



The Florida House of Representatives

Representative Bill Proctor

District 20

June 24, 2009

Joint statement from State Senator Mike Bennett and State Representative Bill Proctor on Governor Charlie Crist's veto of House Bill 1171

We are deeply disappointed in Governor Crist's decision to veto the "consumer choice" insurance bill, House Bill 1171. The Governor's veto is a loss for Florida's consumers.

House Bill 1171 would have allowed consumers to decide for *themselves* – rather than having the state decide for them – whether they want to pay a market-based rate to have their home insured by a large, financially-strong private insurer who they know and trust. Our bill included very strong consumer disclosures and protections – anyone who bought a consumer choice policy would do so *because they want one*.

It's important to note that House Bill 1171 received overwhelming bi-partisan support in the Florida Legislature, with 85 percent of House and Senate members voting for the bill. Additionally, a recent Florida Chamber of Commerce poll found that 60 percent of Floridians (a two-to-one margin) supported the bill and wanted the Governor to sign it into law. The bill also received solid endorsements from state business associations, many individuals, and the majority of Florida's newspaper editorial boards.

With this broad-based support, it is truly difficult to understand why Governor Crist vetoed the bill.

Significantly, House Bill 1171 would also have encouraged large private insurers and their desperately needed private claims-paying capital back to our state. Given this, we believe it is now incumbent upon Insurance Commissioner Kevin McCarty to explain – in detail – how Citizens Property Insurance Corporation and 40 small private domestic insurers represent an adequate homeowners' insurance program in our hurricane-prone state. Commissioner McCarty must also explain precisely how the state will insure the payment of claims resulting from a major storm striking a large metropolitan area with insured losses of \$50 billion to \$100 billion dollars.

Committees
State Universities & Private Colleges Appropriations Committee, Chair
State Universities & Private Colleges Policy Committee, Vice Chair
Education Policy Council
Full Appropriations Council on Education & Economic Development
Military & Local Affairs Policy Committee

We want to thank the many people across Florida who supported House Bill 1171, and who want more choice when it comes to buying homeowners insurance. Governor Crist was clearly within his constitutional authority to veto the bill, and we respect that authority. However, the Legislature has constitutional authority too, and we are examining and exploring all of our options.

We want assure all of the consumers who desire more choices in homeowners' insurance that we have heard your calls for action. We pledge to all of you that we will continue to work tireless on this good legislation.

Committees

State Universities & Private Colleges Appropriations Committee, Chair
State Universities & Private Colleges Policy Committee, Vice Chair
Education Policy Council
Full Appropriations Council on Education & Economic Development
Military & Local Affairs Policy Committee