

The returns of Rick Scott

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One wealthy candidate who Emily and I did not mention in our home page piece on tax returns was Rick Scott, a reader reminds me.

The then-candidate for Florida governor released three years of taxes in October 2010, according to this old story from the Miami Herald and Tampa Bay Times [reporters](#):

Scott's adjusted gross income in 2009 was \$7.87 million, more than double what he made in 2008 during Bush's last year in office. Not only did his income grow under Obama, he paid less in federal taxes -- 13 percent -- than he did the previous year when Uncle Sam took 16 percent.

His best year was 2007, the height of the stock market, when his adjusted income was more than \$13 million, of which he paid 15 percent in federal taxes.

How Scott fared in previous years is unknown, because his campaign declined to release anything earlier, unlike his Democratic opponent, Alex Sink, who disclosed her past five years of tax returns.

"We released the three years that Alex Sink has been in office," Scott spokesman Brian Burgess said.

Scott's tax returns show how he uses aggressive use of deductions to keep his taxes low. Every year, he claims a deduction from the losses from his wife's interior design business. The business earned no money in 2009 and lost \$885.

Scott also deducted charitable contributions. In 2007, he got a tax break for donating a \$999 desk to Liberty Youth Ranch in Naples. Two years later, he gave a "mahogany armoire with gold trim" to the group. He has also donated \$5,000 to the Libertarian Washington think tank, the Cato Institute.

But his biggest charitable deduction for a tax break in 2009 totaled more than \$1 million and went to a group called Conservatives for Patients Rights, his tax-exempt political committee that fought Obama's federal health care overhaul.

Those are the kinds of write-ups that all candidates dread. Scott still went on to win.