

STATE / LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

January 7- January 11, 2013

STATE ISSUES

News

Foreclosures

A legislative budget panel will meet next week to portion out \$60 million to aid distressed homeowners as part of an agreement between Attorney General Pam Bondi and legislative leaders over how to spend some of a foreclosure fraud settlement with five large banks.

The agenda for next week's meeting of the Joint Legislative Budget Commission was released Thursday, providing the first breakdown of how the \$60 million will be spent. Most of the money, \$45 million, will go to the Florida Housing Finance Corp. to help with down payment assistance and housing counseling for eligible homeowners. Bondi's office will receive \$5 million in legal fees, another \$5 million will go to the State Courts System to help pay for foreclosure cases, and the remaining \$5 million will go to legal aid services throughout the state that counsel foreclosure defendants.

Bondi reached an agreement with House Speaker Will Weatherford and Senate President Don Gaetz in November over how to spend the \$300 million that went to the state as part of a multiple-state settlement with Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Ally Financial for rushing foreclosures through the courts with faulty paperwork.

Florida received \$8.4 billion of the \$25 billion settlement. Under the settlement, \$7.6 billion will go directly to affected homeowners for loan modifications and principal reductions, \$170 million in cash payments will go to homeowners unfairly foreclosed upon between 2008 and 2011, \$309 million will be used to help underwater homeowners refinance their loans and \$334 million went to the state in a direct payment -- \$34 million of which went to state coffers as a civil penalty.

Of the remaining \$300 million, \$40 million would go into general revenue as an "additional civil penalty," \$200 million would be appropriated by the Legislature in the upcoming legislative

session for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The remaining \$60 million would be allocated by the Joint Legislative Budget Commission and can be used immediately.

State University Board

Gov. Rick Scott on Thursday named five new members to the board that oversees the State University System of Florida.

Scott's appointees to the 17-member Board of Governors include Harry "Wayne" Huizenga Jr., son of the former Miami Dolphins owner, from Delray Beach.

Huizenga, 51, is president of Huizenga Holdings Inc. and Rybovich Boat Co.

Levine, 45, was former Gov. Jeb Bush's secretary of health care administration and later was Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal's secretary of health. He's currently senior vice president and Florida president of Naples-based Hospital Management Services of Florida Inc.

Lautenbach, 68, was a partner with the private investment firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice after spending 30 years with IBM where he was vice president of sales and services. He currently is a board member of the Fidelity Investments and Eaton Corp.

Morton, 65, is a partner with Wasmer Schroeder & Co. and previously was CEO of NCH Healthcare System.

Link, 45, also chairs the Florida Healthy Kids Corp., which provides health care insurance for children who cannot qualify for Medicaid, and serves on the Palm Beach State College District Board of Trustees.

The new board members can begin serving immediately, although their appointments are subject to later confirmation by the Florida Senate. The board meets next week at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Lautenbach's term is for six years, filling a vacant seat. The other new members have seven-year terms. Morton also is filling a vacant seat. The others are replacing Hector Perez, Gus Stavros and John Temple, whose terms expired this month.

Environment / Tourism

Coral Gables -- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar joined Everglades activists, elected officials and business leaders to discuss state and federal restoration projects.

The three-day Everglades Coalition Conference opened Thursday in Coral Gables. Organizers

say this year's conference will focus on advancing existing efforts that protect wildlife, preserve clean water and promote the economic benefits of Everglades restoration.

On Friday, the South Florida Water Management District will held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a Miami-Dade County canal project that is the first to be completed under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The canal project helps restore freshwater flows to Florida Bay, keeps clean water in Everglades National Park and maintains flood control for communities east of the Everglades.

Congress approved the sweeping, multibillion-dollar plan in 2000, but little progress has been made.

Education

Florida's public schools have returned to the top 10 in a national ranking at sixth place because of high marks for coordinating kindergarten through 12th grade education with early learning, post-secondary education and the state's workforce.

Education Week on Thursday gave Florida an A for transitions and alignment, one of six categories that make up the publication's annual "Quality Counts" rankings for the 50 states and District of Columbia.

Florida's overall grade went up from C-plus to B-minus. This year's national average is C-plus.

The state had dropped from fifth to 11th last year largely because of weaker student performance and spending cuts. Last year's decline interrupted a rapid climb from 31st to fifth place in just four years.

Florida's school spending had been in steady decline for several years including a \$1.3 billion cut in the 2011-12 budget year, which ended on June 30.

Scott, who had sought an even bigger reduction, has since reversed course. Lawmakers approved his request to restore \$1 billion to public schools for the current budget year.

"For the upcoming session, we'll continue working with the Legislature to enhance Florida's education system," Scott said in a statement.

Florida ranks 49th in the number of students funded at or above the \$11,824 national average and 40th in per student funding at \$9,572. The dollar figures are adjusted to account for regional cost differences.

Immigration

The 2013 Legislature will be working to determine whether state leaders are changing their views toward immigration issues.

Republican legislative leaders, as well as Gov. Rick Scott, have previously taken a hard line against easing restrictions against undocumented residents. But following a presidential election, in which Democrats handily won the Hispanic vote, and calls by some national GOP leaders for a more moderate stance on immigration, state lawmakers again will confront a number of immigration-related issues this spring.

One of the most visible is a plan to allow dependent children of parents who are not citizens to receive in-state tuition instead of having to pay costly out-of-state rates when they attend a community college, state college or university. For university students, in some cases, it means an annual savings of \$20,000.

To read more click:

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20130110/POLITICS/130119937/1003/news00?Title=2013-Legislative-Session-to-Grapple-With-Immigration>

Department of Juvenile Justice

DOJ proposes an overhaul of Florida's program for disabled children in a new and even harsher indictment of Florida's treatment of severely disabled children. Federal civil rights lawyers have issued a comprehensive blueprint for overhauling the states system of care.

To read more click: http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/10/3177000/doj-proposes-overhaul-of-floridas.html#emlnl=Five_Minute_Herald

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Elections

Filed on 1/7/ 13, [SB 0176](#) *Relating to Elections* (Diaz de la Portilla) has been referred to the following Committees: Ethics and Elections; Community Affairs; Rules.

SB 0176 General Elections; Expanding the early voting period for elections that contain state or federal races; providing that supervisors of elections may provide early voting for no more than 14 hours per day for general election early voting; requiring supervisors of elections to submit a report to the Secretary of State at least 3 months before a general election, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013

Transportation

Filed on 1/2/13, [SB 0158](#) *Relating to Highway Safety* (Hays) has been referred to the following Committees: Education; Transportation; Judiciary

SB 0158 General Highway Safety; Prohibiting stopping a bus in a manner that impedes traffic while the bus is loading or unloading passengers, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013

Elections

The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday at 10:00 AM, where testimony from several of Florida's Supervisors of Elections will be heard regarding the 2012 elections. Miami-Dade County's Supervisor of Elections Penny Townsley will participate, along with the following:

- The Honorable Vicki Davis, Martin County
- The Honorable Mark A. Andersen, Bay County
- The Honorable Jerry Holland, Duval County
- The Honorable David H. Stafford, Escambia County
- The Honorable Sharon L. Harrington, Lee County
- The Honorable Penelope Townsley, Miami-Dade County
- The Honorable Susan Bucher, Palm Beach County
- The Honorable Brian E. Corley, Pasco County
- The Honorable Gertrude Walker, St. Lucie County
- The Honorable Mike Ertel, Seminole County

Additionally, the House Ethics and Elections Sub-Committee will meet on Tuesday at 8:00 AM for the same purpose.

EVENTS

On Thursday, the Dade Delegation held its third public hearing to give the public an opportunity to address issues concerning Economic Development, Local Government and General Issues.

The forum was well attended by many of Miami-Dade County's stakeholders. The City of Miami Gardens and the Beacon Council were among those who presented and focused on seeking support of a State-Wide Enterprise Zone Incentive Program to provide incentives to induce private investments in economically distressed areas of the state.

Other presenters included: the cities of Miami, North Miami Beach, North Bay Village, City of Miami, Miami Beach, Golden Beach, Bay Harbour Islands and Cutler Bay.

