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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**FLORIDIAN SUPPORT FOR RACE TO THE TOP IS STRONG
TWO-THIRDS HAVE A FAVORABLE OPINION**

By roughly a nine-to-one margin, Floridians think unions should support Race to the Top

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (January 8, 2010)– Today, the Florida Chamber released a survey showing over two-thirds of Floridians have a favorable opinion of *Race to the Top*, a federal competitive grant program in which states compete for education funding. According to the survey, this point of view remains strong in every region and in every demographic group in the state.

Florida is a leading contender for roughly \$700 million in education funding with a successful grant application. School districts that want to participate in the state's *Race to the Top* application are asked to sign a memorandum of understanding with support from the school board, school superintendent and teacher's union.

"Quality education is critical to moving Florida's economy forward," said Mark Wilson, President and CEO of the Florida Chamber of Commerce. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Florida students to learn skills they need to compete and prosper globally."

The Chamber's results also found that by a margin of roughly nine-to-one, Floridians believe local teacher unions should support the state's application if the local superintendent and school board are supportive.

Conducted by Public Opinion Strategies between December 29, 2009 and January 3, 2010, the poll surveyed 600 randomly selected Floridians, with a margin of error of +/- 4 percent. The poll was commissioned by the Florida Chamber of Commerce as part of a coalition effort in support of Florida's *Race to the Top*. In addition to the Chamber, the coalition includes the Council of 100, ENLACE Florida and the Florida PTA.

"As we continue to work for job creation and future economic development, it is clear that Florida must develop a superior education system that prepares students to enter the future workforce," said Steve Halverson, President and CEO of The Haskell Company and Chair of the Florida Chamber of Commerce. "Race to the Top is a tremendous opportunity for our state's students and future leaders, and we encourage all educators, parents and advocacy groups to support this grant application program."

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Highlighting the importance of this issue across the state, the survey shows that 40 percent of Floridians believe improving the quality of public education should be a top priority for the Governor and legislature.

Florida's Race to the Top application is due to the federal Department of Education on January 19. The memorandums of understanding from participating school districts are due to the Florida Department of Education on January 12.

More detailed information about the survey is available at: www.FLRacetothetop.org

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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