

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT APRIL 2ND – APRIL 6TH, 2012**

**Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:**

*THE SENATE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, GREATER MIAMI CHAMBER & MIAMI LOCAL BUSINESS LEADERS PARTICIPATE IN WHITE HOUSE FORUM**

On Tuesday, OIA participated in a forum held at the U.S. Treasury Department for Miami Business leaders hosted by the White House Business Council and Business Forward. The briefing, titled, “Investing in an Economy Built to Last,” was also attended by representatives from Miami-Dade County’s Water and Sewer Department, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Florida International University and Miami-Dade College among other local business, non-profit and faith leaders.

Nearly thirty local business leaders attended the meeting convened by senior White House officials. The purpose of the forum was to exchange ideas and networks on economic competitiveness, job creation and innovation in South Florida., and how the Obama Administration could serve as a productive partner to Miami businesses. Among the general topics of discussion: trade, increasing domestic exports, visa waiver for Brazil and China, immigration reform, clean energy policy, access to capital, workforce development and infrastructure improvement.

The meeting was organized by Business Forward, an organization aimed at increasing business sector input in federal policy-making decisions.

### **MAYOR GIMENEZ SENDS LETTER TO SECRETARY OF COMMERCE BRYSON URGING SUPPORT FOR MIAMI AIRSHOW**

On Tuesday, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez sent Secretary of Commerce John Bryson a letter following up on a recent conversation they had in Miami regarding the Miami International Aerospace Show (MIAS), which would take place at the Homestead Air Reserve Base. In the letter, Mayor Gimenez conveys to the Secretary the strong and broad support the county has secured for the show from political leadership, business and local community leaders, in addition to the Florida Congressional delegation.

The letter also details the potential economic impact that MIAS would have on the U.S. aerospace industry and the State of Florida. Miami-Dade County has set aside \$7.5 million to invest in necessary infrastructure improvements to the land adjacent to the air base. The investment, coupled with the influx of visitors to the show and vendors participating in the trade show, would help generate a multitude of jobs in the region. OIA, the Beacon Council and the Federal contract lobbyists will continue to work for federal support and approval for MIAS.

## **GLOBAL CITIES INITIATIVE – MIAMI**

On Wednesday OIA organized a meeting to connect the Global Cities Initiative (GCI is a joint venture by the Brookings Institution and JPMorganChase) strategic partnerships team with Deputy Mayor Osterholt, PortMiami Director Bill Johnson, OIA and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a forum that is scheduled to take place in Miami on Tuesday, June 19, and to begin a dialogue among key county (Mayor, BCC, PortMiami), business (GMCC/Beacon Council) and education (FIU, MDC, UM) groups that will participate in the forum and who could provide suggestions and collaboration on GCI event content and themes.

GCI seeks to build a large metro coalition and equip coalition leaders with the information, policy ideas, and local, federal and international partners necessary to build economic relationships with their international peers and operate in today's global environment. The initiative plans to co-host three major U.S. regional conferences and one international conference that will drive discussions, consensus, and action about best practices and strategies for regional economic growth in metro communities. For example, in one conference that was already held in Los Angeles, the coalition did a site visit at the L.A. Port, including a tour of the Port and roundtable discussion on exports and goods movement issues. The tour and roundtable helped bring together the regional coalition and shape the forum's message which will be advocated going forward.

### **Exports a Priority for Major Cities and the White House**

March 13, 2012 marked the second anniversary of Executive Order 13534 which created the National Export Initiative (NEI) – President Obama's goal of doubling our nation's exports by the end of 2014.

To that end, the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA) has also been working closely with Brookings and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) on a Metro Export Strategy. As President of the USCM, L.A. Mayor Villaraigosa has pushed metro coalitions to adopt export initiatives as a major priority, and it has become the signature cause of his presidency at USCM. Other groups involved in these efforts include the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Governors Association (NGA), the National Council of State Legislatures

(NCSL) and other local and state elected officials and associations in pushing the President's NEI and ITA's efforts.

## **THE 2012 GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD**

Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney won all of Tuesday's primary contests in Washington DC, Maryland and Wisconsin. The next Republican Presidential Primaries are in Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: APRIL 9TH – APRIL 13TH**

*The House will not be in session next week.*

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**WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT  
APRIL 9TH – APRIL 13TH, 2012**

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**REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION CRACKING DOWN ON TAX RETURN/ID THEFT FRAUDSTERS; TALKS HEALTH CARE REFORM AND THE BUDGET WITH MIAMI CHAMBER AND SUNNY ISLES SENIORS**

With tax day just around the corner, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz announced that she will be introducing legislation to crack down on tax refund identity theft. Miami is number one in the country for tax return fraud, and the Congresswoman's bill would strengthen penalties for the crime, while also working to make victims whole again.

On Friday, the Congresswoman spoke with the Miami Chamber of Commerce about the Affordable Care Act. The speech cited data and examples of the positive aspects of health care reform and how the new policy is saving money for many Floridians, providing more comprehensive health care coverage and helping small businesses save money and create more jobs. This conversation followed a constituent event from earlier in the week with a group of Sunny Isles Beach seniors – that conversation centered on how the Republican budget's proposed changes to Medicare could affect seniors, specifically their health care costs.

**SEN. NELSON RECEIVES LETTER FROM TRANSPORTATION SEC. LAHOOD ON MIAMI-DADE'S TIGER GRANT APPLICATION**

Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood sent Senator Bill Nelson a letter this week acknowledging that the Department had received the Senator's letter of support for Miami-Dade County's TIGER IV grant application for federal funding. The county submitted a request proposing a transit project for the Northwest 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Enhanced Bus Service. The county has applied for each of the previous three rounds of TIGER grant opportunities.

In late 2010, the county was notified that it was awarded a grant in the amount of \$22 million for PortMiami. The project was supported by all members of the South Florida Congressional delegation, and will help restore a rail line at the port that will enable cargo to be moved to an inland distribution center that will alleviate traffic congestion around the port. The PortMiami Rail Access project establishes an intermodal container

rail service to the port by making necessary rail track and bridge improvements and constructing an intermodal center at the rail yard. These federal grants are awarded on a (highly) competitive basis to projects that improve national, regional or metropolitan transportation facilities, reduce greenhouse-gas emissions or increase energy efficiency. OIA will continue to advocate, along with the Federal contract lobbyists and the County's Congressional delegation, to help secure a grant under this round of TIGER awards.

The previous three rounds of the TIGER program provided \$2.6 billion to 172 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Demand for the program has been overwhelming, and during the previous three rounds, the Department of Transportation received more than 3,348 applications requesting more than \$95 billion for transportation projects across the country.

## **BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT ROUSSEFF VISITS WASHINGTON**

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff visited Washington this week and met with President Obama. Both Presidents issued the following joint statement:

*"At the invitation of President Barack Obama, President Dilma Rousseff made an official visit to the United States on April 9, 2012 to discuss their countries' ongoing relationship on a broad range of bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues. The Leaders expressed satisfaction with the constructive and balanced partnership, based on the shared values and mutual trust that exist between their countries, the two largest democracies and economies in the Americas.*

*"To form a U.S.-Brazil Partnership for the 21st Century, the Leaders reviewed the progress of major dialogues elevated to the Presidential-level in March 2011 – the Economic and Financial Dialogue, the Global Partnership Dialogue, and the Strategic Energy Dialogue. To contribute to the 21st Century Partnership, the Presidents directed a new Defense Cooperation Dialogue between their two Defense Ministers that will also report regularly to the Presidents. They praised the work and acknowledged the importance of numerous other interactions and consultations between their two governments in enhancing bilateral cooperation.*

*"The Presidents reviewed the implementation of measures that facilitate the flow of tourists and business executives between the two countries. They committed to work closely together to satisfy the requirements of the of the US Visa Waiver Program and Brazil's applicable legislation to enable US and Brazilian citizens visa free travel. They discussed the "Global Entry" pilot-program and praised the efforts of both governments to facilitate travel, to the benefit of their respective citizens. President Obama recalled his directive to accelerate the U.S. ability to process visas by 40 percent in Brazil this year as well as the Department of State's recent announcement of its intent to open new consulates in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre."*

***Additionally, the White House issued the following fact sheet detailing United States and Brazil Facilitating Travel and Exchange:***

In a testament to the growing strength of the U.S.-Brazil partnership, a record number of Brazilians visited the United States last year. Brazil now ranks as the fourth largest source of overseas visitors with 1.5 million visits to the United States in 2011 – a 26 percent increase from 2010. Brazilian visitors bring their talents, culture, and ideas with them, and both nations benefit from these exchanges. This is why the Department of State is taking action to expand the already extensive ties between our nations.