Several issues of interest included: Pension Reform, Beach Renourishment, Business Tax, Red Light Cameras, Citizens Insurance, Transportation funding and Miami Beach Convention Center Renovation & Expansion and CDT funds.

2013 Session Dates

January 8, 2013	Early House Bill Drafting Deadline
January 14, 2013	Interim Committee Week
January 21, 2013	Interim Committee Week
January 22, 2013	Early House Bill Filing Deadline
January 25, 2013	Senate Bill Drafting Deadline
January 25, 2013	Final House Bill Drafting Deadline
February 4, 2013	Interim Committee Week
February 11, 2013	Interim Committee Week
February 18, 2013	Interim Committee Week
March 1, 2013	House Bills must be in final draft form
March 5, 2013	Regular Session convenes

LOCAL NEWS

Doral

On Wednesday night the City of Doral Council unanimously accepted Doral Mayor Luigi Boria's nomination of former Miami Mayor Joe Carollo as the new city manager of the City of Doral.

Carollo was quoted as saying, "Having been a commissioner, been a vice mayor, been a mayor, I know what the role of a manager should be". "I know what I wanted to see in a manager."

Carollo, who hasn't held office since a failed reelection bid in 2001, replaces Merrett Stierheim.

Stierheim was hired last month as the city's interim manager and abruptly resigned hours before Carollo was officially hired.

Stierheim said that a professional manager should stay out of politics, but Carollo is "in it up to his ears." He further indicated that Carollo should have gone through the selection process.

Carollo will earn \$144,000 a year, plus benefits, and oversee a staff of 277 workers.

Sweetwater

Sweetwater has amended its annexation plans to exclude a portion along Southwest Eighth Street.

On Monday, the City Commission unanimously approved a resolution to modify its application to the county seeking to annex a chunk of West Miami-Dade land, withdrawing the area along Southwest Eighth Street between 117th and 102 avenues.

The city is still interested in annexing Florida International University's College of Engineering and Computing campus at 10555 W. Flagler St. Also, the city is interested in a piece of land on the north side of Flagler between 110th and 102nd avenues.

There areas the city seeks to annex are business and commercial, and do not have any residential neighborhoods.

Mayor Manny Maroño said the city had included the stretch of Eighth Street in part so Sweetwater could better regulate the proliferation of street vendors peddling their products. However, the city changed its plans once it got wind of possible plans to incorporate a city of Westchester.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/10/v-print/3176538/sweetwater-amends-annexation-plans.html#storylink=cpy>

Miami Gardens

Miami Gardens will finally have a street named President Barack Obama.

Earlier this month the measure was rejected by the council because the proposed location on Northwest Second Avenue was deemed not worthy enough.

The street that was deemed acceptable for "President Barack and Michelle Obama Boulevard" is Northwest 185 Terrace between 27th and 25th Avenues. It is also the site of the new City Hall that is scheduled to open later this year.

The street renaming passed unanimously at Wednesday's council meeting.

According to City Manager Danny Crew, the city is spending \$1.5 million in renovations and upgrades on President Barack and Michelle Obama Boulevard.

The renaming comes before President Obama's inauguration on Jan. 21.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/10/3176537/miami-gardens-city-halls-new-address.html#storylink=cpy>

North Miami Beach

North Miami Mayor Andre Pierre was named the 2012 Person of the Year for the Haitian community.

The distinction came from Island TV, a Haitian-American cable network, which every year honors individuals who have had an impact on the local Haitian community.

At Tuesday's council meeting, the city aired a clip from Island TV honoring the mayor for his contributions to North Miami and the Haitian community at large.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/10/3176534/island-tv-honors-north-miami-mayor.html#storylink=cpy>

SAVE THE DATE:

MIAMI-DADE LEAGUE OF CITIES

What: MDCLC 59th Annual Installation
Gala

Miami, FL.

Where: Jungle Island 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail,

When: Saturday, February 9, 2013

STATE / LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

January 14- January 18, 2013

*The weekly report comprises a variety of media sources, including news articles, lobbyist reports and information gathered through the OIA.

STATE ISSUES

Press Release:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JANUARY 17, 2013

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Governor Rick Scott Statement on Election Reforms

TALLAHASSEE – Today, Governor Rick Scott released the following statement, outlining his call for election reforms after a briefing with Secretary of State Ken Detzner:

"I asked Secretary Detzner to meet with election supervisors following the November election to identify specific ways we can fix the problems we saw in some counties with long lines and delayed reporting. Our ultimate goal must be to restore Floridians' confidence in our election system. I asked Sec. Detzner for a report with specific election reform recommendations, because I want to ensure we do whatever possible to improve our election system from the statewide level.

"In short, these reforms need to address the three major areas I have previously outlined. We need shorter ballots. We need more early voting days, which should include an option of the Sunday before Election Day. And, we need more early voting locations. From my briefing with Sec. Detzner today, I believe all these reforms are strongly supported by the input and experiences of local election supervisors and others that the department met with for ideas on improving our current system – a system clearly in need of improvement.

"The detail of these three overarching reforms will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- **More Early Voting Days** – Increase the number of days available for early voting. We should allow Supervisors of Elections the flexibility to offer anywhere between eight and 14 days of early voting. Hours of operation should range between six and 12 hours a day. This should include the Sunday before Election Day, allowing Supervisors the option to accommodate the needs of their community as they requested in committee meetings this week. This would also allow the greatest access to early voting ever in Florida history - at up to 168 hours.

- **More Early Voting Locations** – Work with Supervisors to allow more and larger early voting locations to help reduce wait times, long lines, and to better convenience voters.
- **Shorter Ballot** – Reduce the length of the ballot, including the description of proposed constitutional amendments.

“I appreciate the secretary’s work in support of our goal to give all Floridians confidence in the fairness and accessibility of our election system. We must continually push to make improvements, and I look forward to working with the Legislature on a bi-partisan bill to implement these reforms this session. I also appreciate the Legislature and the Supervisors of Elections for their feedback in committee meetings this week. As the Legislature continues its work, I look forward to working together to craft legislation that will ensure successful elections by making these important statewide reforms.”

Elections continued -

On Monday, Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Elections Penny Townsley was among many elections supervisors that gave testimony regarding the 2012 Presidential Elections. The purpose was to report the strengths and weaknesses in the process in order to advocate for measures that will improve the voter experience. Testimony was given at the Senate Committee of Ethics and Elections, Chaired by Sen. Jack Latvala R- Clearwater (delegation members on the committee include: Sen. Oscar Braynon, Miguel Diaz de la Portilla and Anitere Flores) and on Tuesday, at the House Sub-committee on Ethics and Elections, chaired by Rep. Jim Boyd R- Brandon (delegation member on the committee is rep. Jose Felix Diaz).

Here is a link to view the committee packet:

http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/bills/2013/event_docs/1/CP_Senate_S13EE_2013114_10.pdf

Pensions

On Thursday, the Florida Supreme Court Thursday upheld the 3 percent pension charge slapped on government workers by the 2011 Legislature.

In a 4-3 decision, the court reversed a ruling by Leon County Circuit Judge Jackie Fulford. She had held that the state violated the collective-bargaining rights of members of the Florida Retirement System.

Unions representing state, county, city and school employees had filed suit soon after the Legislature enacted the pension payment. The unions did not contest its applicability to employees hired after June 30, 2011, but argued that the state could not retroactively change conditions of employment for long-serving state workers.

If the Supreme Court had ruled the other way, the 2013 Legislature would have had to come up with about \$1 billion in general revenue to replace 3 percent payments already withheld from public employee salaries.

Citizens

When Citizens Property Insurance Corp. board members considered lifting the cap on annual rate increases for new customers last year, lawmakers from Miami vowed to push legislation to keep the cap in place for all policies.

Citizens eventually backed off the proposal, but South Florida legislators are forging ahead with bills to solidify the 10 percent cap on annual rate increases for all policies.

Rep. Jose Felix Diaz, R-Miami, filed HB 107 Tuesday to clarify that the cap applies to all policies, not just existing policies.

The bill is a companion to SB 96, filed by Sen. Anitere Flores, R-Miami, who was among the [most vocal opponents](#) to Citizens' attempt to break the cap.

