



January 14, 2010

The Honorable Charlie Crist  
Governor, State of Florida

The Honorable Jeff Atwater  
President, Florida Senate

The Honorable Larry Cretul  
Speaker, Florida House of Representatives

Mr. T. Willard Fair  
Chairman, State Board of Education

Ms. Sheila McDevitt  
Chair, Board of Governors

**RE: Closing Florida's Talent Gap**

Dear Honorable leaders:

Florida faces an emerging Talent Gap – an urgent shortage of a resource as basic as food, more valuable than gold, and in higher global demand than oil. This crisis in human capital represents a vast and growing need for a highly skilled and educated globally competitive workforce – our state's most important resource for driving sustainable economic growth and a diversified economy.

In the next two decades, new innovations will be developed to address the world's most pressing environmental, medical, and transportation challenges. The site of those breakthroughs will reap the economic rewards of leadership. But without a thriving base of knowledge workers, that place may not be Florida. The time to build Florida's future workforce is now, and education must be its foundation.

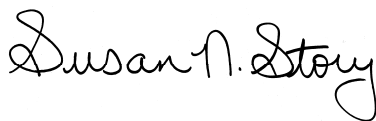
The Florida Council of 100 and the Florida Chamber of Commerce are championing a new approach for energizing what Workforce Florida aptly coined Florida's "Talent

Supply Chain.” The framework is built around the idea that our talent development system must be seamless, integrated, and coordinated; access-oriented; market-driven; focused on high standards, accountability, and incentives; and cost-effective. These concepts, and more, are addressed in the attached report, *Closing the Talent Gap: A Business Perspective*, which draws upon the knowledge and creativity of numerous experts, both within and outside of our organizations. This report addresses Florida’s talent issues from prekindergarten to the workforce in order to highlight interdependencies and emphasize the need for shared responsibility and solutions.

In the end, we call on the state to mandate the creation and implementation of a statewide talent strategic plan that harnesses Florida’s existing educational assets and drives them toward a common goal: training a new generation of knowledge workers for Florida who can keep pace with competitors, both national and international. Driving this strategic plan should be a comprehensive assessment of the current and future talent requirements of the state’s economy and a methodical examination of all options, public and private, to increase high-quality degree and certification production in the state to meet Florida’s short- and long-term needs. Most importantly, proposed strategies must be designed and weighed to provide maximum economic return to the state.

This is a defining time in our state’s history, and we in the business community commend you for your continued leadership in these challenging times. We invite you to draw from *Closing the Talent Gap* as you engage in ways to enhance Florida’s competitiveness and our future talent supply chain. Do not hesitate to contact us for further discussion or to enlist support in closing Florida’s talent gap. We stand ready to help you implement these recommendations and to move Florida forward.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan N. Story  
Chair, The Florida Council of 100



Steve Halverson  
Chair, Florida Chamber of Commerce

cc: Susan Pareigis, President, The Florida Council of 100  
Mark Wilson, President & CEO, Florida Chamber of Commerce  
Chris Hart IV, President & CEO, Workforce Florida, Inc.