Visa issuances to Brazilians tripled between 2006 and 2011, and are on pace for significant gains in 2012. As of February, visa processing was up 57 percent in 2012 from the same timeframe in 2011. The Department of Commerce forecasts that 2.8 million Brazilians will travel to the United States in 2016, an increase of 87 percent from 2011. Visa interview wait times have dropped dramatically in Brazil, and now average just two weeks or less in Brasilia, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro, and 35 days or less in Sao Paulo. The Department of State will continue to welcome Brazilian visitors by:

**Opening New Consulates in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre**

To increase visa processing capacity, the United States is establishing consulates in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre, important economic and cultural centers for the states of Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul. These consulates will facilitate travel and trade to support job and economic growth in both the United States and Brazil, and will further expand the breadth and depth of the U.S.-Brazil relationship.

**Improving Facilities**

The Department of State is investing approximately \$40 million in 2012 on existing facilities – adding interview windows, expanding office space, and improving waiting areas – all with the goal of improving service to Brazilian visa applicants.

**Increasing Consular Staffing**

To address immediate growth in demand, the Department of State is sending dozens of consular officers from all over the world to Brazilian posts to adjudicate visa applications. Between August and December 2011, we sent 82 temporary duty officers to Brazil, who issued more than 135,000 visas to Brazilian travelers. The Department of State is doubling the number of diplomats performing consular work in Brazil over the next year, to ensure that the United States can continue to offer timely visa services to qualified Brazilian applicants.

**Streamlining the Visa Process**

The Department of State is implementing a pilot program in which consular officers may waive in-person interviews for certain qualified individuals, such as those renewing their visas within 48 months of the expiration of their previous visas, and Brazilians below the age of 16 and age 66 and older. Because

security is paramount, consular officers may interview any visa applicant in any category. Nonetheless, this program will benefit thousands of Brazilians who want to visit the United States.

In response to President Rousseff's trip, Senator Marco Rubio issued the following statement:

*"Brazil is an indispensable trade partner and American ally. As Brazil continues its rise as a global power, President Rousseff's visit is a reminder that the U.S. must continue strengthening our economic relationship, boost cooperation on security and energy issues, and also encourage them to use their platform to be a voice for human rights in Latin America and worldwide."*

*"Of all the issues of mutual interest to the U.S. and Brazil, one that already has broad bipartisan support and should move forward immediately is the JOLT Act. The JOLT Act would boost tourism to the U.S., particularly by Brazilians visiting Florida, by reforming a burdensome visa process that has become a roadblock to economic growth."*

*"President Obama and Congress should build on the recent bipartisan momentum following approval of the JOBS Act to move forward with the JOLT Act and help bring more foreign tourist dollars to Florida and the U.S."*

## **REP. ROS-LEHTINEN SENDS PRESIDENT OBAMA A LETTER PRIOR TO PRESIDENT ROUSSEFF'S ARRIVAL**

Late last week, prior to the Brazilian President's arrival, Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, sent the President a letter urging him to discuss several policies of the Brazilian government which run counter to U.S. interests. Here is the statement released by the Congresswoman last Thursday evening:

*"As Brazil continues to emerge as a global power, it is important that its actions and policies reflect those of a responsible nation. I am concerned about a number of foreign policy stances by Brazil which run counter to U.S. interests and the interests of global security and human rights, and aid repressors and extremists."*

*"It is disappointing that Brazil has not shown leadership in standing up for basic rights for the Cuban people, and instead is expanding business with the Castro regime. Similarly, rather than standing with Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East, Brazil has backed unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state, which threatens any chance at true peace between Israel and the Palestinians."*

*"Further, Brazil's unwillingness to harshly penalize the Iranian and Syrian regimes for their dangerous policies and human rights abuses is deeply disappointing."*

*"I urge President Obama to raise these issues when he meets with President Rousseff next week, and hope that Brazil revisits these policies."*

## **SEN. RUBIO VISITS COLOMBIA**

Senator Marco Rubio, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, traveled to Cartagena, Colombia for this weekend's Summit of the Americas. The Summit is an opportunity for the Senator to discuss the importance of democracy and trade with leaders from around the region, and help strengthen America's relationships in this important part of the world. The President also attended the Summit to meet with the Central and South American heads of state.

## **U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS CIRCULATE LETTER URGING BACKPAGE.COM TO TAKE ACTION AND STOP ADS FOR SEX TRAFFICKING OF MINORS IN CITIES**

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) circulated a letter this week urging that concrete steps be taken to prevent the use of Backpage.com for underage sex trafficking. Specifically, the letter would ask Village Voice Media, the company that administers Backpage.com, to require an in-person verification of any prospective escort advertiser's ID, as well as proof of identity and age for anyone pictured in an escort advertisement. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has identified the state of Florida as the third largest trafficking hub in the country.

Eradicating sex trafficking has been a major priority issue for the Miami-Dade Police and Aviation departments, as well as a major policy focus for the Board of County Commissioners and the County's congressional delegation. Indeed, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz has been a staunch advocate of tougher laws to prevent and break up sex trafficking rings in South Florida and has worked tirelessly to stop human trafficking through the County's seaport and airport. Senator Marco Rubio has made the issue one of his top priorities in the Senate.

To raise awareness of the issue, Commissioner Diaz has been a partner with the non-profit organization Kristi House and sponsored a resolution that was co-sponsored by Vice Chairwoman Audrey M. Edmonson and Commissioner Esteban Bovo, Jr. The resolution advocated for legislation that would to train county personnel at both MIA and PortMiami to help children in transit who are being sexually exploited, in addition to calling on state lawmakers to follow suit with a newly enacted Georgia law that imposes a 25-year minimum prison sentence for using coercion to traffic someone under the age of 18.

Last month, the Florida Legislature passed companion bills HB 7049 and SB 80 providing for harsher penalties for those convicted of human and sex trafficking, while MIA and PortMiami provided special training to county employees so they could learn how to identify and respond to suspected victims of sex trafficking and their captors. And, MDPD recently applied for federal grant funding through the Human Trafficking Grant program administered through the U.S. Department of Justice.



Last month, both Florida Senators Nelson and Rubio joined a bi-partisan group of Senators in calling on Backpage.com to stop promoting and profiting from human trafficking by shutting down its adult services section on the website.

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

Ilana Preuss, Vice President of Smart Growth America, joined Climate Communities this week for a discussion titled “Facing the Sustainability Critics - Tools for Local Government Officials” which covered how local government officials can successfully promote the value of their community sustainability initiatives and refute unfounded criticisms. Ms. Preuss provided an overview of the types of sustainability attacks occurring at the local and state levels, and shared specific examples of how cities and counties have dealt with these incidents. Ms. Preuss also described effective communication strategies for dealing with sustainability critics, whether at public meetings, online or through the media.

