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Foreword: Building Community Partnerships

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FOREWORD

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

GOVERNOR LAWTON CHILES*

He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils; for time is the greatest innovator.

—Francis Bacon

ELSEWHERE in this issue you will find articles on some of the major accomplishments of the 1990 legislative session and articles exploring public policy issues that may be addressed in future legislative sessions. As this state's electorate has entrusted its governorship with me for at least the next four years, I am concerned with what can and what should be done to make this state and its government more responsive to Floridians' needs.

We live in a time of remarkable change. Last year was a watershed year during which seemingly impenetrable walls fell from Eastern Europe to Central America. We have learned and relearned many lessons in this time. The most important is that cynical governments which rely on propaganda and public ignorance cannot stand long when faced with the truth. We can and must trust the people because when equipped with the truth they will make the right decision.

Another clear lesson that we have learned is that few organizations or governments can function effectively in a top-down centralized, pyramidal fashion. Tough international competition has sent the message to business that organizational models which take advantage of

* I would like to thank David Osbourne for his assistance in the formulation of these ideas.

the speedy transfer of information by decentralizing decisions are more competitive.

Still much of government has been slow to respond. Lacking the pressures of or sensitivity to market forces, too often government clings to outdated bureaucratic structures.

Worse yet, too many governments have been corrupted by the influence of special interests and the money they bring to the exorbitant cost of running for public office. The scandals of gift giving and the revolving door have eroded the people's confidence and trust in government's willingness and ability to address the problems in their communities. Tragically, public disillusionment results in less individual involvement and the foundation of the community is weakened.

Buddy Mackay and I suggest a new and positive direction and a brighter vision. We believe government can work. Communities in difficulty can with help heal themselves. People can change their lives. Cycles of dependency can be broken. Crime and dysfunction can be prevented and our streets made safe. Our economy can grow and our environment can be protected. Our quality of life can be enhanced.

This vision cannot be achieved in a system which rewards the special interests over public interest, bureaucratic inertia over creative and entrepreneurial management, and large, top-heavy institutions over lean and responsive community based organization. We need new politics, new tools, and new goals.

Our commitment to the new politics of people versus money was expressed in the 1990 gubernatorial campaign by limiting our contributions to \$100. This will provide us with the credibility to make reforms in campaign financing laws. This has already brought many other public minded folks back to the democratic process while limiting the influence of special interest money.

In our travels around the state during last fall's campaign, we saw the effectiveness of new tools we will use to achieve our goals. We witnessed the power of public-private partnerships in recycling programs which protect our environment, of not-for-profit corporations which build affordable housing and reduce drop-out rates, of interagency councils where the results generated are greater than the sum of its parts. Most importantly we have seen the power of market incentives and competition when they are introduced into the public sector. As in the private sector, when these forces are introduced quality improves and costs come down in government.

Our vision is long range and challenging. It is to make our streets safe, to promote economic growth by assisting entrepreneurs, to support families and educate children, to preserve our environment and in so doing, to promote the sense of Florida as a community of shared

values instead of a crowd. Finally, we want to restore the esteem of public service. We believe there is no higher calling than serving our communities and our fellow men and women.

Our mission and our plan start with a central premise. By limiting the influence of the special interests we can rebuild our democracy and deliver services effectively and efficiently at the local level, the level closest to the citizen. Our new system of service delivery will enjoy the synergy of public and private resources and will be more effective.

One cannot lead without trust. To lead, one must occasionally ask for leaps of faith and shared sacrifice. These requests will only be granted in an atmosphere of total trust. Therefore the integrity of public officials must be beyond reproach. Building on this premise we have adopted a set of principles which will guide our approach to the problems we will face.

1. State government should provide a common vision and coherent policy direction.

Transforming bureaucratic institutions, building consensus, overcoming ignorance, bigotry and distrust, fostering ties that bind, and promoting "best practice" are appropriate, if daunting, challenges for leadership of a state. Sometimes this also requires delivery of services where a vacuum exists. Still the goal of state government should be to empower local authorities and local communities and to be their partner. Service delivery should be provided as close to the citizen as possible. State government should steer and not row.

2. Government works best with stakeholders and in partnership.

Through the combination of resources, talent and genius, energy is created which does not exist when government functions in isolation. Partnerships do not imply unfunded mandates. They mean vision, shared challenges, shared costs, shared responsibilities, shared sacrifices and shared benefits. Orlando's Great Neighborhoods program and the Upper St. John's River Marsh Restoration are examples of how government can partner with communities and business interests to solve otherwise intractable problems.

