



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

June 30, 2010

Esther Berry
7128 28th Street North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33714

Dear Esther:

First, I want to recognize your service to the Statewide Advocacy Council and the Local Advocacy Councils. Your work as a volunteer investigating and monitoring threats to the rights, safety, and welfare of people who receive services from state agencies has made Florida a better place for our vulnerable citizens. I will always be grateful for your efforts to protect the constitutional and human rights of citizens who receive services from state agency or providers who contract with them.

As you know, the Florida Legislature chose to not support the function of the Statewide Advocacy Council (SAC) in the Fiscal Year 2010-11 by cutting the SAC's entire funding and staff from the General Appropriations Act (HB 5001). Regrettably, the budget cut was so imbedded in the appropriations bill that funding could not be restored through a line-item veto. In addition, the Legislature did not delete the SAC statutory framework (s. 402.164 and s. 402.166, F.S.). However, the lack of funding to continue the operational component of the duties and responsibilities of the SAC means that the Local Advocacy Councils (LACs) will also have to cease operation on July 1, 2010.

I am saddened to see your great work end, as I am sure you are, too. Although SAC and LACs will cease to operate, it will not put an end to our commitment to ensure the health, safety and welfare of Florida's most vulnerable citizens. I encourage you to stay active in your communities and use your energy and talents in other similar volunteer opportunities.

Your effort, time and advocacy on behalf of Florida's most vulnerable citizens will always be appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Charlie Crist

GUS M. BILIRAKIS
9TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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WORLDWIDE WEB PAGE:
www.bilirakis.house.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0909

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

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(727) 773-2871
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SHERWOOD FOREST PLAZA
TEMPLE TERRACE, FL 33617
(813) 985-8541

October 21, 2008

Paul Talley
Director of Development
Esther's School
4128 28th St. N
St. Petersburg, Florida 33714

Dear Mr. Talley:

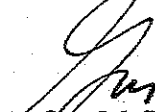
The purpose of this letter is to express my strong support for your organization, Esther's School, and its plans to establish a new state-of-the-art technology center for special needs children.

While I have not been personally involved with Esther's School, I have come to discover the outstanding work they perform. For over three years, Esther's School has been helping special needs children and families in the Pinellas and Hillsborough areas. During that time, word of your organization has reached such notorieties as Nedra Ross of the "Ronettes" and NFL Analyst Terry Bradshaw who have nothing but high praise for your ministry.

Your organization is well known in the community for its ability to educate and provide hope for those children who require special attention. By fostering each student's God-given ability and assisting them in setting their focus on one task at a time, you are guiding them on a pathway towards success; for that, I have the utmost respect and appreciation. You not only aide the students, but also the families. Your financial assistance program provides additional resources to those in need, thereby offering your vital services to a broader range of individuals. In short, you have put the needs of the community first and foremost.

I wholeheartedly support Esther's School and its grant application.

Warmest regards,


Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

GMB: jg