



# NEWS

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**CONTACT:** Harvey Bennett  
Communications Director  
850-222-5052

## **RANSON JOINS FLORIDA TAXWATCH**

**TALLAHASSEE** — Florida TaxWatch is pleased to announce the appointment of Charles Ranson as Executive Director of its Center for a Competitive Florida. The Center evaluates state government fiscal policies and makes policy recommendations toward ensuring Florida's continued competitiveness, growth and prosperity.

In a career spanning more than 30 years in the private and public sectors, Ranson has worked in private and public law, state and federal economic and regulatory policy, capital formation, and international development. Appointed by Governor Chiles as a founding member of the Florida International Affairs Commission in the early 1990's, and later as its Vice Chairman, Ranson spearheaded Florida's effort to create and implement a globally diversified and cost-effective international economic development strategy. In recognition of this advocacy and leadership skills, in 1993 Ranson was retained by the Business Roundtable to organize and lead the "Floridians For NAFTA" coalition.

After Congress enacted NAFTA, Ranson put his economic development expertise to work as President of Kansas, Inc., a public-private business development enterprise. Kansas Inc. was used as a model for developing Enterprise Florida.

Ranson began his career as a lawyer and in 1976 was appointed founding Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Enforcement Division for the Florida Attorney General's Office. He later moved to the Florida House of Representatives, as Staff Director and Counsel, during which time Florida became the first state in the nation to deregulate its intrastate surface transportation industry.

In 1981 he founded Ranson & Wiggins, a law firm specializing in representation of regulated and unregulated industries. Ranson advised the state on the impact of the break-up of AT&T. He left the firm in the early 1990's to join the NAFTA effort.

"Charlie has a historical understanding of government, public policy issues and the battles fought in the past necessary to structure thoughtful, effective solutions for the future economic development of Florida for the benefit of all taxpayers," said Dominic M. Calabro, President & CEO of Florida TaxWatch.

As its Executive Director, Ranson will lead the Center's efforts to help make Florida government more productive and accountable to taxpayers. "I have long admired the independent, objective, and nonpartisan work of Florida TaxWatch," said Ranson. "Florida is poised for greatness in the century ahead, and the Center For a Competitive Florida is committed to upholding the high standard of Florida TaxWatch as it addresses the broader, complementary set of policies vital to our economic competitiveness."

The Center 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, domestically and abroad, in economic markets of today and tomorrow.

"Adding the substantial pedigree, the energy and the integrity of Charlie Ranson to the resources of the TaxWatch Center for a Competitive Florida signals our solid commitment to continue producing our unique and first-rate policy recommendations that will benefit all of Florida's citizens," said David McIntosh of West Palm Beach, Chairman of the Center and past Chairman of Florida TaxWatch.

In 2003, the Center published a special research report on government cost savings and tax system modernization. The report recommended ways to save more than \$4 billion in Florida government through increased efficiency, cost savings, revenue maximization and review of sales tax exemptions.

The Center recently assembled a Task Force to study the consequences of the Substitute Communications Tax. TaxWatch research has supported efforts for repeal of the tax, which it describes as antiquated and overly broad

The Center for a Competitive Florida conducts research and develops policy recommendations through a consensus of the major civic, business and professional men and women across Florida. It's one of four Centers of Excellence at Florida TaxWatch.

Ranson holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from Florida Presbyterian (now Eckerd) College, a law degree from Florida State University, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is married to Dr. Sheryl Ranson and has three children.

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**MEDIA NOTE: A black & white picture of Charles Ranson accompanies this release.**