

CHAPTER 1

January 1999

“Please Make Happen”

Let state government trust Florida's communities to confront their everyday challenges, to advance the ideas that will shape our state. The best and brightest ideas do not come from the state capital, but from the untapped human capital that resides in our diverse communities.

— Inaugural Address, January 5, 1999

I loved being the governor of Florida.

It was my dream job, and that feeling never changed, not in eight years. Not through the hurricanes, budget debates, or even hanging chads. We faced some huge challenges: An education system that was not serving our children well; a broken foster care system; over taxation and government regulations that were crushing our families and small businesses; and an unfocused state budget fat with wasteful spending.

But no time was more exhilarating than those first few weeks. Finally we could act on what we had been talking about. We were ready to go to work.

However, I didn't want to disappear into the governor's office. In my inauguration speech, I said, "public servants must have the humility to listen to and trust Florida's head, heart and soul." And I meant it. The best ideas would come from outside of our state capital. From Floridians. But now that the campaign was over, how could I keep track of what Floridians were thinking? I needed their energy and passion and wisdom.

Email.

Everyone could email me.

So they did.

Millions of emails came in through our website, but it was when I made my personal email – jeb@jeb.org – public that I earned the nickname “The eGovernor.”

And as much as I could, I emailed back. My staff estimated I spent 30 hours a week answering emails, either from my laptop or Blackberry, often while on the road. Otherwise, I answered emails very early in the morning, late at night, or on Saturday. I tried (but didn’t always succeed) to reserve Sundays for my family. No one was more supportive or understanding than my wife Columba – and she never complained about the ever-present Blackberry. But just like a Blackberry, I needed recharging from time to time, and that was time spent with Columba and our three children -- George P., Noelle, and Jebby. And no emails.

The idea of this book, through the use of these emails, is to tell the story of a life of a governor. No day is like the one before it, or what will come after. No day ends the way it began. The unexpected became the expected.

I was determined to focus on the issues we had raised during a lengthy and divisive campaign, to turn those priorities into opportunity, and to bring our state back together - Republican, Democrat, Independent, young, old, North, Central and South Florida. As I said in my inaugural speech, we would "unleash the amazing potential" of faith, family, and friends and "let state government give families and individuals greater freedom - more freedom to exercise compassion, to keep more of what they earn, and to make the choices that would improve the lives of their loved ones. " I knew the best ideas didn't come from "Mount Tallahassee" – as I sometimes called the state capital. They came from the human potential of our diverse communities.

Every governor from every state regardless of political party will attest to the fact that there is no job like being a chief executive. It's truly a 24-hour a day, round-the-clock commitment to the people of your state.

Often my favorite part of the day was the strategy sessions with staff and advisers on how to make our ideas reality. We had a top priority list that I couldn't wait to cross off as "done." But that work was often interrupted by unforeseen challenges (and new opportunities) that arise with little warning. Travel, legislative sessions, meetings

on end, interactions with other elected officials – from sheriffs to city council members to members of the Florida cabinet – all of this became part of our daily schedules. There were never enough hours in the day.

Yet, after a long day of meetings or travel, answering emails is sometimes what actually energized me. They allowed me to stay connected and get first-hand knowledge from Florida's citizens – from the Keys to Cantonment - about what was happening in our communities, in our schools, in our businesses, and with Florida families. In a way, reading and responding to emails allowed me to be in all 67 counties at once.

Spending time on email also could be quite humbling. On some days when I thought I had been just brilliant, I would open up my email and see a number of comments about just how brilliant I had not been. I got a lot of advice – some of it very helpful, and some that I'm still scratching my head trying to figure out what I had said or done to cause such angst. It was always eye opening, and certainly kept me on my toes.

So we'll start at the beginning, January 1999. My emails will give you a sense of what those early days were like for a new governor, determined to fulfill campaign

promises but trying to balance many new and unexpected challenges while also being accessible to Floridians. At all hours!

First, a couple of notes:

- Preparing our first budget was one of the biggest challenges we faced when we took office, since we had just one month to get it ready and present to the state legislature. I had recruited Donna Arduin, who had already been a budget superstar for the governors in Michigan and New York, to be my budget director. She got right to work.

We were still hiring staff, so she leaned on the career state workers who often labor in the shadows of the political appointees. They loved being asked to actively participate, and our budget sessions tended to be raucous and debate-filled. You will see many budget-related missives scattered through the emails we have included in this first month, including constantly asking if we had the money to fund our programs.

