

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT JUNE 4TH – JUNE 8TH, 2012**

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

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **REP. ROS-LEHTINEN HOSTS BRIEFING ON VISA-WAIVER PROGRAM AND RELATED LEGISLATION**

OIA joined representatives from the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB), the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Disney and the U.S. Travel Association (USTA) at a congressional briefing hosted by House Foreign Relations Committee Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen to discuss the progress being made by Congress and the Obama Administration in expanding the U.S. Visa Waiver Program to spur job growth and economic development nationwide.

Last July, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sen. Javier Souto sponsored and Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz and Commissioner Rebeca Sosa co-sponsored a resolution unanimously adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, calling on the federal government and Congress to ease visa restrictions in certain countries, including Brazil, provided that adequate homeland security measures are in place.

The positive economic impact for Miami-Dade County of just Brazil obtaining visa waiver status cannot be overstated, as a 2011 New York Times article pointed out: *“According to the U.S. Commerce Department, 1.2 million Brazilians visited the U.S. in 2010 and spent \$5.9 billion, or \$4,940 for each visitor. Most of the Brazilians who come to the United States visit Florida, and in the first nine months of 2011, an estimated 1.1 million Brazilians spent \$1.6 billion in the state, an increase of nearly 60 percent from the previous year. Among foreign nations, only Canada sends more visitors to Florida.”*

### **SEN. NELSON CO-SPONSORS BI-PARTISAN VISA WAIVER BILL – THE “JOLT” ACT**

Sen. Bill Nelson signed on as a co-sponsor to the Jobs Originated through Launching Travel (“JOLT”) Act, which aims to boost the U.S. economy and create jobs by jumpstarting international travel to the United States. The JOLT Act is a bipartisan bill sponsored by U.S. Senators Marco Rubio, Charles Schumer (D - NY), Mike Lee (R - UT), Amy Klobuchar (D - MN), Barbara Mikulski (D - MD), Roy Blunt (R - MO) and Mark Kirk (R - IL).

International travel to the United States represents a significant component of the United States' economy. Studies show that, on average, each overseas visitor spends about \$4,000 in America per visit. In 2011, foreign nationals spent more than \$134 billion total in travel to America. This spending supported 1.8 million American jobs, and represented 8.7 percent of U.S. exports of goods and services. However, in the past ten years the United States market share of worldwide overseas travel market has dropped from a 17 percent share to less than 12 percent.

OIA has worked closely with the Greater Miami Chamber, GMCVB and travel and tourism industry stakeholders in Washington, including USTA, who has taken the lead in advocating for visa waiver legislation before Congress and the Obama Administration.

## **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SENDS REP. ROS-LEHTINEN LETTER ON MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AEROSPACE SHOW**

Late last week, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta sent a letter to Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen regarding the Miami International Aerospace Show (MIAS). The Secretary conveyed his regret that at this time the Department would not be able to support and grant the county's request to hold the MIAS at the Homestead Air Reserve Base. Secretary Panetta cited a difficult budget environment as well as complicated and difficult regulatory and policy issues as reasons for denying the request.

Attached, please find the full letter transmitted by the Secretary to the Congresswoman.

## **OIA AND NACo MEET WITH DOJ REGARDING SCAAP FUNDING**

On Thursday, OIA joined staff from the National Association of Counties (NACo) and Washington Representatives from other counties and local governments across the country, including Los Angeles, El Paso and New York, in a meeting with U.S. Department of Justice officials to express concerns regarding changes to State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP).

SCAAP is administered at the federal level by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) in conjunction with the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security (DHS). SCAAP provides federal funding to states and localities for the costs of incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens with at least one felony or two misdemeanor convictions for violations of state or local law, and incarcerated for at least 4 consecutive days.

The proposed change to SCAAP funding would cease reimbursing local governments for the costs of incarcerating inmates classified as "unknown" according whether or not the inmate is listed in a federal database administered by ICE. The policy rationale for this change centers on DHS not being able to confirm the alien's status (i.e. as undocumented) for eligibility of an SCAAP payment and according to BJA *"in order to make better use of limited SCAAP funding and to ensure jurisdictions are reimbursed only for known undocumented criminal aliens."* This modification will ultimately have a

disproportionate impact on local governments, since it will shift the cost of temporarily incarcerating these individuals to the local government.

While Miami-Dade County would stand to lose a relatively small amount of federal funding (approx. \$64,000 in 2010 and \$55,000 in 2011), it's the County's strong position that it should be reimbursed for any and all costs associated with the incarceration of federal inmates. OIA will continue to work with NACo and member counties to develop a solution to this issue.

