



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10/30/14

CONTACT: Barbara Petersen, 800.337.3518

Florida has a long and rich tradition of open government, with some of the most progressive laws in the country. However, Florida's open government laws have been under attack in recent years, and there has been a significant increase in the number of complaints received by the First Amendment Foundation's FOI hotline regarding government abuses of our right to know laws.

This year, the First Amendment Foundation asked the two gubernatorial candidates leading in recent polls to answer a few questions regarding Florida's sunshine laws. On October 10, we sent each campaign an email, asking that the candidates answer the questions. The deadline for responding was Monday, October 27. We received a response to our questions from candidate Charlie Crist last week, but Governor Rick Scott didn't respond despite an extension of the deadline.

Here are the responses from Crist:

As governor, will you release a weekly calendar in advance that details your appointments, public meetings, and travel schedule? **YES.**

Do you pledge that all of the public business of your office will be conducted on public computer networks and devices? **YES.**

Do you pledge that you and your staff members will not use private email accounts in conducting public business? **YES.**

In your opinion, what is the state's biggest open government problem and what should be done about it? **Presently, far too much of the public's business by the executive branch is being conducted in private. Travel, meetings, emails, texts...seem to be out of the public view. Further the executive branch seems to believe it is its job to make it more difficult and as expensive as possible for the public to have access to public records. Government in the shadows is contrary to our Constitution and contrary to the best interests of our citizens!**

For more than 30 years, the First Amendment Foundation has worked diligently to protect and advance the public's constitutional right to open government and has provided education and training programs, legal aid, and information services through its free FOI Hotline. Funding is based on voluntary contributions and donations made by concerned individuals.
