’s problems, rather than focusing on the two or three most important challenges and resolving them.”

Production of the handbook was sponsored by Florida TaxWatch, the Leroy Collins Institute, the Florida Association of Broadcasters and IBM Corporation. The handbook’s Steering Committee members are:

- ◆ Dr. J. Allison DeFoor, Steering Committee Chairman
- ◆ Michael A. Jennings, Florida TaxWatch Chairman, Vice President, Prudential Financial
- ◆ Dominic M. Calabro, Florida TaxWatch President and CEO
- ◆ Governor Wayne Mixson
- ◆ Dr. Neil S. Crispo, Florida TaxWatch Senior Vice President Emeritus, Political Science Professor at Florida State University
- ◆ April Herrle, Florida TaxWatch Board Member, President, Herrle Communications Group
- ◆ Pat Roberts, President and CEO, Florida Association of Broadcasters
- ◆ Linda Shelley, Florida TaxWatch Board Member, Fowler White Boggs Banker, P.A.
- ◆ Dr. Carol Weissert, LeRoy Collins Eminent Scholar Chair of Civic Education and Political Science, Florida State University

The “Governor’s Transition Decision Handbook” is available online at [www.FloridaTaxWatch.org](http://www.FloridaTaxWatch.org).

Florida TaxWatch is a private, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 27 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens’ hard-earned tax dollars. Our 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 Government. On the web at [www.FloridaTaxWatch.org](http://www.FloridaTaxWatch.org).