- Especially in the early chapters, there are many emails introducing issues, concerns, ideas -- but no resolution. It is not a trick to keep you reading to the end, but sometimes

the resolutions and answers (and sometimes failures) won't appear until later chapters.

- Sometimes it will appear that I answered emails before I received them. Florida is in two time zones – a small part of the Panhandle west of Tallahassee is in the Central Time Zone; but the rest of the state is in the Eastern Time Zone. That is why the times of the incoming and outgoing emails sometimes appear to be out of time sequence.
- One last note: I hope you'll forgive the shorthand I tended to use when writing the staff – it appears I reserved full sentences and grammatical correctness for the public. (Except for shortening the length of some emails, we did not edit the content, incoming or outgoing. That would include all typos. We did change all the fonts to Courier.)

Here is a brief reading guide for the email sections:

Georgia 12 italics – current day editorial comment.



Courier 10 bold – my emails



Courier 10 regular – incoming email

[Anything in brackets is explanations/identifications inserted in preparation of this book.]

-- Separates email exchanges.

Floridians wasted no time letting me know what was on their minds. No topics were off limits. Some people had ideas; some people had advice; some needed advice; and some people were already NOT happy with me. Here are just a few samples of some of the early emails:



Subject: Inauguration

January 6, 1999 9:41 a.m.

From: Joe Klock

I enjoyed your inauguration and thought that your speech was excellent. It touched on broad values and goals without being a laundry list of projects. I got a really good feeling listening to what you were saying.

...I would offer only one point of practical advice ... as a CEO, you need to find a place and a time when you can get away and just think - - without aides, friends, family, colleagues, or supplicants. Any company gets its top value from its CEO when that individual has break in his or her schedule when thinking and playing with ideas can take place. ...

P.S. I hope you seriously consider a real gubernatorial presence in South Florida. The heart of the state and its future has moved substantially to the east and south since Tallahassee was sited.

PPS: Incidentally, if you are unable to be contacted this way in the future, just let me know. I will not be offended and will simply keep my opinions to myself.



Subject: Inauguration
January 6, 1999 7:52:53 p.m.
From: Jeb Bush

Joe, I would greatly appreciate your opinions and email is the best way. Since you are a fine writer, I feel I am not losing any value. I haven't figured out the rules of the game about email communication so jeb@jeb.org is OK for now. Please keep writing.

Jeb



Subject: ADA
January 16, 1999 12:16 p.m.
From: Michael P. Wargin

DON'T MESS WITH OUR RIGHTS!!!!
DON'T MESS WITH THE ADA!!!
KEEP THE MOST INTEGRATED SETTINGS!!!!
PLEASE HELP KEEP OUR FAMILY AND OTHERS LIKE
OURS TOGETHER. HELP US AFFORD TO KEEP OUR
FAMILIES TOGETHER..



Subject: ADA
January 16, 1999 12:25:01 p.m.
From: Jeb Bush

Thanks for your letter. We are soon to propose a plan that I believe will accomplish the objectives that you desire.
Jeb Bush



Subject: school vouchers

January 17, 1999 9:41 a.m.

From: David N. Figlio

As an economics faculty member at the University of Florida who has devoted much of the last four years to trying to find examples of effective public schools... I am writing to offer my unpaid assistance in helping you to design, implement, and evaluate the various education reform policies that you are interested in pursuing...



Subject: school vouchers

January 17, 1999 5:16:55 p.m.

From: Jeb Bush

David, thanks for your offer. I have asked Brewser Brown, the chief of staff of the Lt. Governor and our internal point person for our education plan to give you a call to discuss your involvement.

Jeb Bush

In the meantime, I was dealing with the first major dustup with the media – actually it happened on the very first day! I had invited Senate President Toni Jennings and House Speaker John Thrasher over to the governor's office for a courtesy meeting. It certainly seemed like the smart and right thing to do. But the media was furious they were not allowed "in," and accused me of violating Florida's open meetings Sunshine Law. I very much appreciated this email from someone who had worked for the previous governor, Lawton Chiles.



Subject: Thank You, Governor

January 7, 1999 5:52 p.m.

From: Ron Sachs

...Don't sweat the honest mistake on Day One --- under Gov. Chiles, who championed "Sunshine" and was committed to openness, the problem was not just a first day one -- it was an occasional problem whenever he/top staff wanted him to have a short or meaningful conversation with leadership/lawmakers at a critical time. We screwed up regularly enough. Other governors, too, have grappled with balancing public rights with simple communications. Your commitment will come through.

When in doubt, don't shut them out. Err on the side of letting press in -- it's public access, not press access that's the issue.

