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106 N. Bronough Street (32301-7723) ♦ P.O. Box 10209 (32302-2209) ♦ Tallahassee, FL ♦ Phone: 850/222-5052 ♦ Fax: 850/222-7476

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March 2009

## **Excerpt from the Acceptance Speech of the Honorable Dean Cannon to be House Speaker Designate of the Florida House of Representatives, March 2, 2009**

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*Dean Cannon is Speaker Designate of the Florida House of Representatives and represents the 35<sup>th</sup> District of Florida. He is the Chair of the Select Policy Council on Strategic & Economic Planning and serves on the Office of Reapportionment Committee, Policy Council and Rules and & Calendar Council. He is an attorney and holds a Bachelor of Science degree and Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida.*

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Now I know I should talk to you today about our future—about our future as House Republicans, our future as the Florida House—but instead, I want to talk to you about our past and our present... and more than about us... more than about a party or a caucus or an institution... I want to talk to you about Florida.

Florida is known as “the Sunshine State,”--a wonderful destination. But Florida has always been so much more than that.

Florida has always been a place where people find opportunity, achievement, and hope. A place where, by industry and hard work, mothers and fathers are able to create better lives for themselves and their children after them. My grandmother did that for my dad, and my parents have now done that for me, and Ellen and I hope to do that for Dean, Katherine, and Sarah.

A Floridian isn't someone who was born in this state. A Floridian, regardless of where they come from, is someone who has staked their future on this state. It's someone who dreams big and who believes that our future is something we ourselves create – not something handed to us by birth...or circumstance...or, for that matter, the government. We have been a destination for all kinds of people seeking a new beginning; and it has been this migration of dreamers that has propelled Florida into its next tomorrow.

That journey into tomorrow has seen its share of ups and downs. Right now, like the rest of the nation, we are intensely focused on economic problems. Florida's families are worried and too many are struggling to make ends meet. But this situation--while it is difficult--is not

unprecedented. Florida's history has been one of boom and bust. The road we are traveling down today, we have traveled down before. If you read accounts of the housing bubble of the 1920s, you will come to believe there are no new problems . . . just old mistakes.

But history only repeats itself when we fail to heed its warnings and learn its lessons – and so we stand here today--not so much at a moment of great *crisis*--but at a moment of great opportunity.

Some say real estate is Florida's greatest resource – that our land is our prosperity. I disagree. Our land will always be a foundation stone of our economy, but our people are our greatest resource. We must channel this resource in new ways – toward new industries and new endeavors – and, in doing so; build a new economy for a new Florida for a new century.

Some look at these complex problems and see a simple solution – more money. They argue that we simply need to raise taxes and spend our way out of our current problems. They seem to believe there's a magical dollar figure--although no one has ever shared with me what it is--that if we could just spend that right amount our problems would fade away. I know the magic number isn't 73 billion dollars, because that's what we spent during my second session, and I still heard every conceivable interest group claim they were underfunded.

**Members, I would respectfully suggest that just as excessive borrowing and rampant spending by the private sector created this crisis; it is foolish to believe that excessive borrowing and rampant spending by the public sector will get us out of it.**

Easy money is never a substitute for hard work. New spending cannot close a deficit of ideas or change basic laws of economics. No matter how much we may wish it were otherwise, you cannot borrow your way out of debt.

Members, we have been given the special privilege of serving in difficult times. And so, over the next 60 days--indeed, over the next four years--we will be tested as individuals, as a party and as an institution.

Holding office is easy. Governing is hard.

And members, we are being called to govern. We are being called to challenge the status quo; to ask hard questions and find difficult answers; we are being called to say “no” to our friends and to listen to our critics; we are being called to transform public institutions and to innovate all so that we might be worthy of the trust that our fellow Floridians have placed in us by sending us here.

If any of you doubt that governing is hard, look at states like New York and California—and you will see our future if we fail to act with wisdom and foresight.

There will be hard times ahead, and in hard times, people can stumble, and people can fall, and people can get hurt. Some believe that whenever someone falls, the government should rush to

their side, prop a pillow under their head, cover them with a blanket and then scour the horizon for someone to blame. They confuse compassion for action, and offer sympathy instead of help. Others say we should do the opposite-- and simply keep walking and ignore the fallen.

Neither choice is correct. We must, instead, extend our hand and help those who are down to pull themselves up, so they can dust themselves off, and continue on their journey under their own power.

Because that concept is at the core of who we are as a Republican Conference. We are the party of individual opportunity. We believe that each person is the best judge of his or her own needs and desires; and that each person deserves the respect of being responsible for his or her own decisions.

We believe all people have a right to live their lives in freedom and to pursue their dreams and aspirations – regardless of whether they’re a 5th generation Florida native, or a person stepping on Florida’s soil for the very first time, or an unborn child.

Over the last four years, I have often looked up at the portraits ringing this room--at these now silent Speakers. In most cases, the details of their speakerships are long forgotten. But they abide as symbols of the chambers they led...of legislatures that were sometimes wise and sometimes not... of legislatures that that convened in prosperous boom years and during scarce bust years... of legislatures that faced few real challenges, or – like us – great and daunting ones. But if the details of those Legislatures are lost to the archives of history, their decisions impact us still today – just as decisions we make will be felt long after we have been forgotten. Decisions that will determine whether Florida remains a destination or becomes a point of departure.

But, Members, I remain optimistic--about this institution and about the future of our great state. Tomorrow, when the gavel comes down and session starts, that future begins. And if we hold true to our principles, work hard, and govern with discipline and foresight, we will, by the Grace of God, write a bold new chapter in Florida’s history.

Thank you.

**David A. Smith, Chairman; Dominic M. Calabro, President, Publisher, and Editor**

**Florida TaxWatch Research Institute, Inc.**

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