According to Climate Communities, “Over the past few years, a number of localities across the United States have endured organized attacks on their local sustainability initiatives. These orchestrated assaults have linked city and county efforts to reduce energy use, curb greenhouse gas emissions, plan smarter communities, expand public transportation, and protect natural resources with bizarre United Nations-led conspiracy theories.” The webinar cited a February 4, 2012 New York Times article - Activists Fight Green Projects, Seeing U.N. Plot – described, extremists are “showing up at planning meetings to denounce bike lanes on public streets and smart meters on home appliances — efforts they equate to a big-government blueprint against individual rights.”

## **GLOBAL CITIES INITIATIVE – MIAMI**

OIA organized a meeting on Wednesday April 4, 2012 to connect the Global Cities Initiative (GCI is a joint venture by the Brookings Institution and JPMorganChase) strategic partnerships team with the Office of the Mayor, the Board of County Commissioners, PortMiami, Miami Dade Aviation Department, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the County’s institutions of higher education.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a forum that is scheduled to take place in Miami on Tuesday, June 19, and to begin a dialogue among key county (Mayor, BCC, PortMiami), business (GMCC/Beacon Council) and education (FIU, MDC, UM) groups that will participate in the forum and who could provide suggestions and collaboration on GCI event content and themes.

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best practices and strategies for regional economic growth in metro communities. For example, in one conference that was already held in Los Angeles, the coalition did a site visit at the L.A. Port, including a tour of the Port and roundtable discussion on exports and goods movement issues. The tour and roundtable helped bring together the regional coalition and shape the forum's message which will be advocated going forward.

### Exports a Priority for Major Cities and the White House

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## **THE 2012 GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD**

This week former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum suspended his campaign for the Republican nomination for President. This gives former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney a path to securing the nomination, although former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Congressman Ron Paul are both still officially in the race, their ability to garner enough delegates is virtually impossible mathematically.

## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: APRIL 16TH – APRIL 20TH**

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## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT APRIL 16TH – APRIL 20TH, 2012**

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### **SENATOR NELSON SUBMITS REPORT LANGUAGE SUPPORTING MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AEROSPACE SHOW**

This week, Sen. Bill Nelson urged the Senate Appropriations Committee to include report language in the Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations bill. The language would encourage DoD to examine job-creating partnerships between local and state governments and DoD facilities, which would include Miami-Dade County and the Beacon Council's ongoing efforts to host the Miami International Aerospace Show (MIAS) at Homestead Air Reserve Base.

Sen. Nelson submitted the following language:

#### **Local and State Partnerships**

I respectfully urge the inclusion of report language that would encourage DoD to develop a pilot program for partnering with State and Local governments for the use of DoD facilities in capacities that would benefit local job creation, without the use of Federal dollars.

We must take every step to help spur job creation and get our economy back on track. Many DoD facilities lie at the heart of their communities and already host a wide variety of public affairs events. Such open houses give DoD to the opportunity to demonstrate our fine men and women in uniform, their capabilities, and equipment. This language would give DoD the ability to expand opportunities. In addition, these expanded public affairs activities can serve as a catalyst for economic recovery in many military communities without compromising or disrupting the vital military missions at these facilities.

*"The Committee encourages the Secretary of Defense to develop a pilot program, in conjunction with the Services, for cooperative agreements for conditional use of certain multi-use installations by State and Local governments for public affairs activities that also benefit local job creation, including commercial activities that promote American technology, and are not unreasonably burdensome to accomplishing the inherent mission of the facility."*

Additionally, in March, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen also urged for the inclusion of report language that would encourage the Department of Defense (DoD) to develop a pilot program for partnering with State and Local governments for use of DoD facilities in capacities that would benefit local job creation, without use of Federal dollars. This language would also directly impact the ability for the county host the MIAS. The Congresswoman asked that the following be included in FY13 Defense Appropriations bill:

*“The Committee encourages the Secretary of Defense to develop a pilot program, in conjunction with the Services, for cooperative agreements for conditional and use of certain multi-use installations by State and Local governments for public affairs activities that also benefit local job creation, including commercial activities that promote American technology, and are not unreasonably burdensome to accomplishing the inherent mission of the facility.”*

## **HOUSE PASSES SMALL BUSINESS TAX-CUT LEGISLATION**

On Thursday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 9, the Small Business Tax Cut Act of 2012, which provides all small businesses with a 20 percent tax deduction.

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart released the following statement after the bill passed:

*“While small businesses continue to struggle, President Obama continues to insist on job-killing policies like tax hikes and burdensome regulations. We must focus on creating an environment that promotes economic security and opportunity for our nation’s job creators; we do not need tax gimmicks that punish small businesses. My home state of Florida has been hit especially hard with double-digit unemployment rates, and this tax relief is a step in the right direction to encourage job creators to expand and hire.”*

Congresswoman Frederica Wilson, who voted against the bill, offered this statement following the bill’s passage:

*“The House Republicans’ so-called small business tax cut does nothing to address the number one concern of small business owners – the lack of business. If the Republicans really wanted to help small businesses, they would focus on creating good-paying jobs for teachers, first responders, construction workers and skilled tradesmen, putting more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans. Another Republican bill giving the largest tax breaks to law firm partners and consultants is not the answer. This proposal is a \$46 billion gift to Americans who don’t need it, and will lead to delays in investment and hiring. I urge my Republican colleagues to reverse course and focus on building an American Dream that is available to all people.”*

## **HHS SECRETARY HOLDS HEALTH CARE EVENT IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY; VICE-CHAIRWOMAN EDMONSON PARTICIPATES**

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius following a two-day trip to Haiti, visited the women's health, pediatric and dental services at the Borinquen Medical Centers of Miami-Dade clinic. Located near Little Haiti, the clinic hosted the Secretary where she discussed health issues related to the island nation as well as the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Vice Chairwomen Audrey Edmonson and Commissioner Jean Monestime were both invited to attend the event. The Vice Chairwoman, who has worked on behalf of the Haitian community, especially following the earthquake, attended the event on Wednesday.

## **NACo LARGE URBAN COUNTY CAUCUS (LUCC) WASHINGTON D.C. EVENTS (SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND LIST OF PARTICIPANTS ATTACHED)**

Quick on the heels of last month's annual Legislative Conference at the Washington Hilton, the National Association of Counties (NACo) held its annual Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) meeting in Washington D.C. this past week. In attendance was Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman. The LUCC "fly-in" included meetings with NACo policy experts, meetings on Capitol Hill, a trip to the White House, and other events listed on the attached agenda.

## **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BILL**

Congress returned this week from a two week recess. Just before leaving town, it passed a bill to extend the old surface transportation reauthorization (highway bill) for 90 days. The old bill (SAFETEA-LU) was set to expire on March 31. Previously, the Senate had passed its version of the new bill. The Senate bill runs through the end of Fiscal Year 2013 and totals \$109 billion. The House has yet to pass its version of the bill.

As Congress was leaving town for recess, the House leadership said it needed the 90 day extension to give the House time pass its own version of the highway bill. Over the recess the leadership conferred with many members of the House Republican Caucus. The goal was to find a way to get enough Republican support to pass a five year, \$260 billion bill. The bill includes provisions to allow oil and gas drilling in Alaska and off the US coasts. All the Democrats oppose these provisions. This means that the House Republican leadership had to get all the 217 votes it needed for passage from the Republican side.

Apparently, the Republican leadership did not succeed. As this week started, they announced that the House will consider a bill that would extend the existing law until

September 30. The new bill would also include a provision approving the Keystone pipeline.

If the bill passes, it is the intention of the House leadership to go to conference with the Senate. The Senate would base its positions in conference on the bill the Senate passed. Technically the House position would be limited to the provisions of the bill it passes, but the House Republicans say that the House will actually try to base its negotiating starting point from the provisions on the big House bill that did not pass.

There are many problems with this strategy. First, there is no guarantee that the House Republicans will pass the small bill. Second, there is no guarantee that the Senate will be willing to negotiate between the House and Senate bill when the House bill has not passed. Third, at the start of the Congress the House enacted rules to prevent new provisions being added to bills in conference. They were highly critical of so-called "air dropped" provisions -- when a provision appeared for the first time in conference. Obviously this strategy violates those rules.

