



**NPRC Challenges Crist, Meek & Rubio to Join Ferre's Condemnation of Captain Morgan's \$2.7B Tax Handout**

*"Will you side with the people of Puerto Rico – or with Washington lobbyists for foreign corporation?"*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** (February 11, 2010) -- The National Puerto Rican Coalition today challenged Florida Senate hopefuls Gov. Charlie Crist, Rep. Kendrick Meek and former Speaker Marco Rubio to join Maurice Ferre in denouncing a massive taxpayer-funded corporate handout to the British liquor conglomerate that owns Captain Morgan Rum. The scheme, as Ferre noted today, will cost Puerto Rico upwards of \$400 million in rum excise tax revenues each year.

"We applaud Maurice Ferre's courage in standing up to the Washington lobbyists representing the powerful Diageo, LLC, and on behalf of the people of Puerto Rico," said NPRC Chairman Miguel Lausell. "The question now is, where do Crist, Meeks and Rubio stand?"

NPRC President Rafael Fantauzzi explained that the U.S. Virgin Islands has lured Captain Morgan out of its existing distillery in Puerto Rico by offering to split the \$6 billion it will receive in rum excise tax rebates as a result of the move. The revenues are an important source of funding for Puerto Rico, where unemployment is at 16.5 percent and 1 in 3 of the island's 4 million citizens live in poverty.

"This is going to cause profound pain in Puerto Rico, which counts on these revenues to meet pressing social needs," added Fantauzzi. "Will Crist, Meek and Rubio join Ferre in standing up for the people of Puerto Rico, or will they tell us how they will accommodate the thousands of Puerto Ricans who will have no choice but to relocate to the United States as a result of the continuing economic crisis on the island?"

Added Lausell, "Governments often give incentives to companies to relocate, but this is out of all proportion. The tax subsidies to Diageo as a result of this short-sighted arrangement will give the company more money than it paid for Captain Morgan in the first place, and on a per-gallon basis, more than it costs them to produce their product. Will Crist, Meek and Rubio join Ferre in his courageous stand – or will they be on the side of the foreign corporation that owns Captain Morgan?"

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**About NPRC**

NPRC's mission is to systematically strengthen and enhance the social, political, and economic well-being of Puerto Ricans throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico with a special focus on the most vulnerable.

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