

**KOHL'S** expect great things™

THE ORIGINAL LOWEST PRICES OF THE SEASON

BONUS BUY

FREE SHIPPING

KOHL'S CASH™

SHOP THE BRANDS. CELEBRATE THE SAVINGS.

CLICK HERE for more deals >>

2009 TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS  Shelton: Is this a coronation for rookie QB Josh Freeman? **Bucs/NFL**



# Role reversal puts Florida Gov. Crist in tracks of loser Tom Gallagher

By Adam C. Smith, Times Political Editor  
In Print: Sunday, October 25, 2009



[Associated Press (2006)]

Will Charlie Crist, left, repeat Tom Gallagher's 2006 defeat?

When people talk about the threat **Marco Rubio** poses to **Charlie Crist's** Senate plans, Crist backers tend to invoke two words: **Tom Gallagher**. He was the last Republican who tried to win a GOP primary by hailing conservative principles and trying to depict Crist as too moderate.

"It's hard to get to the right of Chain Gang Charlie," Crist said, shortly before crushing Gallagher in that 2006 gubernatorial primary by more than 30 points.

This time, it's striking to see the similarities between the Crist of today and the Gallagher of 2006. Just like Gallagher did with Crist two years ago, Crist tried and failed to quickly shove aside former state House Speaker Rubio by overpowering him with GOP establishment support and fundraising prowess.

And just like Gallagher, a lifelong moderate who had supported tax increases, gun control and abortion rights and faced constant skepticism about his conservatism, Crist's attacks on excessive spending in Washington are constantly drawing scoffs from people who well remember Crist campaigning for passage of President **Barack**

Story Tools

Email Article Contact the editor

Print this story Comment on this story

Social Bookmarking [ShareThis](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

SCIENTOLOGY TODAY

freedommag.org

Featured

### Most emailed

- More and more people are getting into the backyard chicken craze
- Police: Clearwater man killed 5-week-old son
- Woman behind Tidewater gas vouchers spent more than \$600,000 on herself
- Thousands of local "zombies" join the record-breaking effort for dancing to Michael Jackson's *Thriller*
- Brooksville Wal-Mart restores Wall of Honor

### News

- Gas prices still on the climb
- My First Car: '40 Chevrolet, Marvelene Marshall Hughes, 78, Dover**
- Q&A: Nominations required to enter military academies
- Agents probe for cause of fuel depot fire
- WASHINGTON **Nearmark effort attracts inquiry**

Subscribe to the Times

Click here for daily delivery of the St. Petersburg Times.

Email Newsletters  
Be the first to know. Register for free breaking news alerts and morning headlines.

ADVERTISEMENT



CREEKSIDE BY MINTO

Private club life on a Grand scale in New Tampa!

Homes from mid-\$200s.

CREEKSIDE BY MINTO at GRAND TAMPTON

ADVERTISEMENT

**Obama's stimulus package.**

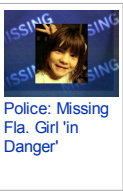
"It gets hard to pass the straight-face test with voters, and especially with you reporters," said **Brett Doster**, who managed Gallagher's campaign and constantly struggled to overcome skepticism that Gallagher believed what he said. "I hate to say this, but Charlie is becoming the new Tom Gallagher."



Uproar Over 'Illegal Alien' Halloween Costume



Sheriff: Girl Disappeared Off Face of the Earth



Police: Missing Fla. Girl 'in Danger'

**Not so fast**

On the campaign trail and in a radio ad, Crist notes that the Cato Institute awarded him an "A" in its fiscal report card for America's governors. But now the author of that report is batting down Crist's boasts.

"I am pleased that Crist values Cato's ratings because we work hard to make them accurate and nonpartisan. But as the report's author, I am concerned that the governor has fallen off the fiscal responsibility horse since the report was written in mid 2008," **Chris Edwards**, Cato's tax policy director wrote in an e-mail.