## **LAND CONVEYANCE LEGISLATION UPDATE**

This week Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen updated county officials on the status of her legislation, H.R. 2825, a land conveyance bill that would authorize USDA to convey land to Miami-Dade County to build MDRF #74. The County has been trying to purchase a parcel of land from USDA for some time now in order to construct the Palmetto Bay Fire Station #74, that would have a response area including parts of Palmetto Bay and Pinecrest, and would help to cut down on response times to the areas of Cutler Bay and Coral Gables. Last Congress a bill was introduced in the House and Senate to try to get this land conveyance accomplished, however the measure stalled in the Senate due to Sen. DeMint's (SC) opposition to this type of legislation. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen reintroduced the bill last summer with the hopes of finally getting it passed in this Congress.

The Congresswoman has also been actively working to get this done on other fronts as well. Her office recently received some positive news on movement of the bill from the House Committee on Agriculture, and it appears that majority and minority staffs have agreed that they have no issues with including the conveyance legislation as a provision in the upcoming Farm Bill. To ensure that this has the best chance of passing, Senator Nelson will be planning on reintroducing the bill on the Senate side, giving us bicameral, bipartisan support for this to go forward. It should be noted that the House is currently waiting on the Senate to act on their Farm Bill package. The Senate has been expected to take up their Farm Bill in the coming week or so. OIA continues to work with the Congresswoman, the county's congressional delegation and the federal contract lobbyists to ensure the bill is passed by Congress in this session.

## **SEN. NELSON DELIVERS SPEECH TO HISPANIC BUSINESS CONFERENCE**

In an event hosted by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando — at the Orange County Convention Center, Sen. Bill Nelson will be delivering a policy speech to the Hispanic Business Conference on Friday. The conference precedes the 19th Annual Hispanic Business and Consumer Expo and will host 350 to 400 business leaders from throughout Florida. The following excerpts of the speech were posted online:

*"I think we should run government more efficiently.*

*So, we've got to restore some fiscal sanity – which means cutting wasteful government spending, reforming the tax code, and balancing the budget. We've got to put people back to work. We've got to invest in public education, and pass the Dream Act. We've got protect and expand the middle class.*

*We've also got to stand up to health insurance companies and keep them from dropping people with pre-existing conditions. If you're sick, you can't work. If a child is sick, he or she can't learn. I believe we need to fight economic inequality and unfairness in the system – and stand up for the middle class and those who strive to get to the middle class. That means fighting to have an environment for thriving and vibrant small businesses. They're the backbone of our economy."*

## **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION UPDATE**

As indicated in past updates, both the House and Senate have passed their respective versions of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill (the Highway bill) and have been engaged in meetings of the conference committee. Both sides have publicly expressed a sincere interest in getting the bill done, although there were significant differences between the two bills. For example, the House bill included a provision to expedite approval of the Keystone XL pipeline along with a provision to limit EPA regulation of coal ash. Obviously, these issues are not related to transportation. In addition to those side issues, there were also differences on the transportation provisions, including the duration of the bill, how to pay for potential funding shortfalls and different methods of environmental streamlining.

Despite these differences, the staff worked hard to bridge the differences, even as the Senators and House Members took time off for Memorial Day. Reports from the conference suggested that perhaps the bill could be successfully completed. In fact, the Chair of the Conference Committee, Senator Barbara Boxer, told the press that she believed the bill's issues could be worked out.

As is usual with Congress, after this step forward, Congress took one step back. Conservative Republicans in the House said the overall cost of the bill should be cut. As reported previously, one major problem on the whole effort is that gas tax revenues are not keeping up with the outlays from the highway trust fund. The Senate bill solved this problem by making a few changes in the tax structure. However as in all tax related matters, opposition arose to the changes. In conference, both sides are trying to find an acceptable new source of revenue or a reduction in spending elsewhere in the federal budget.

The conservatives decided to go a different way. They began pushing to reduce the cost of the programs in the highway bill down to the level of the gas tax receipts. This would reduce the federal spending for highway and transit programs by one-third next year. Such a result would be unacceptable to the Senate and the President.

It is not clear how hard the conservatives will push on this issue. For a few days it appeared that there was an impasse on the bill. But in the last two days the conference started moving again. The Senate sent the House a draft final bill that solves many of the outstanding issues. The House is preparing a counteroffer which should narrow the differences even more. According to Senator Boxer, about 80% of the items are not in disagreement. The Senate offer did not include any language on the major non-transportation issues like the Keystone Pipeline. Senator Boxer's objective is to get agreement on the transportation sections of the bill first. This is wise because issues like Keystone will only be resolved by the Speaker and the Senate Majority Leader and the President.