On the other hand, despite the problems, this may be the only way a bill gets done this year. Having said that, if the bill does go to conference, the final version will look more like the Senate version than the House version.

*(Compiled in part by Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

## **WHITE HOUSE ISSUES STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY OPPOSING THE HOUSE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT**

The White House Statement of Administration policy stated the President would veto the bill.

*The statement says, "The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 4348. The Administration is committed to working on a bipartisan basis on a comprehensive surface transportation reauthorization bill. The reauthorization of the programs funded by the Highway Trust Fund is critical to the safety of the traveling public and the Nation's ability to facilitate commerce and trade. Since the expiration of the last multi-year authorization bill in 2009, surface transportation and highway safety programs have operated under a series of short-term extensions, varying from one to nine months. By simply extending current authority through the end of the fiscal year, this legislation would miss a critical opportunity to provide more certainty to States and localities as they undertake the long-term planning and execution of projects and programs that are essential to creating and keeping American workers in good paying jobs, improving the Nation's surface transportation infrastructure, and ensuring roadway safety.*

*"Further, the Administration is strongly opposed to this bill because it seeks to circumvent a longstanding and proven process for determining whether cross-border pipelines are in the national interest and for assessing the environmental*

*impacts by mandating the permitting of the Keystone XL pipeline project, despite the fact that the pipeline route has yet to be identified and there is no complete assessment of its potential impacts, including impacts on health and safety, the economy, foreign policy, energy security, and the environment.*

*"The Administration continues to support dedicating a significant amount of the Clean Water Act civil penalties resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill for Gulf Coast recovery in a manner that best serves the people and environment of the Gulf Coast. The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to achieve this goal.*

*"Because this bill circumvents a longstanding and proven process for determining whether cross-border pipelines are in the national interest by mandating the permitting of the Keystone XL pipeline before a new route has been submitted and assessed, the President's senior advisors would recommend that he veto this legislation."*

## **APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE**

Congress returned this week from a two week recess and immediately started working on the Fiscal Year 2013 appropriations bills.

By way of a brief background, there are 12 appropriations bills Congress must pass each year that taken together make up the federal budget. Another thing to keep in mind this year is that the Senate has a budget ceiling of \$1.047 trillion for all discretionary spending while the House has a ceiling of \$1.028 trillion -- a \$19 billion difference. This means that there will be significant differences between the House and Senate versions of the appropriations bills and they will probably not get done until after the new fiscal year starts and after the election. What this means, in turn, is that the bills being marked up will change before the process is done. Many of the programs that are underfunded in the House bills will get more money later. Other programs that are fully funded by the Senate may be cut later.

However, both sides want to get the process started. This week the Senate marked up the Commerce, Justice, Science bill. That bill funds the Departments of Commerce and Justice, along with the science agencies like NASA and the National Science Foundation. The Senate will also mark up the bill that funds the Department of Transportation and HUD. These mark ups will occur in their respective subcommittees. The mark up of both bills in the full Senate Appropriations Committee will happen next week.

The House will also mark up the Commerce, Justice, Science bill. It will also mark up the bill that funds the Department of Energy and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Energy and Water). As in the Senate, the markups will occur in the subcommittees. The mark ups in the full House Appropriations Committee will happen later.

*(Compiled in part by Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

## **SENATE APPROPRIATIONS MARKS UP TRANSPORTATION-HUD & CJS FEDERAL FUNDING BILLS**

Tuesday afternoon the Senate Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee also marked up its version of the FY2013 THUD bill. The draft bill includes \$53.4 billion in budget authority, which is \$3.9 billion less than last year. The Subcommittee released the attached summary of the mark. The bill and report will be available after the full Appropriations Committee mark up. The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution sponsored by Commissioner Dennis Moss urging the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to reconsider the proposed funding reductions for the 2012 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME). OIA and the federal lobbyists, as well as the county's Congressional delegation, have been working to ensure funding for these programs remains at its current levels. We have highlighted below some programs of interest to the County in the draft mark:

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** \$3.1 billion is provided for CDBG grant funding for States and communities across the Nation. This is \$152 million above the fiscal year 2012 enacted level.

**HOME Investment Partnership:** \$1 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership program, which is equal to the fiscal year 2012 enacted level. This funding supports the creation and rehabilitation of low-income housing across the country. The bill also includes reforms to ensure that funds are used in a timely fashion for worthy projects.

**Section 8 Tenant-based rental assistance:** \$19.4 billion for housing choice vouchers. This level of funding is \$482 million above the fiscal year 2012 enacted level.

**Public Housing:** \$1.99 billion for the public housing capital fund, an increase of \$110 million above the fiscal year 2012 enacted level. This funding will help maintain public housing. The bill also includes \$4.6 billion for the public housing operating fund, which is \$629 million above the fiscal year 2012 enacted level. The fiscal year 2012 bill required public housing authorities to use their reserves to fund operations. Since these reserves have been used, the increase provided is necessary to maintain current operations.

**Project-based rental assistance:** \$9.8 billion for the project-based section 8 program, including over \$9.6 billion for the renewal of all project-based contracts for a full 12 months. This level of funding is \$536 million above the fiscal year 2012 enacted level.



**TIGER Grants:** \$500 million for grants to support significant transportation projects in a wide variety of modes, including highways and bridges, public transportation, passenger and freight railroads, and port infrastructure. The bill requires the Secretary to allocate no less than \$120 million for projects in rural communities. The funding level included in the bill is equal to the fiscal year 2012 enacted level.

Also, Tuesday the Senate Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittee approved its draft FY2013 CJS bill. The bill provides a total of \$51.9 billion in discretionary budget authority, which is a \$1 billion less than last year. The Commerce Department takes the bulk of the cuts with a \$1.5 billion reduction, while the Justice Department gets a \$458 million increase.

Attached is a summary of the mark released by the CJS Subcommittee. The bill language and report will be released after the full Appropriations Committee mark up. Below are the highlights of the Justice Department State and Local Law Enforcement account. The bill includes \$248 million for COPS grants as well as \$1 billion for State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance programs, which includes Byrne JAG and SCAAP, which are priorities for the County.

**State and Local Law Enforcement Activities** – The bill provides \$2.2 billion, \$26.1 million below the fiscal year 2012 enacted level, for grants to aid local and state law enforcement and crime victims. Specifically, the bill provides:

\$1 billion for **State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance**, which includes Byrne formula grants, State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) funding, bulletproof vest grants, and DNA analysis grants;

\$248 million for **Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)** grants, including \$215 million to hire or retain roughly 1,700 police on the beat;

\$126 million for **research and evaluation** initiatives on prevention and intervention practices, which include regional information sharing activities;

\$225 million to **prevent, investigate and prosecute crimes against children**;

\$278 million for **juvenile justice and delinquency prevention**; and

\$413 million for **domestic violence and sexual assault grants**.

*(Compiled in part by Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

**CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON TESTIFIES AT SENATE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON RACIAL PROFILING**

On Tuesday, Rep. Frederica Wilson testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights hearing titled “Ending Racial Profiling in America.” Senate Democratic Whip Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), the chairman of the subcommittee, presided.

## **CONGRESSWOMAN WASSERMAN SCHULTZ TO HOLD SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP ON SATURDAY**

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz is hosting her third annual free small business workshop on Saturday, April 21 from 9a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Broward County Convention Center. Federal, state and local partners will be on hand to provide marketing, management and financial guidance during a series of seminars.

During the workshop, Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration Marie Johns will give the keynote speech. The Department of Commerce will honor Marcy and Vince Colangelo with the Export Achievement Award. The Colangelos attended Rep. Wasserman Schultz’s small business workshop in 2010, and after attending the exporting break-out session, they were able to grow their business substantially.