Though the bills will be popular in the South Florida region that houses a large portion of Citizens customers, the members of the insurance committees in the House and Senate are likely to be less enthusiastic.

Rep. Bryan Nelson, R-Apopka, chairs the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee and is an insurance agent by trade. He has supported legislation to increase the cap in the past, and prefers to see the cap as a "glide path" designed to get state-run Citizens' rates more in line with those of private sector competitors.

Sen. David Simmons, R-Maitland, is chairing the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee for the first time, but told insurance companies and regulators to present ideas for shrinking the number of Citizens policies. Those presentations are set for next week, but supporters of a smaller Citizens generally see the 10 percent cap as an impediment to removing policies.

The issue is representative among Republican lawmakers in Tallahassee over property insurance issues. Most Miami lawmakers are sensitive to hikes in Citizens rates, since a large portion of their constituents are Citizens customers. Republicans from north or central portions of the state, however, complain that Citizens rates are held artificially low because the state-run company relies on post-storm assessments to pay claims -- assessments that would apply to non-Citizens customers in the event of a catastrophic storm.

That schism may not bubble to the surface during committee discussions, however, because just two Miami-Dade legislators -- Sen. Miguel Diaz de la Portilla, R-Miami, and Sen. Gwen Margolis, D-Sunny Isles -- sit on the main insurance committees.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Citizens

Senator Anitere Flores and Rep. Jose Felix Diaz have filed similar companion bills, SB 96 and HB 107 that would cap Citizens property insurance rates hikes for both new and existing policies to 10 percent per year.

Last summer, Citizens considered increases that exceeded the annual 10 percent cap on new Citizens policies. This pair of bills appears to have been filed in response.

Here are links to the text of the bills and an article on these bills is included below:

<http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2013/pdf/0096.pdf>

<http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2013/pdf/0107.pdf>

FDOT

The Florida Department of Transportation presented its 2013 state legislative package to the House Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee earlier today. Here's a link to the FDOT package, which appears on pages 1-19;

http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/bills/2013/event_docs/1/CP_House_H13THSS_2013115_14.pdf

Some highlights specific to Miami-Dade County:

1. **Strategic Airport Investment Initiative:** Modeled after a similar program for seaports passed last year, provides \$15 million in funding from the FDOT Work Program for strategic airport investment projects (page 3);
2. **Parking meter revenue:** Local governments currently retain all revenue from parking meters on state roads. This statutory change would require 50% of such revenue to go to FDOT (page 4);
3. **Noise mitigation/land use along turnpike/interstate highways:** Requires local governments to adopt noise compatible land use regulations for residential development adjacent to limited access highways by July 1, 2014; requires local governments to equally share with FDOT in noise mitigation costs if such regulations are not in place and FDOT is required to construct noise mitigation walls (page 6);
4. **MPOs:** Requires a single MPO for each urbanized area or group of contiguous urbanized areas; allows for 25 members of an MPO instead of the current cap of 19 members when the boundaries of an existing MPO are expanded to encompass a new urbanized area or where 2 or MPOs consolidate within a single urbanized area (page 19).

Medicaid

The Florida Association of Counties is currently in negotiations with the Governor's Office and the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) over revising the current County Medicaid contribution program. Under current law, each county is required to pay for Medicaid in-patient hospital days (days 11 to 45), as well as \$55 per month for Medicaid enrollees in nursing home for each county's residents enrolled in Medicaid. The total current Medicaid contribution is approximately \$268 million annually for all counties statewide. Miami-Dade County is responsible for approximately \$50 million annually. Determining each Medicaid enrollees' county of residence has been a significant issue especially given the quality of the state's data.

HB 5301 from the 2012 session required counties to pay 11 years of retroactive payments for unpaid amounts and revenue sharing deductions for prospective Medicaid contributions counties are required to pay. Counties fought the legislation as an unfunded mandate and based on the quality of the state's data showing Medicaid enrollees' county of residence.

Current negotiations involve new legislation for the 2013 session that would take one of two options:

1. A buyout by counties of current Medicaid obligations, moving away from the existing individual Medicaid billings and payments of a set amount each year based on current county contribution estimates and the percentage of total county Medicaid obligations for each county (Miami-Dade currently makes up 18.73% of the statewide total). The buyout would include a cap on annual increases for county Medicaid costs currently estimated at 6%. The goal of a buyout would be to hold counties to no more than the Medicaid contributions they currently pay, while no longer having to review (and dispute) individual Medicaid billings to determine county of residency.
2. Continuing with the current Medicaid billing system based on the county of residents of each individual Medicaid enrollee, but improving the reliability of the data. This option would still require review of individual Medicaid billings to determine county of residence, but based on better quality data with the goal of reducing the number of disputed Medicaid billings.

If agreement is not reached on either of these options, the current program may continue based on review of each individual Medicaid billing, although the Governor's Office and AHCA have indicated a strong desire to move away from individual Medicaid billings to reduce state administrative costs and secure this revenue stream, so we are likely to see legislation of some form in any event. It's also important to note that County Medicaid contributions are likely to be affected by implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in the coming years. In addition, the Governor has indicated that he wants to move to a diagnosis-based Medicaid structure (flat fee per diagnosis rather than individual treatment billings), and this could also significantly affect county Medicaid obligations.

Attached is an overview prepared by FAC of these options for county Medicaid contribution legislation for 2013. Also included are runs of the fiscal impact of a buyout for each county. Fiscal impacts for Miami-Dade County are estimated to increase to \$58 million by fiscal year 2016 under the proposal capped at a 6% per year increase, increases without a cap under the current billing system could be higher.

Searches and Seizures /Drones

SB 92 sponsored by Sen. Joe Negron (R – Palm City), was amended this week in Senate committee to include two additional exceptions to language prohibiting the use of drones by law enforcement:

1. If a search warrant specifically authorizes first obtains a search warrant signed by a judge authorizing the use of a drone; and
2. If the law enforcement agency has reasonable suspicion that swift action is needed to prevent imminent danger to life or serious damage to property or to forestall the imminent escape of a suspect or the destruction of evidence.

SB 92: Searches and Seizures; Citing this act as the "Freedom from Unwarranted Surveillance Act"; prohibiting a law enforcement agency from using a drone to gather evidence or other information; authorizing an aggrieved party to initiate a civil action in order to prevent or remedy a violation of the act; prohibiting a law enforcement agency from using in any court of law in this state evidence obtained or collected in violation of the act, etc.

Here are links to the amendment: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2013/pdf/0092123408.pdf>,
and to the staff analysis:
<http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2013/pdf/AS00921398.pdf>.

Local Option Tourist Development Tax

This week Rep. Eddy Gonzalez (R – Hialeah Gardens) filed HB 165 related to financing renovations to Sun Life Stadium. HB 165 authorizes tourist development tax revenue to be used for debt service on bonds issued to finance renovations to a professional sports franchise facility located on publicly-owned land. Renovation costs must exceed \$250 million and more than 50 percent of total renovation costs must be paid by the professional sports franchise ownership. HB 165 removes the 2 percent cap on tourist development tax levies in Miami-Dade County, allowing this tax to be raised by the Board. HB 165 provides for \$250,000 per month (\$3 million annually) in state sales tax revenues to be distributed to the professional sports franchise renovation facility. HB 165 also requires a signed agreement with the professional sports franchise for use of the renovated facility for a term of at least 20 years and an independent analysis that the renovated facility will generate in excess of \$3 million annually in sales tax revenue.

Here's a link to the text of the bill: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2013/pdf/0165.pdf>

Additionally, Senator Oscar Braynon filed a similar companion bill SB 306 - Relating to Professional Sports Facilities.

Here's a link to the text of the bill: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2013/pdf/0306.pdf>

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LOCAL NEWS

Jackson Health System

On November 13, 2012, Kendall Regional Medical Center celebrated the anniversary of the Center's provisional level II trauma center. Meanwhile, Jackson Health System filed two petitions with the state demanding a hearing, alleging the license for trauma operations at Kendall Regional Medical Center was granted illegally and should be revoked.