More personally, I wanted to thank you for being so kind to my oldest daughter Samantha,

15, who e-mailed you in December about a school prayer paper she was writing for a class. She only got around to reading it today (not being in school during holiday break.) She was blown away (a die-hard Democrat kid).

She has learned a personal life lesson -- and so have I -- from your communication -- about leadership, citizenship and listening to other viewpoints. She is overwhelmed that you took the time, busy as you are, to help her...



Subject: Thank You, Governor
January 7, 1999 7:29:55 p.m.
From: Jeb Bush

Thank you Ron. Thanks for the good advice.
I wonder if this email is a matter of public
record????????????????????

Jeb bush

PS tell you daughter to write me anytime.

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Not only did I answer incoming emails, but I often peppered my staff with ideas, questions, concerns. The evening of January 9th I decided to send out a bunch of emails with follow-up questions on emails I had sent them in December as governor-elect. (All these years later, I wonder how they felt about these after-hour missives? Maybe better not to ask.)

The first email is to Donna Arduin; the next six are to my chief of staff, Sally Bradshaw, with other staffers occasionally cc'd. You will often see cc'd Brian Yablonski, Director of Policy.



Subject: government workers
January 9, 1999 7:54:49 p.m.

Donna, can you make this happen? Thanks.



-----Original Message-----

Subject: government workers
Saturday, December 19, 1998 9:32 PM
To: Bradshaw, Sally; Yablonski Brian
From: Jeb Bush

One of our goals should be to have fewer government employees each year we are serving. We need a baseline from which to start. Labor has huge potential to be reduced, possibly in half.

Let me know how many govt folks are our base.



Subject: glitch bills
January 9, 1999 7:54:42 p.m.

Please let me know how the community based modification is progressing. This is important for the long term possibilities of moving away from the DCFS¹ to a more effective way of dealing with kids in need.



-----Original Message-----

Subject: glitch bills
Saturday, December 19, 1998 9:32 PM
To: Rancourt David; Kearney Kate; Yablonski Brian; Plante, Ken²
Cc: Bradshaw, Sally
From: Jeb Bush

There are two very important bills related to helping the Department of Children and Families ...We should be on top of these from the very beginning.

Kate, you need to work with Sally and Ken Plante to develop any additional legislative initiatives to accomplish our objectives in the child welfare and dev dis areas.

I believe that the Department's legislative agenda and the passing of its budget to begin to deal with the crisis that exist and bring about fundamental reform should be a very high priority.

Kate, please work with Ken and David Rancourt to find the best legislative person within our

budget if the current folks are inadequate. The timing of our transition makes it hard to be a player in the legislative process without a good team around you.

1 Department of Children and Family Services.

2 David Rancourt was deputy chief of staff; Kate Kearney was Secretary of the Department of Children and Families; Ken Plante was my liaison with the legislature.



Subject: Workers Comp Judges
January 9, 1999 7:54:48 p.m.

Please make happen. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----



Subject: Workers Comp Judges
Saturday, December 19, 1998 9:32 PM
Importance: High
To: Bradshaw, Sally
From: Jeb Bush

I would like a briefing on how the Workers Comp Judges are selected, how the system itself works and what reforms could make it work better. The briefers can be from inside or out of Government. Thanks, c.m.³

Jeb

3 My nickname for Sally since she had been my campaign manager in 1994 and 1998.



Subject: elder bill
January 9, 7:55 p.m.

This bill will fulfill some of our commitment in the campaign and should be followed with updates to me if possible.

-----Original Message-----



Subject: elder bill
Saturday, December 19, 1998 9:33 PM
To: Plante, Ken
Cc: Bradshaw, Sally
From: Jeb Bush

Bob Brooks⁴ was working on a bill related to nursing home issues that is now going to be sponsored by Argenziano and Cleary in the House and Senate respectively. We should ask for Bob Brooks' help as it relates to the bill which seems to be an excellent bill worthy of support

4 Bob Brooks was Secretary of Department of Health.

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Subject: a veterans opportunity
January 9, 1999 8:54 p.m.

I never heard from you all. Does that imply that this is a lost opportunity or never was one??????



-----Original Message-----

Subject: a veterans opportunity
Saturday, December 19, 1998 9:32 PM
Importance: High
To: Yablonski Brian; Higgins Robin⁵
Cc: Bradshaw, Sally
From: Jeb Bush

The American Legion and the Department of Revenue are in a tax dispute.