Registration is from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. Rep. Wasserman Schultz will speak at 10 a.m., and will be available afterward for interviews. Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration Marie Johns will give the keynote speech shortly after Rep. Wasserman Schultz speaks and will also be available for interviews.

Attendees are encouraged to pre-register at <http://wassermanschultz.house.gov/smallbizevent>.

## **VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN TOURING THE EVERGLADES ON MONDAY**

On Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Vice President Joe Biden will travel to the Everglades in Miami-Dade County, Florida. After touring part of Everglades National Park, the Vice President will deliver remarks on the Administration’s efforts to restore the Everglades at 12:30 PM, at the Pump Station 3A/S-334, Tamiami Trail/8<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Miami-Dade County, Florida.

In a statement from the White House’s Press Office:

“Over the past three years, the Administration has made restoration of the iconic Everglades a top environmental priority by significantly increasing federal funding and breaking ground on several key projects. These efforts remain vital to the state of Florida, as the Everglades are the primary source of drinking water for more than 7 million Floridians and their natural beauty makes them a critically important part of the state’s tourism industry.

## **FIU HEAD FOOTBALL COACH VISITS WASHINGTON D.C.**

FIU and Miami-Dade County have worked together in recent months on joint efforts to secure TIGER grant funding as well as on Department of Justice drug trafficking issues and on emergency management issues among many others. This week was no exception as Mario Cristobal, head football coach of Florida International University's Golden Panthers was in Washington, D.C. this week. During his time in Washington, Coach Cristobal generously took some time out of his busy schedule to stop by the Miami-Dade County Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.



## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

Thursday's Climate Communities webinar was joined by Elizabeth Bellis, an attorney who directs the Energy Programs Consortium's QECB Program and titled "Bonds for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Projects," discussed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's allocation of a \$3.2 billion in bond volume for the Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (QECB). Climate Communities says that, "QECBs are debt instruments that states, local governments and tribes can issue at extremely low rates to fund energy conservation projects, including energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy installations, green community programs, and public education campaigns. Each state received a QECB allocation proportionate to its population, which was subsequently sub-allocated to their largest local governments (cities and counties of 100,000 population or more). While a number of localities have successfully used QECBs, much of the \$3.2 billion allocation remains unissued. In most states, cities and counties interested in funding energy projects with QECBs can still tap into unused allocations."

## **GLOBAL CITIES INITIATIVE – MIAMI**

On Friday, OIA met with representatives from JPMorgan Chase to discuss the upcoming Global Cities Initiative (GCI is a joint venture by the Brookings Institution and JPMorganChase) to take place in Miami. This follows a meeting OIA organized earlier this month to connect GCI's strategic partnerships team with the Office of the Mayor, the Board of County Commissioners, PortMiami, Miami Dade Aviation Department, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the County's institutions of higher education.

GCI seeks to build a large metro coalition and equip coalition leaders with the information, policy ideas, and local, federal and international partners necessary to build economic relationships with their international peers and operate in today's global environment. The initiative plans to co-host three major U.S. regional conferences and one international conference that will drive discussions, consensus, and action about best practices and strategies for regional economic growth in metro communities. For

example, in one conference that was already held in Los Angeles, the coalition did a site visit at the L.A. Port, including a tour of the Port and roundtable discussion on exports and goods movement issues. The tour and roundtable helped bring together the regional coalition and shape the forum's message which will be advocated going forward.

### Exports a Priority for Major Cities and the White House

March 13, 2012 marked the second anniversary of Executive Order 13534 which created the National Export Initiative (NEI) – President Obama's goal of doubling our nation's exports by the end of 2014.

To that end, the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA) has also been working closely with Brookings and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) on a Metro Export Strategy. As President of the USCM, L.A. Mayor Villaraigosa has pushed metro coalitions to adopt export initiatives as a major priority, and it has become the signature cause of his presidency at USCM. Other groups involved in these efforts include the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Governors Association (NGA), the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) and other local and state elected officials and associations in pushing the President's NEI and ITA's efforts.

### **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: APRIL 23RD – APRIL 27TH**

*Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz will be in Washington next week with The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce as they conduct their annual Washington D.C. fly-in from Monday April, 23<sup>rd</sup> – Wednesday April, 25<sup>th</sup>.*

*The House will be in session next week.*

*The Senate will be in session next week.*

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT APRIL 23RD – APRIL 27TH, 2012**

**Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:**

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **COMMISSIONER DIAZ AND GREATER MIAMI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON**

This week Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz traveled to Washington for official meetings and to participate in the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) annual Washington, D.C. fly-in.

Commissioner Diaz held a series of official meetings coordinated by the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (OIA) and GMCC. The Commissioner’s meetings included visits with Capt. Brad Cooper, Executive Director of First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden’s Joining Forces Initiative, Ms. Christine Turner, who is an Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Intergovernmental Affairs & Public Engagement in the Office of United States Trade Representative Ron Kirk, Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Capt. Paul Bucha, who is the Chairman of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Veterans Reemployment Advisory Committee, and the office of Congressman Allen West.

The Commissioner also joined GMCC leaders, delegates, OIA and PortMiami staff in meeting with the Miami-Dade County Congressional Delegation, including meetings with Sens. Rubio and Nelson, and Reps. Ros-Lehtinen, Diaz-Balart, Wasserman Shultz, Wilson and Rivera. GMCC delegates also met with the staff of Gov. Rick Scott in the State of Florida’s Washington D.C. Office at the Hall of States Building on Capitol Hill.

The Commissioner also stopped by a House Foreign Relations Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Hearing held by Ft. Myers, Florida Congressman and Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Connie Mack IV and Miami-Dade County Rep. David Rivera, which examined the Administration’s budget priorities for Western Hemisphere diplomatic activities. During the hearing, Congressman Rivera directed a tough line of questioning at Assistant Secretary of State Roberta S. Jacobson regarding the Administration’s position on U.S. – Cuba relations and declining conditions in Latin America despite spending approximately \$1.8 billion dollars to facilitate increased bi-lateral relations and democratic reforms.

In each of the meetings, Commissioner Diaz and the delegation discussed issues of importance to Miami-Dade County, the Board of County Commissioners and GMCC.

Chief among the advocacy items was the Miami International Aerospace Show and how local efforts can reinforce the work being carried out by Congress and the Administration to assist unemployed and returning veterans as they transition to civilian life and re-enter the civilian workforce, in addition to addressing some of the hardships brought on by extended combat. The Commissioner also joined the delegation in advocating for the County's and GMCC legislative agenda items, which include pushing for visa-waiver status for Brazil, increased transportation infrastructure investment and the expedited reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank.

## **FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE**

### House and Senate Department of Justice and Public Safety funding bills

The **House Appropriations Committee approved the Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) FY 2013 spending bill** Thursday afternoon. There were no significant changes to the bill during the full Committee mark up. The amounts for the Justice Department programs of interest to the County remained the same:

- \$72.5 million for COPS programs (\$176 million below FY2012);
- \$370 million for Byrne JAG grants (same as FY2012);
- \$165 million for SCAAP (\$75 million below FY2012);
- \$125 million for DNA analysis grants (same as FY2012);
- \$209.5 million for Juvenile Justice Programs (\$53 million below FY2012);
- \$415 million for Violence Against Women programs (\$2.5 million above FY2012)
- \$13.5 million for Victims of Trafficking Grants (\$3 million above FY2012).

On Thursday, Committee Chairman Rogers said that the CJS bill would be the first appropriations bill to be considered on the House floor. It is supposed to be taken up on May 8th after they reconvene from the weeklong recess scheduled for next week.

Also this week the **Senate Appropriations Committee released its Commerce-Justice-Science FY 2013 spending bill** as it was approved by the Committee last week.