Jackson executives estimate it has been losing about \$28 million a year since Kendall Regional opened its trauma center. One of the trauma doctors indicated that Jackson Memorial's Ryder Trauma Center tends to get the inner-city gunshot victims who have no insurance while Kendall gets the suburban car accident victims with insurance.

State officials and the HCA hospital chain, which owns Kendall Regional, maintain that Miami-Dade's size requires more than one trauma center.

Mark McKenney, medical director of the Kendall center said the state decided Miami-Dade needed more trauma centers after a 2005 study showed that only 39 percent of the county's trauma victims were treated in trauma centers. Those treated in ordinary emergency rooms showed a considerably higher mortality rate.

In Miami-Dade, HCA's Mercy and Tenet's Palmetto General have also applied for trauma licenses. Jackson countered by seeking trauma units at its two community hospitals, Jackson North and Jackson South.

Wayne Brackin, chief operating officer of Baptist Health South Florida, said Baptist is "very worried about this trauma issue," because in the 1980s, the trauma system fell apart in Miami-Dade with many hospitals losing money on the service, and Baptist doesn't want the Ryder Trauma Center weakened by competition that could again endanger trauma care in the county.

Miami

This week Miami City Commissioner Francis Suarez officially announced that he is running for mayor.

Speculation mounted when Suarez's campaign finance reports showed that in the last three months of 2012 he raised \$460,000 through his "political communications organization."

Suarez, in an interview with The Miami Herald and El Nuevo Herald, outlined his vision for the city. It includes replenishing rainy-day funds, promoting small business, beefing up the police department and making the mayor a player on the national stage.

Incumbent Mayor Tomás Regalado has also launched his bid for reelection, and observers say his popularity remains high among likely voters.

Suarez, a real estate attorney, first ran for the City Commission in 2009. He was elected to represent District 4, which includes Flagami and stretches to the city's western edge, and was previously held by Regalado.

Regalado, who has raised about \$160,000 for his campaign and enjoys popularity in neighborhoods like Little Havana and Flagami, said he welcomed the competition.

Observers expect the race to be close.

There are two other candidates in the race: Williams Armbrister and Jeffrey Anthony Benjamin. Neither has raised more than \$1,000, according to campaign finance reports.

Emilio Gonzalez, former director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under President George W. Bush, said he is also considering running for mayor.

Bal Harbour

Bal Harbour council members voted Tuesday night to hire Merrett Stierheim to search for a new village manager. Among the issues faced by the village is a scandal over a U.S. Justice Department investigation that found the village police misspent millions seized from criminals, and that alleged professional misconduct by the police chief, who has since been suspended.

Stierheim was asked to step in as interim village manager following the abrupt departure of Al Treppeda, who was scheduled to retire on April 30 but announced in an email to the council on Tuesday night that he will not be returning from vacation prior to retirement.

Treppeda gave no reason for his sudden departure, but he thanked the village and its council for 32 years of employment.

Jay Smith, the human resources director, who is currently the village's acting manager, indicated that he does not want the job full time.

The village has been under intense scrutiny from the Justice Department for mispending federal dollars seized from drug dealers and money launderers.

As a result of its investigation, the Justice Department suspended Bal Harbour from the federal program that allows police to seize cash, cars, boats and other assets from criminals — and then keep a cut of the proceeds.

The Justice Department also demanded the village return \$4.1 million received through the program.

Bal Harbour's police department led all Florida law enforcement agencies in the amount of cash received through the forfeiture program in 2011 with \$5.1 million. But the village has since returned \$1.3 million to the Justice Department.

Village attorneys are negotiating a settlement for the rest.

Miami Beach

The following letter was forwarded from the office of Miami Beach Commissioner Deede Weithorn, regarding the Miami Beach Convention Center and the finalists selected for City Manager:

AN IMPORTANT UPDATE REGARDING THE MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER

Dear Residents:

During yesterday's City Commission meeting I reaffirmed my commitment to move forward with the complete overhaul and redevelopment of the Miami Beach Convention Center District. Updating our aging convention center and developing an adjoining hotel with potential mixed uses is of unprecedented importance to our city and county economy as we strive to remain a competing venue for conventions and tourism from around the world.

Proceeding with this \$500 million to \$1 billion development of the 52 acre Convention Center District is a very sensitive task that is not to be taken lightly. I am unconditionally committed to ensuring that this project moves onward but we must do so cautiously and attentive to details to avoid flaws, delays, and breaches of the law.

In doing so, yesterday I was obligated to inform my colleagues of a very serious allegation that had recently been brought to my attention. In short, it was alleged that the former purchasing director for the City of Miami Beach, Mr. Gus Lopez, who is being charged by prosecutors with 63 counts of felonies including bid rigging may had been in

contact with one or more of the teams bidding in the development of the Convention Center with the possible intention of bid rigging.

As an auditor by profession and a Miami Beach City Commissioner I would be remiss not to address this very serious allegation. That is why, following the advice of the City Attorney's Office, all bidders will be contacted and asked to sign an affidavit under the penalty of perjury asserting that they had no contact with the former purchasing director or his agent with the intent of bid rigging. Furthermore, I've been informed that the State Attorney's Office is aware of the current allegation that has surfaced.

The Miami Herald has questioned my basis for bringing the allegation to the attention of my colleagues on the City Commission. Could anyone seriously expect me to disregard an allegation of bid rigging? For many years residents brought to the attention of officials at City Hall allegations of wrongdoing in multiple departments including Code Enforcement, Building, Police, Fire, and others. The City Administration at the time chose to overlook those allegations. Ultimately, the City was repeatedly embarrassed when employees were arrested and charged with partaking in the alleged improper and illegal activity.

Under my watch the City of Miami Beach will no longer run and hide from its problems. I am hopeful that an investigation of the allegation will find no wrongdoing; however, if any evidence is found it will have to be addressed in the appropriate manner to restore the integrity of the Miami Beach Convention Center Development project.

In the meantime, we go onward, full steam ahead, with the public input phase of the Convention Center Development. I have consistently advocated that the City maintain strong lines of communication with residents regarding this project. Furthermore, I want to make sure that you have the opportunity to provide input on the design of the new convention center. As such, **I would like to personally invite you to join us for the first (of many) public meetings that will be taking place on Tuesday, January 29, 2013 at 6:00 pm at the Miami Beach Convention Center, room A101 and A105.**

In closing, I want to thank Mayor Bower, the prime supporter of the Convention Center Development, and my fellow commissioners for supporting me in ensuring that any

allegation of ethical breaches be investigated and for backing my request for professional outreach and communication with residents.

As always, please feel free to contact me at 305-673-7105 or send me email at DeedeWeithorn@miamibeachfl.gov regarding this and/or any other issue.

Sincerely,



Deede Weithorn

Commissioner

UPDATE REGARDING THE RECRUITMENT OF NEW CITY MANAGER

As a result of Commissioner Weithorn's sponsored item calling for a detailed timetable for the remaining process of the recruitment of the new Miami Beach City Manager, the following schedule was set by the City Commission:

- Tuesday, January 29, 2013 – the finalists will be invited to attend the first of public meetings regarding the design of the Miami Beach Convention Center Development project; prior, they will tour the City with members of the Administration and Commission.
- On Wednesday, January 30, 2013 at 8:00 am finalists will be interviewed by the City Commission in the Commission Chambers.
- And, on January 31, 2013 at 4:00 pm the City Commission will narrow down the finalists after Commissioners individually meet with them earlier in the day. The

remaining finalists will advance to the final step of the selection process which includes a professional background check.

Finalists include **Steve Barwick**, long-time city manager of Aspen, Co; **Monica Cepero**, assistant to Broward County Administrator Bertha Henry and former policy coordinator for Florida Gov. Jeb Bush; **Robert Frank**, city manager of Ocoee, a city of 36,000 residents near Orlando; **Emanuel Mayer**, Miami Beach resident and former special assistant to the Miami Beach city manager on capital-improvement projects; **Jimmy Morales**, a former Miami-Dade County Commissioner; **Frank Rollason**, a former assistant city manager and CRA director in the City of Miami; and, **Thomas Wilson**, assistant city manager of development services in Palm Springs, California.

