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**Governor Crist Invites Students to Participate in Sunshine Week
Essay Contest**

www.FLGov.com/og_home

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today announced Florida's 2010 Sunshine Week "Government in the Sunshine" Web site and invited Florida students in grades 9-12 to participate in the Florida Sunshine Week essay contest. Observed March 14-20, 2010, Sunshine Week celebrates Florida's laws dedicated to making state and local government more accessible to the public.

"This year's Sunshine Week Essay Contest provides an opportunity for high school students to focus on the First Amendment and the importance of open government," said Governor Crist. "Openness and transparency must be one of government's top priorities in order to ensure citizens can continue to hold their leaders accountable."

The essay contest is open to all Florida high school students in grades 9-12 and the winner will be announced during the week of March 8, 2010. The first-place winner will receive a \$2,500 scholarship, the second-place winner will receive a \$1,500 scholarship, and third place will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. The contest is supported through the Volunteer Florida Foundation. Winners will be invited to attend an event at the Governor's Mansion.

Guidelines

- After reading the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, contest participants must explain the importance of one or more of the civil liberties found in the First Amendment and how Florida's open government laws protect these liberties.
- Each student may enter only one essay, no longer than 500 words and typed or handwritten in print, rather than cursive writing.
- Essays must include the student's name, home address, telephone number, school the student attends, grade level and essay title.
- Essays must be accompanied by a parental waiver form, which can be found at http://www.flgov.com/og_sunshine_essay. For electronic entries, the parental waiver may be typed, but if chosen as a winner it will be verified.

Entries must be emailed to SunshineEssay@myflorida.com or mailed to:
The Executive Office of the Governor, Attention: Sunshine Week Essay Contest,

400 South Monroe Street, The Capitol, Suite PL-04, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001. Entries must be emailed or postmarked no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Thursday, February 18, 2010.

In addition to the essay contest this year, teachers also have the opportunity to engage their students in activities relating to "Government in the Sunshine." The crossword puzzle and word search may be accessed and downloaded at www.flgov.com/og_sunshine.

About Sunshine Week

In 2002, Sunshine Sunday was launched by the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors in response to increased public and legislative awareness of the open government laws. After Florida's trailblazing actions to establish Sunshine Laws, many other states have adopted Sunshine Sunday, which resulted in the American Society of Newspaper Editors designating a Sunshine Week, which started in March of 2005.

Governor Crist's dedication to the Sunshine Laws is clearly evident. In his inaugural address, Florida's 44th Governor made open government a top priority. He quoted President Abraham Lincoln, pledging under his watch Florida government would be "of the people, by the people and for the people." The next day in his first Executive Order, Governor Crist established the Office of Open Government and charged it with providing the Governor's Office and all state agencies the tools necessary to serve the people of Florida in a professional and efficient manner.

For more information, please visit www.flgov.com/og_home.

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