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Florida Chamber of Commerce Names David Hart as Executive Vice President Additional Staffing Changes Part of Realignment to Five-Year Strategic Plan

(Tallahassee, Fla.) – Today, Florida Chamber President and CEO Mark Wilson announced David Hart has been hired in a newly created position as executive vice president and will manage the Chamber’s extensive legislative and political operations. The Florida Chamber is further ramping up its advocacy efforts to realign its priorities to its new five-year strategic plan and to focus on the changing legislative and political landscape. In addition, Marian Johnson has been promoted to senior vice president of Political Operations and Adam Babington has been promoted to vice president of Governmental Affairs.

“Marian Johnson and Adam Babington are two of the finest people I have ever worked with and to add David Hart as the quarterback of the Florida Chamber’s advocacy efforts makes our team even stronger and more effective,” said Florida Chamber President Mark Wilson. “Partnering with pro-business associations and local chambers and advancing the free enterprise agenda of our members are top priorities of the Florida Chamber, and David Hart has a proven track record of success in all of these areas.”

"As the statewide political director of my 1998 gubernatorial campaign, David Hart demonstrated keen political instincts and organizational abilities which have only increased over time," said former Governor Jeb Bush. "The combination of David Hart and Marian Johnson solidify the Florida Chamber's pro-business political program as second to none."

In her role as senior vice president of Political Operations, Marian Johnson is responsible for candidate recruitment, polling, issue management and electing a pro-business legislature. As vice president of Governmental Affairs, Adam Babington is responsible for managing the Florida Chamber’s 25-member lobbying team and for passage of the annual Florida Business Agenda.

After six years as vice president of Governmental Affairs for the Florida Chamber, David Daniel is joining the Tallahassee-based consulting and lobbying firm Smith, Bryan and Myers. David has been, and will continue to be, a valuable member of the Governmental Affairs team and he will continue to represent the Florida Chamber at the state capitol in his new role.

“As former Speaker of the House and chair-elect of the Florida Chamber Board of Directors, I have always relied on Marian Johnson’s expertise and wisdom, been immensely impressed with the steady accomplishments of Adam Babington, and have stood side-by-side with David Hart

in some very tough battles,” said Allan Bense of GAC Contractors. “When our Board of Directors asked our Chamber president, Mark Wilson, to align the team with our strategic plan this is exactly what we were hoping for.”

Today’s announcements not only strengthen and ramp up the execution of the strategic plan, but also complete the five-month management realignment and staffing changes within the Florida Chamber.

About David Hart

David holds a bachelor’s degree in Economics and Political Science from Emory University and a master’s degree in International Affairs from Florida State University. He has held numerous positions in public service at the federal and state level and worked on several political campaigns, such as serving as the Political Director for Jeb Bush’s successful 1998 campaign for Governor. He spent more than six years in the private sector as the vice president of Government Relations for Al Hoffman at WCI Communities, Inc. and most recently led the advocacy team at the Florida Home Builders Association as their vice president of Legislative & Governmental Affairs. He is a seventh generation Floridian, a member of Leadership Florida Class XIX and served on the Florida Chamber Board of Directors from 2002-2006.

Established in 1916 as Florida’s first statewide business advocacy organization, the Florida Chamber of Commerce is the state’s largest federation of employers, chambers of commerce and associations, representing more than 139,000 employers. The Chamber works within all branches of government to affect those changes set forth in the annual Florida Business Agenda, and which are seen as critical to the continued improvement of Florida’s business environment. Visit www.FloridaChamber.com.

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What’s Being Said About the Changes at the Florida Chamber...

Statement from Steve Halverson, Chair, Florida Chamber of Commerce

“Moving Florida forward requires a great plan, a professional staff and a board that is committed to success. With the completion of our staffing plan we now have all three in place and I am looking forward to further uniting the business community around the six pillar platform.”

Statement from President Jeff Atwater, Florida Senate

“The one organization I always look to for solutions to our transitioning economy is the Florida Chamber of Commerce. The addition of David Hart to lead the Chamber’s advocacy and political operations further positions the Florida Chamber as the leading voice of business in Tallahassee.”

Statement from Speaker Larry Cretul, Florida House of Representatives

"Adding David Hart as executive vice president only five months after naming Dr. Dale Brill as president of the Florida Chamber Foundation sends a clear message that the Florida Chamber is serious about Florida's future. It's a smart move for Florida's leading pro-business advocacy organization. The six pillar plan for Florida's economy is the only long range plan for Florida's future and I personally want to thank the Florida Chamber for providing a cornerstone to build upon."

DAVID HART, Executive Vice President

Statement from Bill McCollum, Florida Attorney General

"David Hart is a great friend and a great leader. The Florida Chamber has made an excellent selection in naming David as its executive vice president of governmental affairs and political operations. In these challenging economic times, we must do everything possible to create a climate that will yield more jobs for Floridians, and the Florida Chamber is a key driver in these efforts. I look forward to working with David in his new capacity."

Statement from Alex Sink, Chief Financial Officer

"David understands the importance of supporting Florida's entrepreneurs and fostering a healthy business climate in our state. He has been a tireless advocate for Florida's builders and I am confident that he will be a great asset to the Florida Chamber. Now more than ever, we need leaders who will advocate on behalf of our state's small businesses which are essential to building a stronger economy and workforce for Florida."

Statement from Al Hoffman, former U.S. Ambassador to Portugal

"David Hart served as my national, state and local government relations vice president for six and a half years in the private sector. His passion for Florida's future, understanding of politics and courage to stand up for good public policy make him the perfect person to lead the Florida Chamber's advocacy efforts for Florida's business community. David is an incredible unifier and knows how to get things done."

MARIAN JOHNSON, Senior Vice President of Political Operations

Statement from Senator John Thrasher, Florida Senate

"I've known Marian Johnson for 25 years. Marian is a consummate, top-of-the-line professional and her political advice is always incredible and always welcomed."

Statement from Representative Will Weatherford, Florida House of Representatives

"I've known Marian Johnson since before I ran for the state legislature and when I think of the top political strategists in Florida, I usually measure them against Marian Johnson. Congratulations, Marian!"

ADAM BABINGTON, Vice President of Governmental Affairs

Statement from President-Designate Mike Haridopolos, Florida Senate

"Adam and I have known each other since my first Senate campaign in 2003. I congratulate him on his new role and I know he will be an asset to me as the next Senate President."

Statement from Speaker-Designate Dean Cannon, Florida House of Representatives

"I have always known Adam Babington to be a relentless advocate for Florida businesses, and I look forward to continuing to work with Adam and the Chamber during my time as Speaker of the Florida House."