YOUTH SAFETY

In light of the recent elementary school shooting in Newtown, Conn., Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Miami-Dade Superintendent Alberto Carvalho hosted a joint roundtable discussion on youth safety with local officials, on Friday at the Vizcaya Museum & Gardens Village Garage, located at 3250 South Miami Avenue.

The roundtable served to unite local leaders, including mayors and police chiefs of various municipalities within the Miami-Dade community to work together on public safety initiatives share successful practices, discuss current challenges and define helpful recommendations for short and long-term solutions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SAVE THE DATE:

MIAMI-DADE LEAGUE OF CITIES

What: MDCLC 59th Annual Installation
Gala

Where: Jungle Island 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail, Miami,
Fl.

When: Saturday, February 9, 2013

STATE / LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

January 21- January 25, 2013

*The weekly report comprises a variety of media sources, including news articles, lobbyist reports and information gathered through the OIA.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

On Thursday, the House Government Operations Subcommittee held a workshop on a draft committee bill to revise the **Florida Retirement System**. The most significant change in the House's draft FRS bill is that all new employees hired after January 1, 2014 would be required to enroll in the Defined Contribution (401k-style) plan and would not have the option of going into the Defined Benefit (traditional pension) plan. The draft bill does not affect anyone currently in the FRS Defined Benefit plan or who enters the DB plan before January 1, 2014.

The draft bill also eliminates the option to apply for disability benefits under the current pension plan for new hires after January 1, 2014, but the House committee intends to put a new disability benefit option in place that parallels the Defined Contribution plan, but this language has not yet been developed.

Here's a link to the draft House's draft FRS bill workshop:

http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/bills/2013/event_docs/6/MISC_House_H13GOS_FloridaRetirementSystemActDRAFT_2013124_8.pdf

House and Senate leadership have agreed that the House will develop an FRS bill, while the Senate will develop a bill reforming laws governing city pension programs.

Senator Diaz de la Portilla (R-Miami) filed **SB 0444** - Relating to Domestic Wastewater Discharged Through **Ocean Outfalls**; Revising the measurement standard for the wastewater flow; revising the requirements for installation of a functioning reuse system by a utility that had a permit for a domestic wastewater facility on a specified date to discharge through ocean outfall; revising plan requirements for the elimination of ocean outfalls; requiring that the Department of Environmental Protection approve certain apportionment of reuse if a facility contracts with another facility to install a functioning reuse system, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013

Please click to view the full text:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0444/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Representative Manny Diaz Jr. (R-Hialeah) filed **HB 517** - CoSponsor: Eddy Gonzalez - **Relating to Foreign-Trained Medical Professionals**: Prohibits DOH from issuing license to, or renewing license of, certain persons who travel to Republic of Cuba to obtain medical training or medical degree; provides exemption for persons who receive training or degree before immigration to United States. Effective Date: July 1, 2013

Please click to view the full text:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName= h0517.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=0517&Session=2013>

Senator Rene Garcia (R- Hialeah) filed an identical bill, **SB 456** - Relating to **Foreign-trained Medical Professionals**; Prohibiting the Department of Health from issuing a license to, or renewing the license of, certain persons who travel to the Republic of Cuba to obtain medical training or a medical degree; providing an exemption, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2013

Please click the link to view the full text:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0362/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Representative Jeanette Nunez (R-Miami) filed **HB 475** – Relating to **Enterprise Zones**; Provides definitions for Urban Job Creation Investment Act; creates Florida Urban Investment Job Creation Authority; creates zone development corporation for each enterprise program zone; provides for designation of enterprise program zones; reduces rate of tax on sales & transactions conducted in zones; specifies qualifications for businesses to receive state enterprise program zone incentives; establishing enterprise program zone assistance funds;

authorizes certain state incentives for projects of qualified businesses; requires OPPAGA to submit report evaluating Urban Job Creation & Investment Act to Governor & Legislature; provides for expiration of Urban Job Creation Investment Act; abolishing designated enterprise program zones; authorizes certain tax credits against sales tax & corporate income tax for qualified businesses located in enterprise program zones.

Effective Date: July 1, 2013

Please click the link to view the full text:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName= h0475 .docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=0475&Session=2013>

Senator Anitere Flores (R-Miami) filed **SB 86-** Relating to **Distribution of Materials Harmful to Minors**; Prohibiting an adult from knowingly distributing to a minor or posting on school property certain specified materials harmful to minors; providing that it is a third-degree felony for any person to knowingly distribute to a minor or post on school property certain materials harmful to minors, etc. Effective Date: October 1, 2013

Please click the link to view the full text:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0086/BillText/Filed/PDF>

An Identical bill **HB 0113** was field by Representative Manny Diaz Jr (R-Hialeah) CoSponsors: Diaz (J), Edwards, Gonzalez, Hood, Hutson, Nuñez, Raburn, Rooney

General Distribution of Materials Harmful to Minors: Prohibits adult from knowingly distributing to minor or posting on school property certain specified materials harmful to minors; defines "school property." Effective Date: October 1, 2013

Please click the link to view the full text:

<http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2013/pdf/0113.pdf>

STATE ISSUES

Education

Gov. Rick Scott is proposing a \$2,500 across-the-board pay raise for every teacher.

On Thursday, House Speaker Will Weatherford and Senate President Don Gaetz both reiterated their views that it's a great idea to pay teachers more money, but that it must be tied to performance in the classroom.

Gaetz was more critical of the plan. He said Scott had an obligation to specify to legislators and the public where he would get the \$480 million to pay for the raises in next year's budget (which Scott did not do).

Weatherford said that historically, longevity and college degrees have determined teacher salaries in Florida, and that while raises are laudable, a "merit pay component" has to be part of the conversation.

Everglades

On Thursday, key legislators indicated that the Everglades restoration plan approved by federal officials in 2012 is leading toward changes in the Florida law dealing with the famed "River of Grass".

Senate and House committees heard from representatives of agencies, environmental groups and sugar farmers about restoration plans. Both groups argued over who was to blame for continued high phosphorus levels in Lake Okeechobee and water runoff from farming areas into the Everglades.

Sen. Wilton Simpson, R-Dade City, said he is working on a general bill with the governor's office, but that there are no specifics yet. He is head of Simpson Farms Inc. in Pasco County.

Gov. Rick Scott in 2011 met with federal officials in Washington to propose a state restoration plan to address lawsuits over water quality and water quantity and prevent a federal takeover of permitting.

In 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved the state's plan to spend \$880 million over 13 years on new reservoirs and marshes to filter water flowing into Everglades National Park.

In its legislative budget request submitted in October, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is seeking \$50 million for Everglades restoration, including \$32 million for the governor's plan.

The Everglades Forever Act set phosphorus limits for water flowing into the Everglades. The law also established a \$35 per acre tax on sugar farms, with a \$10.11 per acre credit for those farms using "best management practices" to reduce pollution and a 1 mill ad valorem tax to reduce pollution.

That overall "agriculture privilege tax" is reduced to \$25 per acre from 2014 through 2017 and then drops to \$10 per acre after that.

Pari-mutuels

An appellate court says a Florida law that would have let two jai alai operators convert their pari-mutuel licenses to dog racing is unconstitutional.

A three-judge panel of the 1st District Court unanimously ruled on Thursday in Tallahassee that the measure is a special rather than general law because it affects only two counties -- Volusia and Palm Beach.

The Florida Constitution requires the Legislature to give advance notice of its intent to pass a special law or require voter approval in the affected areas.

Lawmakers did neither.

The stricken law would have let West Volusia Racing Inc., formerly known as Volusia Jai Alai Inc., and License Acquisitions LLC, doing business as Palm Beach Greyhound Racing, convert their permits. Neither has conducted jai alai games for at least 10 years.

