

# **TALLAHASSEE WEEKLY REPORT**

## **August 1-5, 2011**

### **Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation**

The Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation held a public hearing this week at the City of Miami commission chambers. The meeting served as an opportunity for organizations such as municipalities, schools, and community based organizations to present their legislative priorities to the members. The city of Miami, Florida International University, The Children's Trust, and the Alliance of Aging were among the organizations that presented their issues.

At this meeting, the delegation also voted on priorities for the upcoming session, which includes support for the Miami-Dade Home Rule Charter joint resolutions that were filed last session. The resolution, which provides for a ballot question amending the constitution to allow the delegation to put changes to the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter on the countywide ballot, was defeated in the Senate. A vote was never taken on the House floor. Also included as delegation priorities were: support of a senior property tax freeze, support of legislation addressing mortgage fraud, support of legislation addressing property insurance rates/equity in Miami-Dade, and restoration or maintenance of funding for Farm Share, Poison Control Center, autism research, FIU Medical School, Miami-Dade Public Schools, Jackson, and local services providers.

Due to time constraints, a second meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday August 10 at 9:30 to allow for those organizations who weren't able to present to do so. The meeting will also take place at the City of Miami commission chambers.

### **Governor's Legislative Agenda**

Governor Rick Scott announced this week that he would be rolling out his agenda for the upcoming legislative session as early as September 1. It is widely thought that immigration reform, insurance, and energy will find a place amongst the Governor's priorities.

While no details have been provided as of yet, the Governor stated he is considering recommending changes to the state's no-fault auto insurance law. He also stated that he supports an increase in the use of renewable energy, but would not go along with a proposal that would result in an increase to utility bills and would prefer a focus on the elimination of certain regulations that would help lower the cost of electric bills.

### **Medicaid**

The Florida Medical Association (FMA) became the latest stakeholder to publicly oppose the state's proposal to overhaul Medicaid. The Republican leadership in the legislature has generally worked closely with the FMA on major issues, including medical malpractice.

A resolution passed by the FMA's House of Delegates requires that a letter be sent to the federal government asking the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) not to extend an existing waiver that allows a Medicaid reform pilot in five counties to expand statewide. The resolution goes on to say ask CMS not to approve any new waiver needed to remodel Medicaid "because Florida has failed and is still failing to properly address concerns by patients, physicians, hospitals" and the federal government. It also states that there is no clear and convincing evidence that the five-year old Medicaid reform pilot in place in Broward and four counties in Northeast Florida has saved money or ensured access to quality care.

## **Governor's Staff**

Hayden Dempsey, Governor Scott's chief legal counsel and connection to the Legislature, is stepping down, effective August 12, in order to spend more time raising his daughters. Jon Costello, the Governor's legislative affairs director, will take the lead on dealing with the Legislature.

Dempsey, who was making \$140,000, worked at Greenberg Traurig prior to joining the Governor's office. He was one of the few in Tallahassee that backed Scott in the Republican primary over then-Attorney General Bill McCollum. He had also worked as legislative affairs director for Governor Jeb Bush before joining the private sector.

Dempsey's joins former chief of staff Mike Prendergrast, chief advisor Mary Ann Carter, and deputy communications director Brian Hughes in leaving the Governor's office in the last few months.

## **Office of Financial Regulation**

The Cabinet chose former State Representative Tom Grady to serve as the next commissioner of the Office of Financial Regulation. Grady replaces outgoing commissioner Thomas Cardwell, who announced in May he would be stepping down.

Grady is an attorney who served one term in the Florida House, from 2008-2010.