Brian can brief you of what the issue is. If the cause is just, I think we should strive to solve the dispute in favor of the American Legion during our brief honeymoon. This will allow you to get off to a roaring start.

Brian and Robin, after you get together on this, let me know if you think we can do something on this.



Subject: a veterans opportunity
Saturday, December 19, 1998 8:07:38 PM
From: Robbin Higgins

Jeb,

It's taken a little while to gather all the info on this. It seems, as most things, it's a little more complicated than at first blush. ... The American Legion believes it's going to take legislation to change it, and is drawing some up even as we speak. ...we'll get back with you.

⁵ Robin Higgins was Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

One of the most urgent tasks facing us was a failed child welfare system in Broward County. Immediate action was needed. Brian Yablonski sent me a draft statement to make about an emergency six-month plan to rescue the “intolerable condition” of the foster care system in Broward.



Subject: Final Foster Care
January 11th, 7:13 PM
From: Jeb Bush

Brian, I am assuming that we are fine with the budget on this. Both for this fiscal year and the next. If we are committing to alleviate the deficit for this fiscal year, we have to in the out years as well. In addition, we are talking about annualizing the costs for next fiscal year as well and it must be in the budget.

I keep asking and getting the answer that all is OK. I just don't want to commit to things we aren't going to propose and that we don't have a high degree of chance of getting through the legislature.

Thanks.



[Donna Arduin answered]

I looked at the plan before it went out yesterday. ...We have already covered the deficit in the budget. In addition, we recommend we add \$10m to child welfare (beyond the amount we have been carrying in the budget) in a lump sum to cover the second phase of the foster care

plan (which has not yet been determined), legal costs, and other child welfare costs...



[To a reporter]

January 11, 1:16:48 PM

From: Jeb Bush

I just read your article in The Miami Herald today.

I hope you saw our actions today. Judge Kearney and I are committed to dealing with the management and financial problems of our child welfare system, particularly the challenges faced in District 10. All we ask is that we are given time to do our job.

Jeb Bush

PS Please call [Communications Director] Cory Tilley at 850-488-4802 if you need any information concerning our emergency plan.

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I was somewhat obsessed with getting a new and improved state web site. This is the first of many emails I sent on the subject, in this case asking Cory Tilley for action.



Subject: web page
January 11th, 8:35:02 PM
From: Jeb Bush

We need to get the web page upgraded as a high priority. Use your creativity on how we get this done. Some suggestions get Adam Herbert to do a competition for the best designed (and maintained) web page for the governor's office. What we have now needs to change and change soon. In addition, we should get rid of the jeb.org web page which has not been updated in a long, long while.

Cory, we have raised the bar and each day of doing nothing, we are not reaching it. If the campaign had the best web page in the country, why shouldn't the Governor's office?

In the immortal words of our friend David Leavitt⁶, Why Not??????????????
 Let us discuss manana.

Jeb

6 David Leavitt was a citizen activist who among other things, got the law changed so that unused school cafeteria food could be used to feed the homeless.

—

I sent Sally Bradshaw, and all subsequent chiefs of staff, a lot of emails like the following. I loved using email to send them lists of things I wanted to discuss the next time we met.



Subject: agenda assignments
January 15, 1999 8:36:11 PM
From: Jeb Bush

- * Pharmacy formulary
- * Tobacco endowment rollout
- * Dev. Disability rollout
- * Mentor initiative



Subject: Tax cuts
January 17, 1999 9:33:44 AM
To: Sally Bradshaw, Brian Yablonski, Donna Arduin
From: Jeb Bush

I think we need to have some backup data for each of our tax cut proposals, how it would work, how it would impact the average person, how many people would be impacted and when, why the tax is the right one to cut (fairness, broadness, equitableness, eco.dev. etc.etc.) and how Florida fairs compared to other states.

This email to Brian Yablonski was my edits to a draft press release, announcing the establishment of an endowment fund, named in honor of former Governor Lawton Chiles, to use tobacco settlement monies to “insure the financial health of vital children’s and senior’s programs,” – foster and child welfare programs; community services for senior citizens, etc.



Subject: Tobacco Endowment press release for tomorrow
January 18, 1999 7:56:38 p.m.
From: Jeb Bush

Here is my view. There should be more explanation of what an endowment is and why we are doing it. there should be an explanation of how an endowment works (you don’t take from the principal only the income and not all of the income allowing the principal in the fund to grow creating more ability to pay for things in perpetuity), an explanation of the governance of the endowment, etc.

I think we need to add a chart to show the projected growth in endowment and how this means an increase in spending on the programs we are proposing.