2013 Session Dates

January 21, 2013	Interim Committee Week
January 22, 2013	Early House Bill Filing Deadline
January 25, 2013	Senate Bill Drafting Deadline
January 25, 2013	Final House Bill Drafting Deadline
February 4, 2013	Interim Committee Week
February 11, 2013	Interim Committee Week
February 18, 2013	Interim Committee Week

March 1, 2013	House Bills must be in final draft form
March 5, 2013	Regular Session convenes

Announcements:

The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce will hold its Tallahassee Fly-In on Tuesday, February 12- Wednesday, February 13, 2013. For more information please click the link:

<http://www.miamichamber.com/cwt/External/WCPages/WCEvents/EventDetail.aspx?EventID=3244>

Miami-Dade County Days will celebrate its 25th Anniversary as it holds its Fly-In on Wednesday, April 3 – Thursday, April 4, 2013.

For more information, please click the link: <http://dadedays.com/>

LOCAL NEWS

Miami

The Rev. Richard P. Dunn wants to once again represent Miami's District 5.

The former city commissioner filed Thursday to run in November for the seat. The district runs from Overtown up into Little Haiti and Liberty City. So far, he's the only person to qualify.

If elected, it would be the third time that Dunn — senior pastor at Faith Community Baptist Church in North Central Miami-Dade — has held the seat.

He held it briefly through appointment in the mid-'90s when Commissioner Miller Dawkins was removed from office. Dunn also spent 19 months, from January 2010 to August 2011, filling in

for Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones after she was removed from office while facing felony charges.

Dunn was originally appointed to Spence-Jones's seat by the commission, then held onto it by winning election in November 2011.

Spence-Jones regained her seat in August 2011 after one of the felony cases was dropped, and she was found not guilty in the second. She is expected to run again.

On Thursday, the Miami City Commission chose attorney Mitchell Berger as counsel on matters relating to a lawsuit filed against the mayor and the state attorney by Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones.

Berger, who agreed to do the work for free, is best known for representing former Vice President Al Gore and former Sen. Joseph Lieberman in the Florida lawsuits stemming from the 2000 presidential election controversy.

Berger was considered along with three other high-profile attorneys: former Miami U.S. Attorney Marcos Jimenez, former Miami-Dade Circuit Court Judge Israel Reyes and former Miami-Dade County Court Judge Ana Maria Pando.

In the federal lawsuit, Spence-Jones accuses Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernández Rundle and Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado of plotting to destroy her political career in connection with two failed prosecutions. The city is not a defendant, but the commission needs outside counsel to give legal advice on matters relating to the case. City Attorney Julie O. Bru has recused herself, citing a conflict of interest.

Among the most pressing issues the commission must take up: whether to fund an outside attorney for Regalado.

The mayor has asked to have Miami defense attorney Jose Quiñón work on his case. But the commissioners have not discussed the matter yet. The commission also extended its contract with Miami-Dade County to use the county's waste-disposal system.

In other business, the commission finalized an agreement that will let DecoBike set up an automated bicycle share program in the city of Miami. DecoBike operates a successful bike share program in Miami Beach.

Now that the agreement is in place, the county will release \$45 million in bond dollars set aside for the closure and remediation of the Virginia Key landfill. The landfill, which has not been in use for more than three decades, is leaching dangerous chemicals into the groundwater.

The county has agreed to spearhead the clean-up effort.

Once the site is decontaminated, the city will build a park.

Doral

The day after former Miami Mayor Joe Carollo started his new job as Doral's city manager Former Miami Police Chief Miguel Exposito submitted his application to become Doral's Chief on January 11. Three days later, he withdrew, according to the city's Human Resource Department.

Carollo and Exposito became allies in a 2011 crusade against gambling machines in Miami, one of many issues that led to a public spat with Mayor Tomás Regalado. Exposito was later fired for insubordination.

More than 60 cops have applied for the job, including interim Police Chief Mike Perez.

Hialeah

On Wednesday, Judge Milton Hirsch declined to throw out Miami-Dade's absentee ballot ordinance.

Miami-Dade's absentee ballot ordinance endured a legal challenge in criminal court, while county commissioners approved a new measure to track how campaigns pay workers involved in collection of the ballots.

The use of absentee ballots, which voters can turn in by mail or in person to the elections department, has sharply climbed in Miami-Dade in recent years. Allegations of absentee-ballot fraud shook the August primary as police investigators arrested two ballot brokers, or boleteros, on voter fraud charges.

On Wednesday, a Miami-Dade judge declined to throw out misdemeanor charges against one of the accused, Sergio “El Tío” Robaina, whose lawyers had challenged the constitutionality of a county ordinance that bans collection of multiple ballots. A person may turn in only two absentee ballots in addition to their own: one belonging to an immediate family member and another belonging to a voter who has signed a sworn statement designating that person as responsible.

The ordinance, sponsored by Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz, will require candidates running for county or municipal office to identify paid workers who take part in their absentee-ballot campaigns.

Candidates must already disclose their campaign expenditures under state campaign finance laws. They will now have to file an additional report solely listing campaign workers who deal with absentee ballots — including those hired by campaign consultants. Candidates often list consultants without detailing what work the consultants are doing.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

In November, voters approved a \$1.2 billion capital improvements referendum that would allow the school district to fix up old schools and improve technology. Additionally, some of the money will also be spent on new campuses.

New schools are on the way in Northeast Miami-Dade, Doral and the area west of Interstate 75 in Northwest Dade, according to a schedule of work compiled by the district.

Chief Facilities Officer Jaime Torrens said the new schools are in response to growing communities or in some cases development that has re-emerged after the real estate collapse. Most of them are slated for the third and fourth years of the bond program.

The list is vague on some locations, but new schools are identified as:

- K-12 at Southwest 149th Avenue and 160th Street
- K-8 at Southwest 167th Avenue and 95th Street
- K-5 at Southwest 149th Avenue and Coral Way
- Two K-8 schools and a high school in Northeast Miami-Dade
- K-8 at Northwest 90th Street and 114th Avenue
- K-8 west of Interstate 75 and north of Northwest 138th Street
- High school in Doral.

Other schools listed as new are actually additions, such as work at Glades Middle and South Pointe Elementary. Others are conversions like the project to turn Ethel Koger Beckham Elementary into a K-8 center.

The list also includes expansions, like ongoing work at the MAST Academy on Virginia Key, a project that is half funded by the Village of Key Biscayne.

Seven Counties 50 Years (Seven50)

On Thursday, community leaders made up of urban planners, business and civic leaders, elected officials and government leaders came together to further develop Seven50, a plan to build stronger communities, create jobs and a resilient economy, while protecting our fragile ecosystem.

The event was kicked off by welcoming comments from Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioner Jean Monestime, Southeast Florida Regional Partnership Executive Committee Member. Additional participants from Miami-Dade County included Nicole Hefty (climate change panel) and Transit Director Ysela Yort (transportation panel). The OIA also participated in the event.

Seven50 was drafted through public summits, workshops, and studies and is the result of a grant from the US department of Housing & Urban Development's Sustainable Communities

Initiative. The grant was secured by the Southeast Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRP) and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRP).

Six workgroups are actively focused on the following topics: Education, Workforce and Economic Development; Development Patterns; Environmental Natural Resources and Agriculture; Climate Resilience; Community Assets and Agriculture and Inclusive Regional Leadership.

Seven50 is mapping the strategy for the best quality of life for residents of Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties (all who make up the SFRP).

Announcements:

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC 59th Annual Installation
Gala

Where: Jungle Island 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail, Miami,

FL

When: Saturday, February 9, 2013

STATE / LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

January 28- February 1, 2013

*The weekly report comprises a variety of media sources, including news articles, lobbyist reports and information gathered through the OIA.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Medicaid

Please see the attached PDF to view the Governor's proposed budget conforming bill on County Medicaid Contributions. The bill moves away from review of each individual Medicaid billing by the state and counties, and moves to a formula-based system.

The formula allocates to Miami-Dade County for state fiscal year 2013-14 almost \$53 million in Medicaid costs or just over 19% of the total statewide county Medicaid contributions of \$278.4 million. The bill adds an additional \$20 million to county contributions for state fiscal year 2013-14 and it appears that this amount also will be split among counties for an additional approximately \$3.8 million for Miami-Dade in state fiscal year 2013-14 (total for Miami-Dade \$56.8 million in state fiscal year 2013-14).

