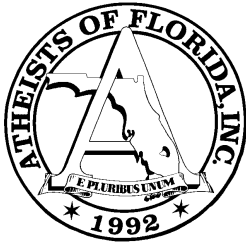


March 8, 2010



Office of Governor Charlie Crist
State of Florida
PL-05 The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Crist:

I am writing on behalf of Michael Middlebrooks, an Atheists of Florida member and doctoral candidate at the University of South Florida. He personally informed me of the details below, and a witness to this event is available for verification.

On Friday, March 5, 2010, during an informal evening gathering in St. Petersburg, Florida, Mr. Middlebrooks approached you to ask a question. Following a cordial handshake, he asked about the letter you placed in Jerusalem to prevent hurricanes from hitting Florida, to which you replied, "Who's more powerful than God?" Upon asking again and getting a similar reply, he informed you that he does not hold a belief in God. According to him, you then reached out and "ripped" a campaign sticker off his chest, which read "Charlie Crist for US Senate 2010," placed there moments earlier by your campaign worker. Mr. Middlebrooks noted that you quickly turned your back to him while simultaneously shouting to him over your shoulder that you "felt sorry" for him.

Governor Crist, your reaction to Mr. Middlebrooks, an atheist whose views on religion are constitutionally protected, is sadly symbolic of the intolerance and bigotry that atheists across the state have endlessly endured. Imagine instead if you had ripped a campaign sticker off some other religious minority, say a Jew or a Muslim, shouting, as you did here, that you felt sorry for them. The outrage in such a case would create newspaper headlines around the world.

Let there be no mistake. Atheists of Florida members are outraged by your bigoted and humiliating reaction to Mr. Middlebrooks. Attacking his minority worldview is an affront not only to him, but to me and all non-believers who expect you, as Florida's chief executive, to protect and defend our constitutional rights, including our right to freedom of religion.

Therefore, I urge you to promptly offer a letter of apology to Mr. Middlebrooks for your demeaning assault upon his character and person. What you did could be considered a hate crime because you committed this battery while denigrating his personal religious worldview. I would refer you to F.S. § 877.19.

Your letter may be forwarded to me for personal delivery to Mr. Middlebrooks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John A. Kieffer'.

John A. Kieffer
President, Atheists of Florida

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