I am willing to discuss.

—

Sometimes I felt, when answering emails, that I was taking a pop quiz. This series of emails, answered over a few days' time, illustrates once again that Floridians were thinking about absolutely everything.



Subject: DB/DC, better than ac dc

January 19, 1999 10:23 PM

From: Russell Bjorkman

...Are things settling down for you a little? The bullet train termination was extremely well reported and received in reports I heard and read.



Subject: DB/DC, better than ac dc

January 20, 1999 8:49:52 PM

From: Jeb Bush

It is still frenetic. I need to force it to slow down or we will all run out of gas.

Jeb

—



Subject: I need your help!!

January 20, 1999 10:31 PM

From: Barbara

Dear Jeb:

Hillsborough County Crisis Center needs your help! ... We need \$900,000.00 to build out the inside and move 4 different locations into one

... would like a meeting with you to go over the details and ask that you include this request in your budget ...



Subject: I need your help!!
January 21, 1999 6:47:13 AM
From: Jeb Bush

Our budget is at the printer!

Jeb

—



Subject: semis on the interstate
January 20, 1999 9:06 AM
From: Carol Markett

Who do I write about the problems the tractor trailers are causing now that they are not allowed in the left lane of I'-75? By the way, are you really Jeb or a staff member? Just curious.



Subject: semis on the interstate
January 21, 1999 6:47:14 AM
From: Jeb Bush

I am jeb. You can write Secretary Barry at the DOT in Tallahassee.

Jeb Bush

This email exchange was with someone who was not happy with an appointment I made to the Pinellas County Commission.



Subject: Pinellas County Commission

January 19, 1999 7:26 a.m.

From: Marilyn Giaquinto

What have you done.. to the Republicans of Pinellas County! It is with sadness that I write, but I feel I must let you know my thoughts ... I know and YOU know Paul Bedinghaus IS the only qualified candidate to fill the Pinellas County vacancy. ... I just had to speak my mind. All night long all I could think of was why??? Again, thank you for listening.



Subject: Pinellas County Commission

January 22, 1999 8:16:38 p.m.

From: Jeb Bush

First, my address that comes directly to me is jeb@jeb.org <<mailto:jeb@jeb.org>> so this is the first time I saw it. I appreciate your writing.

I admire Paul and appreciate his work for the Pinellas County Republican Party. In addition, I am pleased it appears he will be the Treasurer of the State Party where I will work with him at another level. As you said, he is a man of unimpeachable integrity and I hope will serve the citizens of the state in the future in other capacities.

I chose Karen because she too is a person of integrity and will do a great job as

Commissioner. She had broad support as well.

Making these kind of decisions is never easy since there were others beyond Paul and Karen who were qualified to serve as well.

I hope you understand.

Jeb Bush

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Thankfully, Paul was a little more understanding.



Subject: County Commission Appointment

January 21, 1999 3:12 p.m.

From: Paul Bedinghaus

Just a note to express my appreciation for your consideration of my candidacy for the County Commission. ...Naturally, I was disappointed with your decision, not only for myself, but for the loyal party people that supported John Morroni and myself. However, I do understand the pressures placed upon you, and I do support your decision, as I respect your judgement on what's best for the citizens



Subject: County Commission Appointment

January 21, 1999 9:44:58 p.m.

From: Jeb Bush

thanks for your understanding Paul. I believe

there will be opportunities of service and i believe you would make a difference.

I am interested in knowing what is the situation on the finances of the party as well and look forward to learning of the situation from you or Al.

Jeb

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This email was part of an exchange with a constituent concerned about teachers' salaries and other education issues. I can't find the original incoming email that resulted in this response, but I will include my answer anyway since education was my top priority.



January 23, 1999 2:45 p.m.
From: Jeb Bush

Thanks for writing.

Our budget recommendation will show a 6%+ increase in funding for K-12 education plus we will fund the deficit in the capitol outlay budget. This will give school districts ample money to pay teachers more. However, we also believe that we should give more autonomy to teachers and principals and parents at the school level and more direct funding of schools

that show improvement. Finally, I believe we should have more money available for performance bonuses, teacher training and higher expectations of our teachers.

Our plan will be forthcoming shortly. I hope you get a chance to review it.

Jeb Bush

*It was almost the end of the month and still no new website.
This went to Sally Bradshaw and Cory Tilley.*



Subject: help request
January 26, 1999 8:45:18 p.m.
From: Jeb Bush

We need a major upgrade. When will I see the plan to upgrade our web page and how long will it take. How will it be interactive with the rest of Florida. I believe it should be the leader in the nation. If you disagree come and tell me why. If you agree, help me make it so.