3. The best government programs are preventative and promote investment in human resources.

Preventing problems is almost always preferable to paying to cure them. Too much of what we see in government contradicts this intuitive logic. Only 25% of Florida's mothers receive prenatal care in the

first trimester. It is little wonder that many of our counties have infant mortality rates which rival Third World countries. We believe that preventive programs like prenatal care, drug education, health and nutrition programs are consistent with a long term strategy of savings and investment in the most valuable resource we have—the hope and genius of our people.

4. Government's investments should be managed, measured and driven by results.

Too often we measure our commitment to the public by the amount we spend. If we manage that way we are not likely to promote economic development or build affordable housing much less reduce the soaring drop-out rates, teen pregnancy and violent crime. These are results and results count. In order to commit to an investment we should be able to define and measure desired outcomes and have a reasonable chance of success toward achieving those *outcomes*.

5. Government should be citizen driven.

The central purpose of government is to serve. The best government efforts serve the needs of the client but do not sacrifice human dignity and self-respect. Unfortunately, the responsibility and decision making authority for many state programs is too distant from the client and therefore not sensitive nor responsive to the customer's needs. These programs are too often monopolies with captive customers; customers almost always benefit from competition.

6. Government must be mission driven.

Our current state administration system is often rule driven which requires that we pursue a given course because outdated and often conflicting rules or regulations require that we do so. This system is also budget or line item driven. Too many of these line items have little or no relationship to a coherent policy or strategy. So the budget system can neither measure what has been achieved in a particular program nor predict what should be achieved. This system is not presently a management tool nor even a very good accounting document. If we are to achieve our goals we must move to a mission-oriented program budgeting system.

7. State government must be decentralized.

Power should be a measure of achievement, not control. Management which encourages decisions to be made closest to a problem is

more likely to achieve desired results. Today we find that in many areas state government is rigidly centralized, with layer upon bureaucratic layer between the customer and actual decision makers. Caseworkers, teachers and other service providers have little authority in this pyramidal system. Creativity and accountability are fostered when you pass down decision making authority to the level closest to the customer.

8. Programs don't work, people do.

Those who serve the public are special. They possess a unique spark as well as an invaluable willingness to give of themselves. They must be given the opportunity to succeed. Yet, government repeatedly puts public servants in positions which are destined to frustrate and to fail. Leadership must chart a bold and risk-taking course which encourages and rewards the entrepreneurial spirit in all who serve. The glory in public service is not found in wealth accrued, but in a better and more productive society.

9. We must try to introduce competition and other market incentives into the delivery of public services.

In the private sector, we abhor monopoly while in the public sector we abhor competition. Yet, instinctively we know that competition spurs our creativity and anchors our reality. It causes us to do things smarter and better. Still, competition is not a silver bullet. Because a service is delivered by the private sector does not ensure a more cost effective alternative. The central question is not whether a given service is public or private but whether the system through which it is delivered has a competitive mechanism which reduces costs and improves quality. Still, it takes genius, dedication and honesty to protect the public trust and to ensure that the integrity of competition is maintained.

10. Government can help provide a continuum of nurture and support.

We have witnessed much of what is creative and exciting in Florida today. Still in most communities Florida does not have a true continuum of public/private support. Some communities are providing superior day care, others are preventing teen pregnancy. Some are achieving significant reductions in drop out rates, others are conserving natural resources and protecting the environment. Still others are deterring crime and providing affordable housing while another community employs innovation to address its transportation challenges.

The mission of state government is to work with local governments to build bridges, to rationally differentiate the appropriate role of state and local governments, to cross pollinate those efforts which are working in other communities, to promote the concept of public/private interagency councils which integrate and coordinate services, to listen and to learn, and most of all to lead by example.

While there are many critical assessments of public policy today, our travels in Florida told us there is hope and there is light. There are programs that work. Some are public. Some are private. The most innovative and imaginative of these very often combine both public and private sectors and cross agency lines. Efforts like the Interagency Council in Pensacola, the Juvenile Welfare Board in Pinellas County, the Children Services Council in Palm Beach, the Miami Dade Chamber of Commerce, the Broward Interagency Task Force, and the Orange County Compact are examples of this movement.

Some might doubt whether we can replicate and connect these and other efforts. Not everyone will agree with all the details of the course we have set. Inherent in the term "consensus-building" is the concept that parties with differences will work to bridge them. Therefore, this initial plan is a point of departure in this journey.

We do not underestimate the challenge inherent in our vision or the rewards if we succeed. Nor do we underestimate the price Florida will pay if we fail to try.