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Community Advocacy Network Applauds Florida Gov. Charlie Crist, Legislature for Enacting Critical Condo Relief Legislation

CAN Executive Director Donna DiMaggio Berger Congratulates Florida House & Senate Co-Sponsors, Points to Statewide Grassroots Support as Key to Legislation's Passage

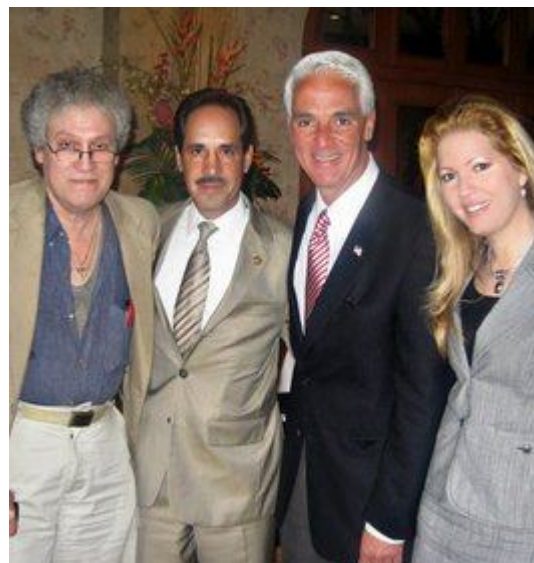
TALLAHASSEE, FL--(Marketwire - June 1, 2010) - The Community Advocacy Network (<http://www.canfl.com>), the leading statewide advocate for the interests of millions of Florida community association residents, today praised Gov. Charlie Crist for having signed into law the Distressed Condominium Relief Act, passed overwhelmingly by votes of the Florida Senate and House of Representatives during the 2010 Legislative Session.

Co-sponsored by Senators Jeremy Ring (D-Margate) and Mike Fasano (R-New Port Richey), and in the Florida House by Reps. Elyn Bogdanoff (R-Ft. Lauderdale), Matt Hudson (R-Naples), and Maria Lorts Sachs (D-Delray Beach), the legislation was sent by lawmakers to Gov. Crist earlier this month, after having won approval in a unanimous 38-0 Florida Senate vote on April 16 and in a 107-4 vote by the Florida House on April 27.

The Distressed Condominium Relief Act provides relief for Florida condominium and co-operative associations in several key areas, including doubling the amount of past due assessments that condo and co-op associations can collect from foreclosing lenders from 6 months to 12 months; as well as enabling condominium Boards to collect rent from tenants in delinquent units and to suspend the common area use rights and voting rights of delinquent owners subject to notice and hearing requirements.

The legislation also delays and in certain instances removes, through exemptions or membership approvals, expensive condominium retrofits for sprinklers, elevators and smoke detectors. In addition, it aims to help stimulate Florida's depressed condominium real estate market by enacting a time-limited bulk-buyer provision to encourage investors to purchase abandoned units in failed and floundering communities.

"Gov. Crist's signature on this long-awaited legislation means that relief is now in sight for struggling Florida condo and co-operative associations and individual unit owners pushed to the brink of financial insolvency by the negative effects of the mortgage foreclosure crisis in our State," said Ms. Berger, Executive Director of the Community Advocacy Network (CAN), a statewide organization representing more than 1,000 community associations that worked closely with State legislators and local government officials to promote passage of the legislation.



[March 11, 2010 -- Community Advocacy Network meets with Florida Gov. Charlie Crist to urge his signature to Distressed Condominium Relief Act. L to R: Eric Berkowitz, Director, Galt Mile Community Association \(GMCA\); Piero Ieraci, CAN Advisory Council Member; Gov. Charlie Crist; CAN Executive Director Donna DiMaggio Berger.](#)

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"The Community Advocacy Network applauds the sponsors in the Florida House and Senate for their bipartisan leadership and determination in approving and sending to Gov. Crist this crucial legislation, which addresses the concerns of millions living in condominium and co-operative associations across our great State," said Ms. Berger, who is also Managing Partner of the statewide community association law firm Katzman Garfinkel & Berger.