Jeb

I was blessed with an outstanding staff and more than likely did not tell them often enough what a great job they were doing. I sent this note to Donna Arduin after I saw her package on our proposed tax cut proposal:



Subject: thanks
January 27, 1999 8:54:41 p.m.
From: Jeb Bush

The tax cut proposal and the backup material was first class in every way. We will have the high ground on the debate and will have backed it up with solid reasoning. You should be proud of your leadership in this regard. I will confess that I felt a little by myself on the subject of tax relief at the level proposed during the transition but your steady insistence that we were on the right track made me feel comfortable with the proposition.

Good work, Donna and thank you for making it down to Tallahassee to make a difference!

Jeb

—

Even I was surprised to learn that sometimes people would complain about a proposed tax cut:



Subject: Excess Money

January 28, 1999 7:56:46 AM

From: Lois Horowitz

I am not interested in receiving \$100.00 back from the State of Florida which was just reported on the news this morning. If there is that much surplus in the budget, why can't more money go to education which sorely needs it to build new schools and attract better teachers.



Subject: Excess Money

January 28, 1999 7:26:17 PM

From: Jeb Bush

Lois, thanks for your email. Our budget calls for a significant increase in education funding. And, our tax relief proposal will help small businesses and working families and seniors on fixed incomes. We can do both and we should do both.

Sincerely,

Jeb Bush

**Subject: Tax Break**

January 27, 1999 6:31:27 PM

From: Sandi

Your idea on giving the people of Florida a tax break out of the surplus is a great thing, but, giving the homeowner a bigger portion. I don't own a home, I RENT, so I'm going to be penalized for this? WHY? ... Please think about the average or slightly below average people.

**Subject: Tax Break**

January 28, 1999 7:26:24 PM

From: Jeb Bush

Thanks for your email. We are proposing a \$375 million rebate on utility bills which will total \$50 per electric customer. That will help out everyone, most particularly renters.

Jeb

—

**Subject: education**

January 28, 1999 9:41 PM

From: Deborah Barasch

It was an honor to meet you this evening. You are truly accessible! As I entered the Hyatt this evening one of the staff offered her assistance in directing me to the correct meeting. I finally told her that I wanted to give you this information. ... [on] some of the

issues facing children today. I will be glad to share whatever I can with whom ever would like it. As you know the need is overwhelming.



Subject: education
January 28, 1999 10:01:13PM
From: Jeb Bush

Thanks Deborah. I just got home and am really tired but promise I will read the info you gave me tomorrow.

Jeb Bush

—



Subject: Phone rate increases
January 23, 1999 10:42:30 AM
From: Ray Burhop

As a registered Republican and a contributor to the Florida Republican Party, I have been most delighted in your governorship. I have been enthused with your statements in controlling governmental costs. I look forward to possible return of state surpluses to the citizens of Florida in the form of tax cuts. A recent article in the St Petersburg Times greatly disturbs me concerning possible GTE phone rate increases of \$5.00, . Even more disturbing was your quoted statement, "It depends on what the purpose of it is".

You are then quoted as indicating if the increase would bring competition to the

industry, you may be supportive of the rate increase. I urge you to discourage this rate increase. Your position is very hard to understand. The \$380,000 GTE and Sprint contributed to the Florida Republican Party may partially explain your comments. ... I urge you to reject this rate increase and encourage the Florida Public Service Commission to recommend against the increase. It is time for you to show you are not in the hands of these infamous lobbyists and big political contributors. It is time to prove you will look after the interests of the common citizens of Florida.



Subject: Phone rate increases
January 29, 1999 11:52 AM
From: Jeb Bush

First, let me make it clear that my motivation for responding to a press question about phone rates was not influenced by any contribution of any company to the Republican Party. If by raising rates and providing relief for users that don't use long distance service, overall phone rates would decrease, I would be supportive. I would not support an increase in rates without any commensurate drop in overall rates and without some consideration for the folks that can't afford the increase.

Does that make sense?

Jeb

PS Please note that I am proposing broad based tax cuts (including a \$50 rebate on electric bills and a \$470 million property tax cut that will help working people.

I received numerous emails about Ward Connerly, an African-American businessman and political activist from California who led ballot initiatives in the 1990s to get rid of affirmative action. Our relationship was quite cordial, but his foray into Florida politics set off a firestorm – and a lot of anger directed at me. This is just one example of many.



