

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2009

## Charlie Crist Loses Cato's Grade A Tax Rating



Current Florida Governor and US Senate candidate Charlie Crist has been touting his "A" grade on tax policy from the Cato Institute in [his latest radio ads](#).

Cato Institute's Tax Policy Director Chris Edwards is now having second thoughts about that rating.

In an email sent out by Edwards he **rescinds his original evaluation of Crist's tax record and points out that the evaluation was made much earlier and before Crist decided to raise taxes on Floridians.**

*From an Edwards email:*

*According to the Herald's Naked Politics (October 16), Gov. Charlie Crist is trumpeting his grade of "A" on Cato's "Fiscal Policy Report Card on America's Governors." The governor earned the grade in last year's report based mainly on his property tax cuts and moderate spending approach.*

*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.*

*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, which will particularly harm moderate-income families. 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.*

*These tax increases will be particularly painful to Floridians in the short-term because of the recession. But Crist has also jeopardized the state's long-term finances with his expanded subsidies for hurricane insurance. Hurricanes are a major challenge in Florida, but giving big subsidies to coastal property owners, driving private insurers out of the state, and guaranteeing a massive state bailout when the next hurricane hits strikes me as the height of fiscally irresponsibility.*

*Sincerely,*

*Chris Edwards*

*Director of Tax Policy*

*Cato Institute*

*Washington, D.C.*

Crist is in a tough battle with former Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio for the chance to compete against the Democrat challenger Kendrick Meek. Crist's lead in the polls was cut in half by Rubio this week and Rubio is gaining grassroots conservative support along with an impressive number of contributions to his campaign in the last quarter of over a million dollars.

The momentum is clearly in Rubio's favor at this point and Crist has reason to worry about his bid for senate.