The **House and Senate Energy & Water Appropriations Subcommittees** also approved FY 2013 spending bills. The bills will likely be brought to a full chamber vote in May; however, it's unlikely any appropriations bills will be passed prior to the November elections. OIA and the Federal Lobbying Team will continue to monitor and report on the federal appropriations process. Contact the office for a complete list of funding items by agency and account for each appropriations bill. (*Compiled by Akerman Senterfitt & Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Teams*)

## **CHAIRMAN ROS-LEHTINEN ADMONISHES LATIN AMERICAN REGIMES THAT STIFLE FREE SPEECH AND PRESS**

*(Remarks As Prepared For Delivery - April 26, 2012)*

*“As World Press Freedom Day approaches on May 3, we are reminded of the deterioration of press freedom in our Hemisphere and increasing attacks against freedom of expression by repressive leaders in the region. For far too many journalists in Latin America, the rights that we sometimes take for granted in the United States, are but a goal – an abstract concept.*

*Right here in this Committee room, the Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee exercise those freedoms by having spirited debates on foreign policy without the fear of intimidation, imprisonment, or other reprisal. Committee hearings are broadcast over the web and sometimes televised on C-SPAN. U.S. and foreign media are able to be in the rooms and report on the proceedings without fear. However, there are regimes in our very Hemisphere that have attacked the press and it is the responsibility of every freedom advocate to bring to light these clear violations of human rights.*

*One might ask: Why would a government attack the press? Because information is power and it empowers those who struggle against these dictatorial leaders. Thanks to technological advances, the media have the power to report information in real time and distribute it quickly through the internet, smart phones, and social media sites. Tyrannical regimes attack the press so that these thugs can control and distort the information displayed to the people. With that control, they disguise their power grabs, promote government propagandas, and hide the truth from the people and the international community.”*

Contact OIA for a full copy of the release.

## **VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN TOURS EVERGLADES WITH COMMISSIONER BELL AND SOUTH FLORIDA REPS**

On Monday, Vice President Joe Biden was in South Florida to tour a portion of Everglades National Park and talk about the Administration’s plans for funding restoration projects. The Vice President was joined by Miami-Dade County Commissioner Lynda Bell as well Sen. Bill Nelson, Rep. Alcee Hastings, State Senator Nan Rich and former U.S. Senator Bob Graham.

In a statement from the White House’s Press Office:

*“Over the past three years, the Administration has made restoration of the iconic Everglades a top environmental priority by significantly increasing federal funding and breaking ground on several key projects. These efforts remain vital to the state of Florida, as the Everglades are the primary source of drinking water for more than 7 million Floridians and their natural beauty makes them a critically important part of the state’s tourism industry.*

Additionally, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement regarding the Vice President’s trip to the region:

*"I am pleased Vice President Biden is touring the Everglades today to underscore the Administration's ongoing commitment to restoring the River of Grass. Everglades restoration has been a bipartisan, state-federal partnership for more than a decade, and returning the Everglades to a more natural state will have broad positive benefits for Florida's economy and natural resources."*

*"While progress over the years has been uneven, since 2008 we've seen a dramatic increase in federal resources as well as the commencement of several major federal projects – from construction on a Tamiami Trail bridge, to improving the ecosystem at Picayune Strand and the Indian River Lagoon. It is important that Congress maintain the momentum of the last few years by fully funding the Administration's restoration priorities as laid out in the President's 2013 budget. Unfortunately, House Republicans have slashed \$7 million out of the President's restoration funding request, but I am optimistic that working together with the Senate, we can restore funding to continue our restoration efforts."*

*"Restoration of the Everglades has significant environmental and economic benefits for Florida. In addition to the seven million Floridians who rely on the Everglades for their primary source of drinking water, a study conducted for the Everglades Foundation showed that for every dollar invested in Everglades restoration, \$4 are generated in economic benefits. This means that \$11.5 billion invested in Everglades restoration would result in \$46.5 billion in gains to Florida's economy and create more than 440,000 jobs over the next 50 years, by spurring construction and tourism activity."*

*"We are fortunate to have one of the world's great wonders right here in South Florida, and restoring the Everglades serves as a reminder that we must leave this world better than we found it so that future generations can enjoy it too."*

## **DIAZ-BALART HAILS NEW IRS PILOT PROGRAM AS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart released the following statement in response to the implementation of the IRS new Law Enforcement Assistance Pilot Program, exclusively for the state of Florida. The pilot program is designed to aid law enforcement in obtaining tax returns to investigate and prosecute specific cases of identity theft. Diaz-Balart comments:

*"After numerous hearings and meetings with the IRS, during which I expressed deep concern with the astounding number of identity theft cases in South Florida, today the IRS responds with the launch of a new pilot program. The new program will help provide answers to the thousands of identity theft victims in the state of Florida, particularly in South Florida. We must ensure the security and safety of*



*hardworking taxpayers; I think this program is a step in the right direction to prevent these heinous crimes from occurring in the future.”*

Congressman Diaz-Balart testified on a panel in June 2011 held by the Oversight Committee, Subcommittee on Government Organization, Efficiency and Financial Management titled “IRS E-file and Identity Theft.” In the same month, Diaz-Balart met with IRS Commissioner, Doug Shulman to demand more effective measures to be implemented to prevent identity theft.

## **REPS. ROS-LEHTINEN AND DIAZ-BALART TESTIFY BEFORE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

On Friday, the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held a joint legislative and oversight hearing on H.R. 4094, the “Preserving Access to Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area Act,” and, “Access Denied: Turning Away Visitors to National Parks.” The hearing focused on two examples, Biscayne National Park in Florida and Cape Hatteras in North Carolina. Each of these were cited as cases of overly restrictive policies. The following statements were included in a press release issued by the committee:

“The National Park Service is pushing a new management plan at Biscayne National Park that will eliminate access to over 10,000 acres of sport fishing waters and dissuade visitation to other areas of the park despite strong objections from the surrounding community and opposition by the world renowned scientists of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Fishing, boating, diving and other recreational activities within the Park drive the local economy and support hundreds of jobs. Prohibiting these activities and restricting Park access will negatively impact the local economy, dissuade tourism and cause job loss.”

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen issued the following statement on the issue:

*“Biscayne National Park is part of the heritage of our community and is of great significance to many South Florida families. My intent is to help preserve the unique culture surrounding South Florida’s water-centered way of life, while also protecting our environment and maintaining access.”*

Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart issued the following statement:

*“No one cares more about Biscayne National Park than Floridians and those who utilize the park. Restricting access should be a last resort after all other alternatives have been exhausted. It is my hope that we can all work together on a plan that both protects the Park and remains accessible for the public to enjoy.”*

## **FEMA RELEASES PRE-DISASTER EMERGENCY DECLARATION REQUESTS POLICY**

FEMA announced it is currently reviewing and updating many policies and directives in keeping with their mission to support citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

As part this effort, FEMA is updating the *Pre-Disaster Emergency Declaration Requests Policy*. This *draft Pre-Disaster Emergency Declaration Requests Policy* will update the criteria FEMA uses to evaluate, and criteria used to provide a recommendation to the President for, a request for an Emergency declaration in advance of an incident that threatens such destruction as could result in a major disaster.

This draft policy will supersede Disaster Assistance Policy (DAP) 1001, which was published as an interim measure in July 2007. The proposed updates to DAP-1001 more precisely align with the Code of Federal Regulations and with the authority granted to FEMA by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA).

As with all emergency and major disaster declaration requests, Governors must demonstrate why the disaster immediately threatening the State is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and why federal assistance is necessary.

As per the existing policy (DAP-1001), this Policy does not obligate the President to either approve or disapprove any declaration request. Revisions to the Pre-Disaster Emergency Declaration Requests Policy will *not* affect policies related to *Major Disaster Declarations*.

OIA will continue to work with the Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management on this and other issues relating to disaster emergency. Contact OIA for a full copy of the draft document.

