



MARCO RUBIO TO RPOF CHAIRMAN JOHN THRASHER: CREDIT CARD STATEMENT LEAK IS APPALLING ACT OF DESPERATION FROM CRIST CAMPAIGN

Miami, FL – U.S. Senate candidate Marco Rubio tonight delivered a letter to Republican Party of Florida Chairman John Thrasher regarding the Crist campaign's leak of Rubio's American Express credit card statements during his time as Speaker. The full text of the letter follows:

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

The Honorable John Thrasher
Chairman
Republican Party of Florida
420 E. Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 311
Tallahassee, FL 32301
TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL AND FACSIMILE: (850) 681-0184

Dear Speaker Thrasher,

Congratulations again on your election as Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida. Our Party needs your leadership now more than ever. I have every confidence in your ability to repair the financial mismanagement that occurred under the previous administration, and restore the confidence of the staff, donors and most importantly the grassroots of our party.

As I mentioned to you on Monday, I applaud your call for a full forensic audit of the RPOF. Our Party's generous donors deserve to know how their money was spent, and often misspent, during the previous administration. We must do this not to simply rehash what has already happened, but instead to learn from the mistakes of the past so they will never be repeated.

I have always agreed with your position that these issues are internal party matters which must be decided by the Republican Party of Florida, and not in the court of public opinion through selective information leaked to the media. As you know, I have maintained that I would not unilaterally disclose my personal American Express statements. I made this decision out of respect for any internal review process a new chairman might initiate, and to avoid creating a media circus that at best would be a distraction, and at worst could actually hurt our Party.

However, as I told you Monday, at least one Florida media outlet is now in possession of my statements. No one other than the previous RPOF administration and myself had access to this information. It is clear these internal documents were taken from the RPOF by former Chairman Jim Greer, or someone working for him, and were leaked to the media by the Crist Campaign.

These actions are an appalling act of political desperation. The idea that the former chairman of the RPOF, or those working for the Governor, would selectively leak internal RPOF documents is disturbing. But sadly it is not surprising because these are the very men who put the party in the mess it is in today. The Florida

GOP under Jeb Bush was never run with this sort of arrogance, mismanagement, lack of integrity and lack of leadership.

During my leadership at the party, my efforts focused on promoting a strong conservative agenda and raising more than \$12 million dollars to protect Republican seats. In order to accomplish these goals, I had an American Express card from February of 2005 through November of 2008. While that card is commonly referred to as an "RPOF AMEX," it was in fact secured under my name, my Social Security number, and my personal credit through the Corporate Division of American Express. On its website, Americanexpress.com, the company clearly outlines the billing practices for the corporate card as follows:

"Each Cardmember submits an expense report in accordance with your company policy. Your company issues a single check to American Express for all authorized charges, streamlining your payment process. Cardmembers can pay American Express directly for unapproved and personal charges."

In accordance with this procedure, each month, the RPOF would approve and pay only those expenses related to my role with the Republican Party.

When it came to incurring expenses, I erred on the side of caution and maintained two operating principles: If it was questionable as to whether the expense was state or Party related, I tried to err on the side of saving taxpayer money by charging that expense to the Party. If it was a question between Party expenses or personal expenses, I tried to err on the side of protecting Party money by paying personally for those charges directly.

During the 25-month period covered by the leaked documents, the Party authorized and made payments of \$109,618.45 for my charges directly related to my work for the Party.

As you will see, 89% of my Party expenses were for travel, lodging, fuel, car rentals and meals related to my official work for the party. During this time I crisscrossed the state countless times for Lincoln/Reagan dinners, GOP fundraisers, and other party business. In all, more than half of my expenses were transportation costs: 40% for commercial airline travel and 14% for car rentals, tolls, parking and fuel.

As a point of reference, during this time period, the charges on my card amounted to approximately 3% of the Party's total American Express expenditures. In fact, I had fewer expenses in two years than my opponent's handpicked RPOF Executive Director spent in just one month.

During the period in question, there was no formal process provided by the Party regarding personal charges made on an AMEX account. At no time during my four years as a cardholder did the party ask me to provide additional information about, or personally pay, any of the charges I submitted for payment. I always took it upon myself to identify and directly pay American Express for all non-official expenses. During the two-year period in question, I made \$16,052.50 in direct payments to AMEX to cover non-party related expenditures.

To the greatest extent possible, I made sure the Party never paid for any personal charges. In fact, all of my statements were- at least I certainly hope they were- reviewed and approved by former Chairman Jim Greer or others designated by him.

Thank you again for taking on this new leadership position in our party. It is a huge responsibility and a tough task. And while I wish you didn't have to deal with politically motivated distortions and distractions like this, I'm confident that we as Republicans will overcome and quickly get beyond them.

Our party is much bigger than any one administration, person or problem. With common sense, conservative reform, and simple honesty and integrity in our operations, I believe the principles that define our party can once again fix it too.

Sincerely,

MARCO RUBIO