

WEEKLY WASHINGTON MARCH 28TH – APRIL 1ST, 2011

Below is an informal overview of the Weekly Washington activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY VISITS DC

The Miami-Dade Public Housing Agency (MDPHA) was in town Monday, March 28th through Wednesday, March 30th to meet with the county's Congressional delegation to discuss the impact of HUD budget proposals on Public Housing and Section 8 Programs in Miami-Dade County. Participating in the meetings along with Executive Director of Miami-Dade's Public Housing Agency, Gregg Fortner was Alex Ballina (Public Housing Director), Crystal Coleman, (Contract Administration Director), Annette Molina (Public Information and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer), and Beatriz Cuenca-Barberio (Contractor's Section 8 Director). OIA worked with MDPHA to coordinate meetings with the Congressional Delegation, which included direct meetings with Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Frederica Wilson, and Rep. David Rivera. The Public Housing Agency also met with staff for Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz's office along with both of Florida's Senators.

3% WITHHOLDING TAX

Miami-Dade County, along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Government Withholding Relief Coalition and other member organizations sent a letter to members of the U.S. Senate strongly supporting Amendment 212 to S. 493, which would repeal a new tax withholding requirement that is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2012. The law requires that federal agencies, states, and certain local governments like Miami-Dade County withhold 3% of nearly all of their contract payments, Medicare payments, farm payments, and certain grants. Compliance with this law would impose significant financial restraints on Miami-Dade County. OIA will continue to work with the U.S. Chamber and other coalition members to repeal the withholding requirement through the legislative process.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Despite claims that an agreement is in place to fund the government beyond the April 8th deadline by Sen. Charles E. Schumer (NY) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV) house republicans insist no deal has been reached on the proposed \$30 billion in cuts. House Speaker John Boehner announced that no compromise was in place to prevent a government shutdown on April 8th when the current continuing resolution is set to expire. House Republicans passed what is largely a symbolic measure with no chance of passage in the Senate, the Government Shutdown Prevention Act. The Act would mandate that if the Senate takes no action on the H.R. 1, the bill to fund the government for the remainder of the year, the House stopgap spending measure would become law. Democrats questioned the constitutionality of the bill and some Republicans also expressed reservations about the measure as well.

FY 2012 BUDGET

On Tuesday, House Budget Chairman Paul Ryan will release the Republican FY 2012 budget, which is expected to address the highly controversial issue of entitlements. The Republican budget would impose cuts on Medicare and Medicaid. The proposed budget would institute a voucher program for Medicare, although specifics are not yet known. The cuts to the health care program used by seniors aims to save billions of dollars. Chairman Ryan also seeks to trim up to \$1 trillion from Medicaid, which would affect low-income individuals health benefits. The Republican proposal does not however address Social Security, although many within the party believe this to be a mistake. The budget is also reported to included cuts to the corporate tax rate, and a permanent extension of all the Bush-era tax cuts.

CALENDAR

Congress will be in session the next two weeks before they recess on April 15th for two weeks during the Passover and Easter holidays. This is provided the House and Senate reach an agreement on a funding bill that is set to expire on April 8th. If an agreement is not reached there will be a government shutdown until one is achieved. David Raymond, Director of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, will be in Washington, DC on April 8th for a series of meetings with key members of the county's Congressional delegation to advocate for homeless program funding. Director Raymond will also be in town to participate in the National Alliance to End Homelessness Leadership Council.