For subsequent years, county Medicaid contributions would increase by 75% of the growth rate in the state's share of total Medicaid spending in the most recent calendar year compared to 2012. The bill defines state Medicaid spending as all Medicaid spending minus federal funds (which is likely to be significant given the anticipated increase in Medicaid spending among currently-eligible Medicaid populations as a result of the Affordable Care Act).

Elections

The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee will hold a workshop on elections reform and the following elections bills Tuesday, February 5, 9 a.m., in Tallahassee (no votes will be taken on the bills):

SB 80 by Joyner—Elections (reinstate 14 days of early voting, inc. Sunday before election day, 12 hours per weekday/14 hours per weekend, expand early voting sites, require early voting site for every 50,000 voters)

SB 176 by Diaz de la Portilla—Elections (expand early voting to 9 days inc. Sunday before election day, authority to extend to 14 hours per day, reporting requirements to Secretary of State)

SB 234 by Clemens—Voter Registration (automatic voter registration of eligible citizens when they sign up for driver licenses)

SJR 254 by Clemens-Amendments to the State Constitution (Limit number of const'l amendments Legislature can place on any one ballot to three)

SB 388 by Soto—Elections (reinstate 14 days of early voting inc. Sunday before election day, 8 hours per weekday, 14 hours per weekend, expand sites, early voting site for every 70,000 voters; 3rd party voter registration; change of address/regular ballot)

Here's a link to the meeting notice:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/EE/MeetingNotice/2012>

STATE ISSUES

Budget (education / manufacturing)

Governor Rick Scott Unveils 2013-2014 Florida Families First Budget

On Thursday, Governor Rick Scott unveiled his Florida Families First Budget for fiscal year 2013-2014. Governor Scott's Florida Families First Budget includes \$18.47 billion in total funding for K-12 education, an increase of \$1.25 billion over last year's budget, which also invested 1 billion in K-12 education. Governor Scott's proposed budget also supports the elimination of tax barriers on manufacturers who buy equipment, which will help build up Florida's manufacturing sector and create more jobs.

Governor Scott said, "My message is simple - everything we do in government must be focused on helping families pursue their dreams by getting a great job and accessing a quality education."

"Over the last two years, we made the tough choices to get our economy back on track. Through cost-savings efforts, we were able to cut taxes and eliminate regulations on businesses to help them succeed and create more jobs. As a result of our work over the last two years, we have created an environment where Florida's private sector was able to create thousands of jobs. We have also had the second largest drop in our unemployment rate in the nation. The Sunshine State is now among the best states in the country for our drop in our unemployment rate. Florida's economy is back on track."

"My Florida Families First 2013-2014 Recommended Budget includes an increase of \$1.25 billion, or 7.3 percent, for K-12 public schools. This increase represents per student funding of \$6,800, an increase of more than \$400, or around 6.5 percent, over the current fiscal year. State funding for K-12 education totals \$10.7 billion - the highest state funding level in history. Included in this historic total is \$480 million to support \$2,500 pay raises for Florida's K-12 classroom teachers, plus the cost of associated benefits.

"Additionally, my budget focuses on building up our state's manufacturing sector by eliminating the sales tax on manufacturers who buy equipment.

"I am proud of what we have accomplished already in the areas of jobs and education, but there is more work left to do. As long as even one Florida family is still struggling to find work or access a great education, our work is not done. This year, we will build on our successes through targeted investments that put Florida Families First."

Budget (transportation)

Included in Gov. Rick Scott's \$74.2 billion budget recommendations is a \$917 million increase in the Department of Transportation budget, an 11.22 percent increase over the current fiscal year, bringing the total transportation budget to \$9.1 billion. All of the funding would come from the State Transportation Trust Fund, not general revenue.

Most of the money goes to the transportation work program, including \$3.6 billion for highway construction, \$288 million for port improvements, \$160 million for rail projects, \$287 million for bridge construction and repair, \$766 million for land acquisition, and \$525 million for road resurfacing.

Not all facets of transportation are getting more money, however. The Florida Turnpike Enterprise's budget is cut 40 percent to \$917.3 million under Scott's proposal, with most of the money coming out of the Turnpike's highway construction budget.

Scott's office thinks the added spending will retain or create 505,000 jobs, with one-third of them connected to highway construction. A release from Scott's office asserted \$5 in economic activity results from every dollar spent on transportation.

There is also a reduction of 204 transportation positions in the budget.

Key points of Gov. Rick Scott's proposed budget

Public schools

\$2,500 increase in teacher salaries

\$100 million for digital learning programs

\$75 million for school safety

Higher education

\$118 million in new operating funding, partially restoring last year's \$300 million cut

No increase in college or university tuition

\$167 million for performance-based funding

Health care

\$29 million to offer insurance to full-time contract employees, as required by Affordable Care Act

Reduce allocation to most hospitals for Medicaid by 2 percent or \$82 million

\$80 million to create 700 new medical residency positions to address the doctor shortage

No increase in mental health or substance abuse funding

Taxes

Sales tax exemption for manufacturers' equipment

Raise corporate tax break from \$50,000 to \$75,000

Jobs

Elimination of 3,647 state jobs (3.1 percent)

Cash bonuses for high-performing state workers

No across-the-board worker pay raise for seventh year

\$279 million for various economic development programs

Environment

\$60 million for Everglades restoration

\$75 million for Florida Forever land preservation program

\$6.5 million for restoring springs, though water agencies had requested \$122 million

Energy (FPL)

On Wednesday, House Speaker Will Weatherford told reporters that he is open to revising the the 2006 law that allowed Florida Power & Light and Progress Energy of Florida to collect money for nuclear power plants before building them.

Speaker to reporters at the annual pre-session gathering for reporters and editors hosted by the Associated Press, Weatherford said he will leave it up to lawmakers on the various committees to decide whether to alter or repeal the law that has allowed the two utility companies to collect nearly \$2 billion from customers with no guarantees they will build the plants.

Reps. Mike Fasano, R-New Port Richey, and Michelle Rehwinkel Vasinlina have proposed bills over the last several legislative sessions that would repeal the law but, amid intense pressure from FPL and Progress Energy, the measures have never received a hearing.

The 2006 law is now being challenged by the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, an alliance of clean energy advocates who argue that the measure amounts to Florida taxpayers socializing the risk but privatizing the profits.

Elections

On Wednesday, legislative leaders agreed that raising ethical standards in Florida's Capitol and fixing the state's voting systems will be top priorities in the 2013 session.

Gaetz, R-Niceville, and House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, appeared together at a forum hosted by the Associated Press in preparation for the legislative session starting March 5. Gaetz praised a bill (SB 4) already fast-tracked by the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee, which would strengthen the Florida Commission on Ethics and forbid lawmakers to vote on bills affecting their personal finances.

Democratic leaders Perry Thurston in the House and Chris Smith in the Senate, both Fort Lauderdale Democrats said they will press for a return to 14 days of early voting and authorization for county elections supervisors to set up more sites for balloting. Smith said Republican lawmakers in 2011 ignored the minority party's warnings that restrictions on voting would lead to the extreme long lines and other problems at the polls last Nov. 6.

Weatherford said the length of the ballot, 11 long constitutional amendments on Nov. 6 and mechanical problems in some counties also contributed to prolonged waits for counting votes.

“Work Plan Florida”

Additionally, on Wednesday, Gaetz and Weatherford announced their priorities for their joint agenda for 2013. Three points on their 5-point "Work Plan Florida" were all about cleaning up corruption and making government transparent in Florida.

These are the Gaetz-Weatherford 2013 session priorities distributed to AP editors on Wednesday:

Ethics Reform. Holding elected officials to a higher standard by addressing a number of reported ethical concerns, including strengthening abstention and disclosure requirements for conflicts of interest and making the process surrounding financial disclosure more transparent and accountable.

Campaign Finance Reform. Increasing accountability in Florida's election system by ensuring more dollars are spent to directly influence elections, and increasing transparency through more frequent campaign finance reporting.

Pension Reform. Ensuring long-term fiscal predictability for Florida taxpayers and retirees. Increasing transparency by standardizing accounting standards and recording requirements across local public sector plans.

