

# Bradenton Herald

[Previous Story](#)

[Next Story](#)

## Crist rips Gov. Scott for rejecting billions in fed money

By AMY SHERMAN

Herald/Times Tallahassee Bureau July 10, 2014 Updated 15 hours ago

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google Plus](#) [Reddit](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#)



Former Florida Gov. Charlie Crist.

CHRIS O'NEARA — AP

Former Gov. Charlie Crist defended his record leading Florida through the recession and attacked Gov. Rick Scott's record on everything from education funding to rejecting federal dollars during a speech Thursday to the Florida Press Association.

Former state Sen. Nan Rich of Weston, who is running against Crist in the Democratic primary, speaks Friday at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables. Scott declined an invitation to appear at the press association event where Crist faced questions from Miami Herald editorial page editor Nancy Ancrum, Sun-Sentinel editorial board editor Rosemary Goudreau and AP reporter Brendan Farrington. Crist gave familiar

responses to questions, including why he refuses to debate Rich. “I am running against \$100 million,” Crist said. “I really don’t have the luxury to take my eye off the ball.” Scott’s side is expected to raise \$100 million with the help of national groups and the Republican Party of Florida. That’s likely far more than Crist and the Democrats will be able to raise, though they brought in the star power of President Bill Clinton last month, who helped the party raise about \$1 million at its annual dinner. Scott’s political committee, Let’s Get to Work, and the Republican Party of Florida have released a total of about 16 TV ads over several months, and among the cities targeted is Tampa, Crist’s homebase. The ads appear to have helped Scott climb in the polls — a recent poll by Saint Leo University found the two candidates in a statistical tie, while a poll by the same university six months ago showed Crist ahead 46-34 percent.

The Democratic Party has released about three TV ads. Crist just released his first TV ad this week in which he promised if elected he would raise the minimum wage, demand equal pay for women and restore funding for public schools.

Scott has framed himself as the jobs candidate and often repeats that more than 800,000 jobs were lost during Crist’s term while private sector jobs have soared under Scott’s watch. But Scott’s claims ignore the context that Crist governed during a recession while Scott has led Florida during a national recovery. “It wasn’t because of me we had the global economic meltdown I walked into,” Crist said. During the event Thursday, Crist pointed to opportunities that Scott passed up that would have grown jobs, including his rejection of \$2.4 billion in federal dollars for high speed rail. Crist also criticized Scott for the state’s failure to accept \$51 billion over 10 years to expand Medicaid. Scott initially opposed the expansion, but later said he supported it. Scott didn’t lobby Republican legislative leaders, and the Legislature rejected it in 2013. “How many jobs have we lost because of Rick Scott’s inaction or wrong decisions?” Crist told the association. Crist framed his opposition to the U.S. embargo on Cuba as a jobs issue, too, arguing that Cuba will need a lot of reconstruction. “Florida would be a natural launching pad for that,” he said. “That’s a jobs program.”

Earlier this year Crist said that he no longer supported the 1962 U.S. embargo against Cuba — an increasingly common stance in public opinion polls. Crist had supported the embargo while governor and as a candidate for U.S. Senate in 2010 — PolitiFact Florida gave him a Full Flop for his change in stance. Crist later upped the ante by saying that he wanted to visit Cuba during his campaign, but then scrapped that plan, citing the demands of his campaign. His decision followed a poll that showed his plans to visit Cuba were not popular with Cuban-American voters in Miami-Dade. During the speech Thursday, Crist highlighted his choice to accept federal stimulus dollars, which he says saved 20,000 teacher jobs. When Crist has taken credit for those saved jobs, PolitiFact Florida ruled a similar claim Half True because it was federal action that saved the jobs, and the precise number of teachers who avoided layoffs is difficult to assess. Crist told the press association that despite the hard times, he invested in K-12 education. “We were able to fund almost \$200 more per pupil than the current administration is doing with almost a \$3 billion surplus,” he said.

That’s actually a reference to before the recession in 2007-08, when per pupil spending was higher than what is included in the most recent budget. Scott can claim that he has overseen the highest K-12 funding in terms of total dollars. Crist repeated promises he has made throughout the campaign, including that he wants to make it easier for Floridians to vote and expand early voting. Crist reiterated his support for the medical marijuana amendment on the ballot, but when asked if he supports recreational marijuana he said, “not at this point.” The governor’s race is the only competitive statewide race this fall in which Democrats appear to have any shot. Crist hopes to drive up turnout among Democrats in South Florida who show up at the polls in far smaller numbers than in presidential years. Broward’s 41 percent turnout in 2010 was a key reason behind Democrat Alex Sink’s loss to Scott.

Crist told the room full of editors that he will accept their invitations to speak at editorial boards, taking a stab at Scott: “If memory serves I don’t think he attended one editorial board four years ago”

Herald/Times Tallahassee Bureau reporters Steve Bousquet and Kathleen McGrory contributed to this report.

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google Plus](#) [Reddit](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#)

## Join The Conversation

Bradenton Herald is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

[Commenting FAQs](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

### Today's Circulars



**JCPENNEY**

EXPIRES THIS SUNDAY

[View All Circulars](#)



**DOLLAR GENERAL**

EXPIRES TOMORROW



**RADIOSHACK**

EXPIRES TOMORROW



**BIG LOTS**

PREVIEW THE DEALS

[Email Newsletters >](#)

[Manage newsletter subscriptions](#)

[Tablets >](#)

[Apps and services for tablet devices](#)

[Mobile >](#)

[Apps and services for your mobile phone](#)

[Social Media >](#)

[Get updates via Facebook and Twitter](#)

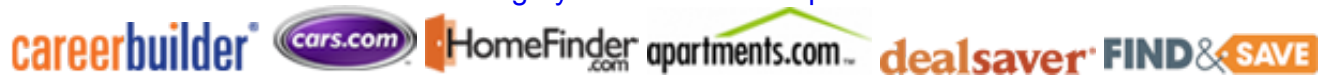
[e-Edition >](#)

[Your daily paper delivered to your computer](#)

[Home Delivery >](#)

[Manage your home delivery account](#)

Digital Subscriptions >  
Manage your online subscriptions



---

© 2014 www.bradenton.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.bradenton.com>