Subject: FW: Decision not to back Ward Connerly
 January 25, 1999 8:23:31 PM
 From: Douglass R. Pettitt

I was very proud and extremely happy when you became the governor of Florida. I was equally happy when your brother became governor of Texas. However, after reading that you had given the "cold shoulder" to Ward Connerly and his efforts to end the reverse racism fostered by state sponsored affirmative action programs it has become apparent that the citizens of Florida have simply elected another politically correct coward. It sure would have been nice if you had shown some "back-bone". You leave me utterly disappointed.



Subject: FW: Decision not to back Ward Connerly
 January 31, 1999 6:43 AM
 From: Jeb Bush

Thanks for your email. I did not give Mr. Connerly the cold shoulder. Unlike others in Tallahassee, I met with him and was respectful of him. I believe that the issue of discrimination can and should be dealt with in

means Other than the initiative process. I will do my part as governor to fight against it.

I think my actions this first month have defied your somewhat unkind comment. Our education plan, the stopping of the bullet train, the proposed largest tax cut in our state's history and going to Federal Court to stop a pending trial concerning our foster care system are examples. The great thing though, is that you can have your own opinion as I know you will. I will keep trying to do what is right in service to Florida.

Again, thanks for expressing your opinion.

Jeb Bush

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The last day of my first month was a Sunday; I obviously spent it catching up on emails -- answering emails from the public, bugging the staff, and teasing the lieutenant governor. I am lucky the staff didn't quit after all I sent them on what is supposed to be a day off. And I am lucky that as usual, Columba understood that although it was Sunday, I unfortunately needed to do some work. Once again the topics were diverse and interesting. In other words: A rollercoaster.



[No subject]

January 25, 1999 5:47:29 AM

From: Bryan Stewart

...To put it plainly; people ought to be judged on their merit and charecter, not their color and gender. ...You have the ear of many Floridians. You could make a powerful case for ending "de facto" racism in this state.

People of all colors and creeds would listen if you speak would from the heart and with crisp honesty and not gaurded caution. Make no mistake about it governor, no matter what you call preferences and quotas, they will always be about the same thing; taking equality away from some to grant privilegde to some others. That can never be right, no matter what the circumstances.

I want to thank you for reading this and for listening to my opinion. You have the hopes and prayers of many of us in Florida and regardless of your eventual decision on this matter, I wish you the best in your endeavors.



[No subject]

January 31, 1999 8:46 AM

From: Jeb Bush

Well said Bryan.

I agree with your thesis and oppose discrimination of any kind. As governor I will do my part to eliminate quotas and set asides in purchasing practices and am looking at the admissions policies of our schools. However,

what Mr. Connerly is proposing isn't the passing of a law. Rather, it is going through an initiative and referendum process which will be divisive. It will make it harder for me to be successful in passing meaningful tax relief and education reform, two policy areas of great importance for our state's future.

Thanks for writing.

Jeb Bush

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Subject: Drug Sting in Orlando

January 30, 1999 6:50 AM

From: Lt. Governor Frank Brogan

So remind me to tell you about the drug sting I rode in last night in Kissimee! Whoever said DRUGS MAKE YOU STUPID! wasn't just whistling the theme song from Shaft!! Took down about 50 people in 4 hours on the same cornerave me a great chance though to tald to lots of press and the public about the 4 front drug strategies we are headed for in the administration.

With regards from your undercover L.G.

(undercover: where being short is a plus!)



Subject: Drug Sting in Orlando

January 31, 1999 9:45 a.m.

From: Jeb Bush

Power to the people... the short, little people of course.

[To Sally Bradshaw]



Subject: Federal Government
January 31, 1999 1:04:02 PM
From: Jeb Bush

I suggest that we identify all of the issues and opportunities with Washington in the next few weeks. If you could ask that each Secretary and agency heads (including FDLE etc and including our legal office, the Ags office and OTTED⁷) point out the opportunities and problems they are having with Washington so we can go from there. I really would like to be prepared as it relates to our meeting with the congressional delegation and our intent to make our DC office a strong one.

We should look to be proactive on identifying business opportunities through the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank.

In addition, I still believe there are opportunities to work with California and texas on a couple of issues of common concern.

What do you think?

Jeb

7 FDLE is Florida Department of Law Enforcement; OTTED is Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development. "Ags office" refers to the Attorney General's office.

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[To Scheduler Jillian Inmon]

Subject: Drug Summit
January 31, 1999 1:04:04 PM
From: Jeb Bush

Who is in charge of gathering the crowd? Who has been invited? Have parents groups been invited? Business leaders? Church and religious leaders? What does the schedule look like?