## **CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON RECEIVES FRIEND OF HAITI AWARD**

During Haiti's "Week of the Diaspora" ("Semaine de la Diaspora"), Congresswoman Frederica Wilson received the Friend of Haiti Award for her tireless work on behalf of the Haitian community both on the island nation and in South Florida.

"It is a humbling honor to be recognized for my work on behalf of the Haitian people, and I will continue to be there for them as they rebuild," said Congresswoman Wilson.

Mr. Daniel Supplice, the Minister of Haitians Living Abroad (MHAVE), announced that Congresswoman Wilson was selected from the many deserving candidates for the award that recognizes a foreign individual who has made a significant positive impact on the Haitian people. Throughout her life, Congresswoman Wilson has been a champion of Haitian causes. In 1982, she stood up for the fair treatment of Haitian women refugees who were incarcerated at the Krome Detention Center.

Congresswoman Wilson's tireless activism led to a change in policy and improved living conditions for women at the Krome Detention Center.

Congresswoman Wilson has traveled to Haiti numerous times, including soon after the devastating 2010 earthquake. She fought to extend and expand temporary protective status (TPS) for Haitians, led the effort to get the State Department to add Haiti to the list of now-58 countries eligible for the H-2A and H-2B nonimmigrant visa program, and introduced H. Res. 521 – a resolution to combat gender-based violence. Earlier this week, Congresswoman Wilson attended the 2012 Sustainable Haiti Investment Conference to encourage investors to consider Haiti because, as President Martelly said, "Haiti is open for business."

This announcement comes on the heels of a recent visit by Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime.

## **HOUSE AND SENATE TRANSPORTATION BILL CONFEREES NAMED**

On Tuesday, the Senate announced conferees who will lead negotiations on the transportation reauthorization bill. Senate Democrats are Boxer (CA), Baucus (MT), Rockefeller (WVA), Durbin (IL), Johnson (SD), Schumer (NY), Nelson (FL), Menendez (NJ) and Republicans, Inhofe (OK), Vitter (LA), Hatch (UT), Shelby (AL), Hutchison (TX), Hoeven (ND).

Later in the week, the House formally disagreed to the Senate bill, agreed to go to a conference, and appointed its own conferees. Twenty of the 33 are Republicans: Reps. John Mica (FL), Don Young (Alaska), John Duncan (TN), Bill Shuster (PA), Shelley Moore Capito (WVA), Rick Crawford (Ark), Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA), Larry Buschon (IN), Richard Hanna (NY), Steve Southerland (FL), James Lankford (OK), Reid Ribble (WS), Fred Upton (Mich.), Ed Whitfield (KY), Doc Hastings (WA), Rob Bishop (UT), Ralph Hall (TX), Chip Cravaack (MN), Dave Camp (Mich.) and Patrick Tiberi (OH).

The remaining 13 are Democrats: Nick Rahall (WVA.), Peter DeFazio (OR), Jerry Costello (IL), Jerrold Nadler (NY), Corrine Brown (FL), Elijah Cummings (MD), Leonard Boswell (Iowa), Tim Bishop (NY), Henry Waxman (CA), Ed Markey (Mass.), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), Earl Blumenauer (OR) and Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC).

These members are charged with the challenging task of sorting out the differences and reaching compromise between two very different bills. The House bill is a short-term extension of federal highway funds that includes a requirement to approve the Keystone oil pipeline, a very controversial issue for many Democrats and environmentalists. The White House has threatened to veto any bill that includes the Keystone XL provision. The Senate bill, S. 1813, is a two-year, \$109 billion extension. OIA will continue to work with the Federal Lobbying Team to monitor and track the conference negotiations and provide updates to MDT, Aviation, MPO and MDPR.

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

On Thursday's Climate Communities webinar, featured Elizabeth Bellis, an attorney who directs the Energy Programs Consortium's QECB Program. Elizabeth spoke about Bonds for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Projects and provided an overview of QECBs, and discussed how communities have successfully used their QECB allocations across the country and helped cities and counties determine if QECBs are the right tool for their energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

According to Climate Communities, "In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allocated \$3.2 billion in bond volume for the Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (QECB). QECBs are debt instruments that states, local governments and tribes can issue at extremely low rates to fund energy conservation projects, including energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy installations, green community programs, and public education campaigns. Each state received a QECB allocation proportionate to its population, which was subsequently sub-allocated to their largest local governments (cities and counties of 100,000 population or more). While a number of localities have successfully used QECBs, much of the \$3.2 billion allocation remains unissued. In most states, cities and counties interested in funding energy projects with QECBs can still tap into unused allocations."

## **REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION**

On Tuesday, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney swept the primaries in Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. Governor Romney's path to the nomination is all but secured.

## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: APRIL 30TH – MAY 4TH**

*The House will not be in session next week.*

*The Senate will not be in session next week.*

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT APRIL 30TH – MAY 4TH, 2012**

**Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:**

*THE SENATE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **D-BLOCK UPDATE**

Betsy Markey, Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security hosted a stakeholder call on Thursday, April 26 with presentations by Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Director Chris Essid, who discussed the National Broadband Network. The following was an posed during the call.

***If States decide to opt out, do they still get funding to build out their portion of the public safety broadband network?***

Under the law, if a State decides to opt out after receiving the RFP from FirstNet, they must submit a plan to the FCC. If the FCC approves the plan, then the State may submit a request for grant funding to FirstNet. To receive this funding, the State must prove the State-developed network will be interoperable and technically compatible with the nationwide network and the plan must take into account cost-efficiencies and security concerns.

### **FEMA RELEASES THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS REPORT**

This week FEMA and its partners released the National Preparedness Report (NPR). The Report identifies significant progress the nation has made in areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Overall the Report found that the nation has increased its collective preparedness, not only from external threats, but also for natural and technological hazards that face its communities.

The Report was developed to meet the requirements of *Presidential Policy Directive 8/PPD-8: National Preparedness*. PPD-8 is aimed at strengthening the security and resilience of the United States through systematic preparation for the threats that pose the greatest risk to the security of the Nation, including acts of terrorism, cyber attacks, pandemics, and catastrophic natural disasters.

The report highlights a case study from the Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management (OEM):

***Preparedness Case Study: Faith-based and Community Organization Activities in Miami-Dade County, Florida***

*In March 2011, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in Miami-Dade County, Florida, partnered with FEMA to launch the Communities Organized to Respond in Emergencies (CORE) program, which engages faith-based and community organizations in planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. CORE works to ensure that post-disaster assistance is available throughout the county, including in traditionally underserved areas. Since its inception, CORE has actively recruited faith-based and community organizations, working with them to assess the types of services and resources they could provide after a disaster and tracking that information in a database. As of June 2011, the CORE program had assessed 103 organizations and created ties with 25 affiliates, over 55 percent of which are faith-based organizations. CORE affiliates support the Miami-Dade County OEM by serving as temporary shelters and distribution points for emergency supplies, managing donation drives, offering translation services for non-English speaking residents, and assisting with volunteer coordination, emotional and spiritual care, and other recovery activities.*

The NPR focuses on five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery, as outlined in the National Preparedness Goal released in October 2011. Within these mission areas are 31 core capabilities central to preparedness. The NPR assesses each of these 31 core capabilities.

Overall, the NPR found the Nation has made significant progress in enhancing preparedness and identifies several significant areas of national strength. For example, the Nation has built the foundation for an integrated, all-hazards planning architecture that considers routine emergencies and catastrophic events. Operational coordination has also improved with the adoption of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which provides a common doctrine for incident management. In addition, intelligence and information sharing capabilities are stronger thanks to a national network of fusion centers and Joint Terrorism Task Forces that bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement, Intelligence Community resources, and other public safety officials and private sector partners. The Report also identified opportunities for national improvement in cybersecurity, long-term recovery, and integrating individuals with access and functional needs into preparedness activities.