Gaetz and Weatherford's other top priorities, in their words, are these:

Higher Education Reform. Initiating high-quality, affordable options that will keep Florida's higher education system responsive to the realities of a post-recession digital economy through an expansion of online higher education and continued incentive support for college and university programs that produce high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations.

Elections Review. Comprehensively reviewing Florida's election law to provide local elections supervisors the flexibility needed to reduce wait times and ensure accurate and timely counting and reporting.

Other news:

House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, was named to the 19-member Republican Legislative Campaign Committee executive committee, a release from the Republican State Leadership Committee announced Thursday.

The 11-year-old RLCC's purpose is to elect more Republicans to state legislatures. It "focuses on increasing the number of Republican-held state legislative chambers across the country by targeting national resources on key legislative races," according to the release.

The RSLC raised \$39 million in the 2011-2012 political cycle, and spent \$27 million in 42 states.

Here is the full list of RLCC executive committee members:

Chairman: Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger, North Carolina

Vice Chairman: Speaker Sam Smith, Pennsylvania

Senate President Pro Tem Michael Lamoureux, Arkansas

Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, California

Senate Republican Leader Bill Cadman, Colorado

Speaker Will Weatherford, Florida

House Republican Leader Tom Cross, Illinois

Speaker Brian Bosma, Indiana

Speaker Kraig Paulsen, Iowa

Speaker Jase Bolger, Michigan

Speaker Tim Jones, Missouri

Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, New Jersey

Speaker T.W. Shannon, Oklahoma

Speaker Beth Harwell, Tennessee

Speaker Joe Straus, Texas

Speaker Becky Lockhart, Utah

Speaker Bill Howell, Virginia

House Republican Leader Rich DeBolt, Washington

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, Wisconsin

Medicaid Expansion Legislative Forum

On Monday, the United Way of Miami-Dade County hosted a Medicaid Expansion Legislative Forum to address the potential impacts of expanding Medicaid in Florida. The forum included legislators, community leaders and stakeholders from the public and private sectors. The panel included Miami-Dade Delegation members Senator Rudy Garcia and Representative Eddy Gonzalez, as well as, Jeff Bartell, Chair of the United Way Public Policy Committee; Steven Marcus, Ed.D, President & CEO Health Foundation of South Florida; Jack Hoadley, Ph.D, Senior researcher Georgetown Health Policy Institute and Sector Representatives. The forum encouraged questions, concerns and information from those in attendance. The goal is for Florida to make the

most informed and responsible decision for its residents. Other participants included Representatives Erik Fresen, Jose J. Rodriguez, and David Richardson, who were joined by Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioner Juan Carlos Zapata.

2013 Session Dates

February Week	4,	2013	Interim	Committee
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February 11, 2013 Interim Committee Week

February 18, 2013 Interim Committee Week

March 1, 2013 House Bills must be in final draft form

March 5, 2013 Regular Session convenes

Announcements:

The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce will hold its Tallahassee Fly-In on Tuesday, February 12- Wednesday, February 13, 2013. For more information please click the link:

<http://www.miamichamber.com/cwt/External/WCPages/WCEvents/EventDetail.aspx?EventID=3244>

Miami-Dade County Days will celebrate its 25th Anniversary as it holds its Fly-In on Wednesday, April 3 – Thursday, April 4, 2013.

For more information, please click the link: <http://dadedays.com/>

LOCAL NEWS

Miami Beach

On Thursday, the Miami Beach City Commission narrowed the number of candidates vying to become the city's next manager. Three locals made the list: Monica Cepero, Jimmy Morales and Frank Rollason.

Cepero is currently an assistant to the county administrator in nearby Broward, and also worked in Tallahassee as a policy coordinator for the governor from 2000 - 2007.

Morales is the current city attorney of Doral and a former Miami-Dade County commissioner who unsuccessfully ran for county mayor in 2004.

Rollason served as interim city manager and later assistant city manager in Miami, and more recently as the executive director of that city's Omni redevelopment agency.

Miami Beach, a city of 90,000, has been without a city manager since July, when former city manager Jorge Gonzalez was forced out amid a slew of public corruption investigations, though he was never implicated, and he reported some of the problems to authorities himself.

The commission will reconvene before 30 days to make a final selection.

Hialeah

A Hialeah employee of sixteen years was accused of stealing more than \$10,000 in water and sewer payments to the city.

Hialeah police arrested Ivis Valdes on Wednesday, charging her with grand theft.

Although customers were getting the services they paid for, the city never received payments, according to an arrest document. Valdes, 46, has returned \$5,200 of the stolen money so far, police said.

She most recently worked as a supervisor in the customer service section of the Hialeah Water and Sewer Department.

Valdes, who faces a court hearing on March 1, is suspended without pay while the investigation continues

Opa-locka

During the State-of-the-City address, Mayor Myra Taylor emphasized that Opa-locka is changing and her goal is to let people know.

Taylor encouraged residents “to be strong and courageous,” a biblical quote from Joshua 1:9. And, even though the city has been fighting a reputation for having a corrupt police force and chronic problems with street drugs, Taylor said the police have actually cleaned up several areas.

“We had a thriving pharmaceutical business down in the Triangle until Police Chief Cheryl Cason and her forces broke that up,” said Taylor. Now, the infamous Triangle is “being transformed into a beautiful renaissance called Magnolia North.”

Taylor also said the police department confiscated 23 marijuana plants in 2012, held its most successful gun buy-back in history, and increased the number of officers on staff.

Taylor highlighted the Public Works Department and three pump stations completed to improve sewer service, the opening of Sherbondy Village, a multi-million dollar project that had been on hold for more than a year, and major repairs to roads, sidewalks and storm drainage.

The Mayor’s Beautification Initiative was implemented in 2012 as well. As a result, for the first time, Opa-locka lit up 25 Christmas trees for the holiday season.

In addition to trees and lights, residents will soon get a “monumental gateway,” an electronic billboard at the entrance to the community at Northwest 27th Avenue and Opa-locka Boulevard. The marquee will be interactive and include a waterfall. Furthermore, the mayor announced several projects underway for 2013, including four developments: the Georgia Ayers residential housing project, a 72-unit “green” development located within the Nile Gardens community that includes a police substation; Presidente supermarket, the first grocery store chain in Opa-locka since the 1970s; the reconstruction of the two-story Helen Miller Center; and a \$19 million affordable apartment complex for senior citizens.

“It is the largest development in our city’s history and will serve as a catalyst for the redevelopment of our downtown area,” said Taylor, who also announced the purchase of the four-story town center building the city has been using to house its offices.

“In the past we’ve had a shiny red nose but no one noticed us. Now, we are going to do some things that will make everyone see who we are. Things are already underway and people are starting to get a sense of ownership, of pride,” said Taylor. “There is as forward shift in our spirit, a pull on our imagination, and a demand on our potential.”

Lastly, during her address Taylor implemented the first Opa-locka Lifetime Achievement Award which was given to City Commissioner Timothy Holmes. He has been with the commission since 1994.

Surfside

Lynn Dannheisser, Surfside's town attorney since September 2008, vacated her position citing differences with the town's manager, Roger Carlton, and a feeling that she could no longer adequately carry out her duties.

Since her departure, the town decided that Linda Miller and Sarah Johnston will keep their jobs as Surfside's interim town attorney and interim assistant attorney, respectively, for six months.

Both were named to the interim posts during the Jan. 15 commission meeting after former Town Attorney Lynn Dannheisser vacated the position. Miller had been Dannheisser's assistant since 2008. Johnston has served as law clerk for the town the last three years.

In a special commission meeting to find a replacement for Dannheisser, the commissioners unanimously approved keeping Miller and Johnston for the short term rather than finding an immediate permanent replacement.

The commissioners all agreed that having an in-house attorney was preferable to hiring an outside firm as a permanent solution.

Commissioners decided that discussion of salary details for Miller and Johnston will be taken up during the next commission meeting on Feb. 12. Commissioners also decided to formally hire Johnston, who has been working as a contract employee.

Announcements

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC 59th Annual Installation Gala

Where: Jungle Island 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail, Miami, FL.

When: Saturday, February 9, 2013