



## **Memorandum**

**TO:** Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Greenberg Traurig

**DATE:** April 11, 2012

**RE:** March Report to the Board of County Commissioners

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Below please find a summary of Greenberg Traurig's efforts on behalf of Miami-Dade County in March.

### ***Overview of Legislative Activity in March***

Work on a surface transportation reauthorization continued in March. The House also released its budget for fiscal year 2013. The House budget called for an overhaul of the income tax system. In order to protect defense spending, the House budget also calls for alternative savings to the automatic spending cuts that are scheduled to take effect early in 2013 under the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA). The budget, which paralleled the Ryan budget from last year, sets a lower level for discretionary appropriations than Congress agreed on under the BCA. Democrats in the Senate sent a letter to Speaker John Boehner in response to the House budget's adjustment to discretionary spending under the BCA. In the letter, the senators said that plans by the House to lower the cap on discretionary spending would delay action on appropriations bills for fiscal 2013 and represent a breach of faith that will make it more difficult to negotiate future agreements.

### ***Agriculture***

The House and Senate began to hold hearings on the proposed 2012 farm bill in March. After the release of the House budget, members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees began to lobby their respective chambers to exempt farm programs from mandatory cuts. Senate Agriculture Chair, Debbie Stabenow, said that her committee would stay within the \$23 billion in cuts that she had proposed in 2012. However, the real struggle to protect farm programs will be in the House. Under the House budget, farm and nutrition programs have been identified as alternative cuts that could help protect the defense budget from mandatory cuts. Both committees finished their initial rounds of hearings on the farm bill in March. GT continues to monitor action on the farm bill and report to Miami Dade County.

### ***Aviation***

The surface transportation reauthorization continues to confront political hurdles as House leadership remains unable to build a consensus for support of the bill within the Republican caucus. The Senate passed its version of the transportation reauthorization in mid-March, which calls for a two-year, \$109 billion plan. However, instead of passing a reauthorization, the House was forced to try and pass a 90-day extension of the current programs. Both chambers remain at loggerheads over a path forward. It is extremely likely that the Senate will be forced to pass a House extension to protect tens of thousands of American jobs. GT continually provides updates on the bill's progress and the many obstacles that remain between it and passage.

### ***Media Updates***

GT continues to send media updates on legislative and political issues to the County in order to ensure that the Commission and staff remain up-to-date on developments within the Beltway. Our team has continued to send those interested individuals information regarding issues such as the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill, appropriations and immigration, among others. We will continue to monitor the issues most relevant to the County and provide timely and accurate information in order to make certain that the County is aware of any developments which may provide an opportunity to accomplish established legislative goals.

If you have any questions, or we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.