"In particular, Crist approved a huge \$2.2 billion tax increase for the fiscal 2010 budget, even though he had promised that \$12 billion in federal 'stimulus' money showered on Florida over three years would obviate the need for tax increases. About \$1 billion of the tax increases are on cigarette consumers. ... The rest of the increases are in the form of higher costs for often mandatory services, such as automobile registration, which is really just a sneaky form of tax increases."

**Party establishment uniting behind Meek**

More signals that Senate candidate **Kendrick Meek** is getting his party establishment to unite behind him: Democratic gubernatorial candidate Alex Sink endorsed him, after having said she intended to stay neutral. So did U.S. Rep. **Corrine Brown**, D-Jacksonville, who had looked at running against Meek.

**Dueling attorney general endorsements**

The Democrats running for attorney general, state Sens. **Dave Aronberg** and **Dan Gelber**, appear to be chasing different sorts of endorsements. Aronberg has picked up a slew of sheriff's endorsements and last week one from the Fraternal Order of Police, Florida's second-largest police union.

Gelber has been doing better among key Democratic interest groups, most recently winning the endorsement of Florida's largest gay political group, Equality Florida. Gelber also picked up the Florida Education Association's "Champion of Education" award, which presumably makes him the clear favorite for winning the teachers union endorsement.

**Crist too busy for Obama this time**

Crist hasn't lived down the man-hug with Obama during the president's last trip to Florida, so it's no surprise the governor won't join Obama in DeSoto County Tuesday to hail Florida Power & Light's new solar plant. Crist said he'll be busy with a Cabinet meeting. He might have come up with a better excuse, however. When Obama came to Fort Myers in February, Crist skipped a Cabinet meeting (and lunch with **Jeb Bush** and other former governors) to be with the president.

Check out council candidates

St. Petersburg City Council candidates Leslie Curran and Pamella Settlegoode will be on *Political Connections* at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. today on Bay News 9.

*Adam C. Smith can be reached at [asmith@sptimes](mailto:asmith@sptimes) and is on Twitter at [adamsmithtimes](https://twitter.com/adamsmithtimes).*

**Winner(s) of the week**  
**Larry Williams, Deveron Gibbons, Scott Wagman, Jamie Bennett.** The more people see and hear of St. Petersburg mayoral candidates **Bill Foster** and **Kathleen Ford**, the more we lament that one of the also-rans failed to make it into the runoff.

**Loser of the week**  
**Charlie Crist.** So much for Gov. Crist's cakewalk into the U.S. Senate. Polls show Marco Rubio is closing the gap, even former conservative fans are turning on Crist (see Cato, right) and now come revelations about how little actual governing time Crist schedules. Now Crist has dispatched his chief of staff to help stem Rubio's momentum at a time when he could use all the horsepower available to actually govern Florida.

[Last modified: Oct 24, 2009 08:56 PM]

Have your say...

Empty text input field for user comments.

**CHOOSE YOUR REWARD. THEN EARN AS MANY AS YOU CAN.**

Free Nights  
OR Bonus Points


October 1, 2009 through January 31, 2010

REGISTER NOW ▶

HYATT GOLD PASSPORT

You must [Login](#) or [Register](#) to publish a comment.

There is 1 comment Newest First

 **mclyn82@bellsouth.net** wrote:  
Chain Gang Charlie is just words with an empty meaning. Marco Rubio is a doer and his record as our speaker in the House tells us that. Crist has consistently lied to the public with his 'words' of empty meaning and failed promises.  
Oct 26th, 2009 8:35 am [Report Abuse](#)



© 2009 · All Rights Reserved · St. Petersburg Times  
490 First Avenue South · St. Petersburg, FL 33701 · 727-893-8111  
[Contact Us](#) | [Join Us](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [Subscribe to the St. Petersburg Times](#) | [RSS](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Standard of Accuracy](#) | [Terms, Conditions & Copyright](#)