FEMA developed the NPR in close coordination with leaders of federal departments and agencies, and the Report reflects inputs from state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, private and nonprofit sector partners, and the general public. Data was also integrated from the 2011 State Preparedness Reports, which are state-wide self-assessments of the core capabilities submitted by all 56 U.S. states and territories through a standard survey. FEMA also conducted research to identify any recent, independent evaluations, surveys and other data related to the core capabilities. (provided by FEMA)

OIA continues to work closely with FEMA and the county's Emergency Management department and other stakeholders to ensure that Miami-Dade is current in the areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

## **HOUSE FOREIGN RELATIONS CHAIRMAN ROS-LEHTINEN: “PROMOTION OF FREE PRESS ABROAD MUST REMAIN PRIORITY FOR U.S.”**

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, released the following statement on Thursday commemorating World Press Freedom Day:

*“In the United States and other free nations, we depend on a free press to inform the people and place a check on the power of government by making it accountable to its citizens. Whenever and wherever the rights of the press are threatened, the rights of the people are sure to be in the ruling regime’s crosshairs as well.*

*“Year after year in nations such as Cuba and North Korea, people are kept in near complete darkness about what is going on in their country and in the world. In many nations, such as Russia, journalists are targeted for the perceived threat they pose to those in power. Other dictatorial regimes, including those in the Latin American nations of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Ecuador, are rapidly eroding press freedoms as they advance their assault on democracy.*

*“The United States must continue to stand up for the rights of free people in the face of despotic regimes around the world who pull out every stop to keep them imprisoned. Promoting and protecting the rights of a free and independent media must remain a priority in our efforts to stem the rise of tyranny.”*

## **CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON RESPONDS TO HAITIAN PRESIDENT**

Haitian President Joseph Michel Martelly endorsed Dr. Rudy Moise this week in the Democratic primary election for the District 17 congressional seat currently held by Congresswoman Frederica Wilson. Congresswoman Wilson was elected in 2010 to replace former Rep. Kendrick Meek, who vacated the seat to run for U.S. Senate. In response to the endorsement, Congresswoman Wilson issued the following statement:

*“I don’t appreciate Mr. Martelly’s efforts to divide my Congressional district into Haitians versus African-Americans, and my constituents don’t appreciate it either. In 1982, I met Father Gerard Jean-Juste and was largely responsible, along with U.S. Sen. Lawton Chiles, for getting Haitian women released from the Krome Detention Center. I have worked tirelessly with the Haitian community ever since. Through the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Project, I have awarded college scholarships to more than 6,000 Haitian young men. How dare Mr. Martelly insinuate that I neglect the Haitian community?*

*“With the myriad of problems that Haiti is experiencing at this time, it’s amazing that President Martelly would have the time, energy and resources to discuss a political situation in Florida. He needs to spend his time, energy and resources*

*solving the many crises in Haiti, which include but are not limited to the creation of public schools, the rebuilding of the police force, the cholera epidemic, the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and the lack of clean water and irrigation systems. Mr. Martelly also needs to establish housing for the thousands of Haitians who still live in tent cities without the benefit of basic sanitation and hygiene.”*

*The Congresswoman went on to say, “All of these things must be addressed in order to attract the endorsement of the international community so that they will free up the funds pledged toward Haiti’s recovery efforts. That is what I discussed with Mr. Martelly when I visited him in Haiti. I took a helicopter ride in his private helicopter to survey the damage caused by the earthquake. Mr. Martelly and I put a plan in place, and I continue to meet regularly with Haitian senators and deputies, ambassadors, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), the State Department, the Congressional Black Caucus, the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Haitian Diaspora. I am constantly advocating for Haiti in Congress and all across the nation. This is what the Haitian people need their president to do as well – not for him to be meddling in District 17 affairs.”*

## **WHITE HOUSE BUSINESS COUNCIL AND BUSINESS FORWARD REACH OUT TO BUSINESS COMMUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL**

On Thursday, the White House Business Council reached out to the business community informing small and medium sized business owners about opportunities to comment on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The Department of the Treasury has requested comment on proposed methods for calculating "minimum value" of insurance plans and verification of employer-sponsored insurance coverage. The attached documents provide background on recently proposed rules, how they may affect businesses, and how to submit comments that will be taken into consideration as the regulations reach their final form.

In a statement from the White House Business Council: *“Leading up to changes in the health care system that will take place in 2014, there will be opportunities to take part in the implementation of ACA. It is important that business leaders who will be impacted by these rules have the opportunity to participate in the rule making process, and we encourage you to do so.”*

Summaries of the attached notices are as follows:

### Notice 2012-31

This notice requests comment on possible approaches to determining whether health coverage under an eligible employer sponsored plan provides minimum value. If an employer plan fails to meet minimum value, the employer may be liable for an assessable payment. Currently, only 1.6-2% of people are enrolled in plans that do not meet minimum value.



#### Notice 2012-32

This notice invites comments concerning reporting requirements for health insurance issuers, government agencies, employers that sponsor self-insured plans, and other persons that provide minimum essential coverage to an individual. Proposed regulations are expected to include guidance intended to minimize administrative burden and duplicative reporting.

#### Notice 2012-33

The Department of Treasury and intends to propose regulations implementing employer-provided healthcare coverage reporting. Proposed regulations are expected to include guidance intended to minimize administrative burden and duplicative reporting. This notice invites comments on possible approaches for coordinating and minimizing duplication between information required to be reported by employers.

Instructions for comment submission can be found in attached documents.

### **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

“Converting to LED Streetlights” was the subject of this week’s Climate Communities webinar. According to Climate Communities, “ , local governments have identified street lights as a major energy sink in their communities. Efforts to replace older street lights with light-emitting diode (LED) technologies can conserve energy and money. However, cities and counties still face challenges developing and financing these improvements.

Maggie Ullman, the Energy Coordinator for the City of Asheville, North Carolina joined the call to discuss the city’s LED replacement initiative. The City will save about \$650,000 in electricity costs each year once all 9,000 lights are installed. The installation is staggered such that the annual debt service associated with the project will never exceed the annual savings from reduced energy costs. Maggie provided an overview of Asheville’s program, and describe its financial model.

Doug Elliott, a Senior Research Economist with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, also join the call and described a new economic cost-benefit analysis tool developed by the U.S. Department of Energy that allows municipalities and utilities to estimate the cost and impact of switching to LED-based street lighting.

### **NEXT WEEK’S CALENDAR: MAY 7TH – MAY 11TH**

*The House will be in session next week.*

*The Senate will be in session next week.*

### **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

It is with great sorrow that OIA reports on the loss of a close member of the County family. Mr. Jack Blagman, father of longtime Miami-Dade County Federal Lobbyist Diane Blagman, has passed away. The following obituary was published in The Washington Post from April 29 to May 2, 2012.

### **JACK BLAGMAN**

On Thursday, April 26, 2012, JACK BLAGMAN of Gainesville, VA. Beloved husband of Claire Blagman; devoted father of Diane Blagman (Michael Botelho) and Robert (Leslie) Blagman; loving brother of the late Sally and Jack Sutter, Jeanette and Bernard Swetlow. Also survived by his grandchildren, Hannah Botelho, Jason Blagman and Erin Blagman.

Jack proudly served in the Navy during World War II. He was awarded four medals before being honorably discharged. Opera and classical music played a key role in his life. Jack was very knowledgeable about history and world affairs, and was also an avid reader. For many in advertising, he was their mentor and Jack also volunteered for and supported various charitable organizations.

Graveside services will be held Friday, May 4, 11 a.m. at Garden of Remembrance, Clarksburg, MD. Immediately following interment family will be receiving friends Friday until 6 p.m. Shiva will begin Sunday, from 1 to 6 p.m., Monday from 5 to 8 p.m. at the residence of Diane Blagman and Michael Botelho. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Society of Yad Vashem and Planned Parenthood. Arrangements entrusted to EDWARD SAGEL FUNERAL DIRECTION, INC., Rockville, MD 301-217-9400.