"I am very pleased as a co-sponsor of the legislation signed into law today by Gov. Crist to know that it will provide real benefit to struggling community associations and positively impact the lives of untold numbers of condo and co-op residents, not only here in my Broward district but across the State of Florida," said Sen. Jeremy Ring (D-Margate). "I'd like to extend special thanks to CAN Executive Director Donna Berger and her organization, whose help in drafting key portions of the legislation and securing support from municipal governments and other State legislators played an important role in the legislative process."

As part of a Community Advocacy Network grassroots lobbying effort statewide, members of the organization's volunteer Advisory Council (<http://www.canfl.com/advisorycouncil.cfm>) helped drive a groundswell of public opinion in favor of the legislation that included successful passage of resolutions of support from local government commissions in Collier County, Broward County and Miami-Dade County, as well as the cities of Naples, Ft. Lauderdale, Miami Beach, Miramar and Lauderdale by the Sea.

"The support from local officials in each of these cities and counties played an important role in letting our State legislators know there was growing grassroots support 'back home' in their districts for this legislation," Ms. Berger said. "The cities and counties who supported these reforms and contacted their representatives and the Governor in Tallahassee deserve special recognition for their efforts."

A not-for-profit, non-partisan organization established in 2007, the Community Advocacy Network (CAN) is dedicated to improving the quality of life of all who live, work and serve in common interest ownership communities through education, information and advocacy. Representing more than 1,000 member communities statewide, CAN activities are coordinated through a volunteer 11-member Advisory Council, whose members include:

- Charlotte Greenberg, a Broward County political watchdog and the current President of the Broward Coalition, Inc., a not-for-profit group consisting of 200-plus Broward County associations.
- Pio Ieraci, President of the Galt Mile Community Association, Inc., comprised of 27 high-rise associations located along Galt Ocean Mile and also President of his own condominium association in Ft. Lauderdale;
- Wendy Murray, the founder and President of the Miramar Communities Council as well as President of her own HOA;
- Ed Duch, Managing Partner of the Good Neighbors Institute, LLC, a company dedicated to fostering harmonious relationships between Owners, Board Members and Managers as well as serving as the Legislative Vice President for the Gulf Shore Association of Condominiums in Naples;
- Jim Hoppensteadt, President and CEO of the Pelican Bay Foundation, which oversees the 93 private residential communities that comprise Pelican Bay in Naples;
- Ewing Sutherland, President of the Gulfside Condominium Association in Naples and regular contributor of articles to the Naples Daily News calling for positive community association legislation;
- Bonita Vandall, President of Associa Benson's Inc. and previously appointed by the President of the Florida Senate to serve as one of seven statewide representatives on the Advisory Council for Condominiums;
- Lawrence Percival, Executive Vice-President of the Kendall Federation of Homeowner Associations, Inc. (KFHA) in Miami-Dade County and a member of various local charitable and civic boards over several decades;
- Jack Loeb Jr., President of the Bayside Village Condominium Association, one of 22 condominium and homeowner associations comprising the "master association" on Miami's exclusive Fisher Island;
- Barbara Zee, Vice President of Legislative Affairs and Insurance Issues for the Alliance of Delray, an umbrella group representing the interests of 65-plus community associations in Palm Beach County, and a Board member of her own HOA in Palm Beach County for many years.
- Joel Jeffrey, a member of the Board of directors for the Savanna Club, a community of nearly 1,900 manufactured homes in St. Lucie County and an advocate at the local, state and federal levels for positive legislation impacting common interest ownership communities.

Membership in the Community Advocacy Network (CAN) is open to all Florida community associations, including condominiums, co-operatives, homeowner associations, timeshares and mobile home communities.

For more information about the benefits of CAN membership and the organization's activities around the State, please contact dschick@canfl.com or phone 954-315-0372.

About the Community Advocacy Network (CAN)

The Community Advocacy Network (CAN) is the leading statewide advocacy network dedicated to promoting positive community association legislation while advising legislators to resist the urge to micromanage and over-regulate private residential communities. CAN works through its website, email alerts and tools such as the "Capitol Connection" email system to give association leaders and residents the information and resources they need to play a meaningful part in the legislative process before harmful bills are passed. Capitol Connection enables our members

to contact their elected officials at every level of government with just the click of a button. For more information, visit www.canfl.com or call 954-315-0372.

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