Thanks Jillian.

My first month in office was chaotic and exhausting, but exhilarating at every turn as we launched our reform agenda and began to honor the promises and commitments I had made during the campaign. We felt terrific about everything we had accomplished, including getting our first budget ready to be sent to the state legislature in early February. Other highlights, some of which you will recognize from the email exchanges:

January 8th

Announced a major agreement that brought 60,000 acres of land within the Everglades Agricultural Area into public ownership. It was major step forward toward restoration of the Everglades.

January 11th

Unveiled an emergency plan to rescue the foster care system in Broward County. Included were measures to reduce the number of children per foster home; improve and enhance foster care training; and reduce the number of runaway children.

January 14th

Announced that I would withhold funding for the High Speed Rail project. I felt the risk was too great for our already overburdened taxpayers.

January 22nd

Unveiled a new code of ethics for the Executive Office of the Governor. I was delivering on a campaign promise to have the most ethical administration in Florida history. Among other things we established an ethics office in every executive state agency, including the governor's office; toughened the guidelines on accepting gifts; banned state employees from serving as a director or officer of a publicly-held company; and made a strong commitment to follow the open records and open meetings laws.

January 25th

Unveiled our "sweeping A+ education plan to reform public education in Florida." I considered it my top priority

throughout all eight years of my governorship. Some of the more important provisions:

- *\$643 million in additional funding for K-12 schools*
- *Higher standards and expanded testing*
- *End social promotion*
- *Higher standards for educators and improved teacher training*
- *Opportunity scholarships for students in failing schools*

January 27th

Announced the largest tax cut in Florida state history -- \$1.235 billion.

Another way to wrap up my first month in office would be to share this email exchange with Brian Crowley of The Palm Beach Post, one of the most respected political reporters in Florida. Brian and I had occasional email exchanges about different topics – the first of which was simply about my new life as governor of Florida.



Subject: From Brian Crowley

February 6, 1999 5:54 p.m.

From: Brian Crowley

Hi....I'm glad we had a chance to talk briefly about this email project.

So you've been in office a month. What's it been like? What's the biggest surprise? How is being governor different than being a corporate titan? Is the door to the bathroom in the governor's office the smallest one you've ever seen? What's been the most fun? The worst moment? What's the quirkiest thing about the governor's mansion? What's been your toughest decision?

Anyway, I hope from this random list of questions that you get the idea that I'd like to have your thoughts not just on the making of policy but those things that making being governor different than anything else you've experienced. I look forward to hearing from you weekly and I as I said when we talked, if there is some information that you would feel more comfortable giving me on background please just note that part in your email....

Many thanks for your help.....Brian



Subject: From Brian Crowley

February 6, 1999 7:17:05 a.m.

From: Jeb Bush

Brian, it has been a joyous experience. I get to eat dinner with my family many nights which we didn't do much of in Miami. Unfortunately, the food at home is verrrrrrrryyyyy good leaving me with no chance yet to lose any weight.

Most important, Columba is happy and so is Noelle. When they are happy, I am as well.

The biggest surprise is the volume of my voice. People listen to what I say and do. I am learning to show more self-restraint so as to not restrict a free flow of thinking that could yield a better decision. That has been hard for me. IN fact, I would say I have a long way to go on this. So far, it has not been a problem since I have known where I want to go on decision but that will change.

I really enjoy the work. It is important and meaningful. Education reform, a drug policy, the largest tax cuts in State history, child welfare and developmentally disabled reform and adequate funding, an ethics package of significance, the Lawton Chiles endowment idea, the end of the bullet train and Powerball and a good solid budget got us off to a good start.

A growing challenge is to focus on the things I need to focus on and slow the pace down for the rest of the team. We got off to a fast and fine start but we need to slow down to follow up and let our partners, the legislature, digest and absorb our suggestions. That will be easier to do with me less visible than I have been.

One of the more interesting events was the one that I saw you at.⁸ Talk about "large and enthusiastic crowds" to use a phrase of last year! Yes, I did buy my beautiful wife a music box for about \$160 over the QVC web page site. She is gonna love it.

The governor's bathroom door is the smallest in Florida. It requires a sideways twist to make it in.

The water pressure up here is great. Great showers!

The toughest decision has been in the appointments process. Friends who were expecting jobs have not gotten what they want and while I will always do what I think is right, it's not fun to disappoint. There is much more but I need to move on. Keep prompting me.

8 The event was the opening of a large facility in Port St. Lucie for the home shopping network QVC.