

Ripon Profile

Name: Charlie Crist

Hometown: St. Petersburg, Florida

Occupation: Governor, State of Florida

Previous Jobs: Attorney General, State of Florida 2002-2007;
Commissioner of Education, Florida Department of Education 2000-2002;
Senator, Florida Senate 1992-1998

Individual(s) who inspired me as a child: I am inspired by my grandfather Adam Christodoulos, who came to this country in 1914 from the island of Cyprus. He arrived nearly penniless at Ellis Island in New York City and worked hard as a shoeshine boy in Altoona, Pennsylvania. My grandfather's legacy and love of freedom remind me that future generations in Florida will be shaped and inspired by decisions made today by state and community leaders.

Historical figure(s) I would most like to meet: Abraham Lincoln. He understood leaders must stay focused on serving the boss – the people. His words, “government of the people, by the people, for the people,” have timeless purpose for all who serve in a position of public trust.

Issue facing America that no one is talking about: While some are calling for action on climate change, I believe we must focus more on renewable sources of energy. During a recent trade mission to Brazil, I learned about the ways the country has reduced their reliance on other nations through ethanol production. Ethanol is cheaper and cleaner and can be produced in Florida from sugar or citrus waste. We can do more with less if we place more emphasis on alternative fuels.

What the GOP must do to reclaim its congressional majority: We must govern with common sense, understanding that we are here to make a difference, not to mark time. If we listen to the people who have given us their trust, we can do good rather than divide, and we can restore confidence in our party and the path we believe is best for America.