Last Monday things looked grim. Today things look much brighter. Clearly there are still several hurdles. But both the House and Senate are working hard and they are making progress. *(Compiled by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

## **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS MEET WITH IKEA REGARDING ACCUSATIONS OF USING CASTRO SLAVE LABOR**

On Wednesday, Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, along with House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Congressman David Rivera, and Senators Bob Menendez (NJ) and Marco Rubio, met with representatives of IKEA regarding recent press reports that the company may have contracted with an East German supplier who used prisoner slave labor through the Castro regime to manufacture furniture and goods in the 1980s.

Diaz-Balart issued the following statement after the meeting:

*"Representatives from IKEA informed us that they have made this issue a top priority. IKEA has begun a thorough investigation to discover the extent of its role in contracting with the East German supplier, and with the Cuban regime to use forced prison labor. It has vowed to investigate the extent of its contractual and other involvement with the Castro dictatorship, including whether Cuban political prisoners had any hand in the manufacture of IKEA products, and to keep us informed about the results of that investigation. In addition, they have made it clear that they do not partake in any sort of business with Cuba.*

*It appears that IKEA is taking this matter very seriously, and that it has initiated concrete steps to discover the truth about IKEA's possible connection in the 1980s to the Castro regime, and to keep interested Members of Congress well informed about the progress of that investigation. I intend to follow the progress of that investigation very closely, and hold the corporate leadership of IKEA to its word."*

**REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ AMENDMENT GIVES LAW ENFORCEMENT \$20 MILLION TO GO AFTER CHILD PREDATORS**

To combat the growing epidemic of sexually exploited children on the Internet and child sex abuse, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz introduced and the House of Representatives passed an amendment to the FY2013 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill to provide \$20 million for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to assist in child exploitation investigations.

*“This amendment protects our most vulnerable constituents – our children,” said Rep. Wasserman Schultz. “With the proliferation of the Internet and wireless technology, the spread of child pornography online must be addressed aggressively and quickly. My amendment directs additional funding to go toward Immigration and Customs Enforcement to aide in child exploitation investigations.*

According to estimates by the U.S. Department of Justice, at any moment there are more than one million images of children being sexually exploited on the Internet, with an additional 200 images being posted every day. More than one-third of the world’s pedophiles involved in organized distribution of child pornography worldwide live in the U.S. The Internet allows these images to be disseminated indefinitely, victimizing that child victim again and again with each click of the mouse.

*“Since the 1970s, ICE has been a leader in the fight to protect our children. As recently as 2009, ICE was responsible for 52 percent of cases prosecuted for receipt or distribution of child pornography, and 90 percent of cases prosecuted for child sex tourism. This is in addition to hundreds of arrests every year, and thousands of children rescued to date. Their efforts are second to none, and I know they will put these resources to good use. Our children, the most innocent among us, deserve and need our help.”*

Rep. Wasserman Schultz also urged ICE to use the additional funds to hire wounded veterans as they return home.

## **VEEP ADDRESSES CYPRESS BAY GRADUATION AT MARLINS PARK**

Vice-President Joe Biden addressed the graduating class of Cypress Bay High School this week at Miami Marlins Park. This is the first commencement event held in the new stadium.

## **CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON’S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

On Wednesday, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson issued the following statement on National Caribbean-American Heritage Month:

*“As the granddaughter of Bahamian immigrants, I am proud to commemorate June 2012 as National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. Like many Americans of Caribbean descent, my parents and grandparents came here with nothing, but through hard work and education, they achieved the American Dream. Caribbean-Americans have made numerous invaluable contributions to our nation through areas such as the arts, politics, armed forces and science. It is because of this shared heritage that I join my fellow Caribbean-Americans in honoring our ancestors’ homelands and sacrifices, and for future generations to have a chance at the American Dream. Happy National Caribbean-American Heritage Month!”*

## **GROUNDBREAKING MARINE RESEARCH BUILDING AT UM**

On Thursday, the University of Miami opened a \$47 million complex at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science on Virginia Key, featuring a giant tank capable of simulating Cat-5 hurricane storm surges. According to a Miami Herald press clip the project will be completed by late 2013 and includes two interconnected buildings devoted to hurricane and climate research, with another devoted to the study of aquatic biology. The first new facility added to the marine school in 30 years was made possible by a \$15 million federal grant awarded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), better known as “the Stimulus Bill.”

The federal stimulus grant was awarded in 2009 by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST). NIST is the federal technology agency that works with industries to develop and applied technology, measurements and standards. Also from the press clip: “the complex will include a 28,000-gallon tank — roughly the length of a bowling alley and about six lanes wide — that will help researchers study the interaction of hurricane winds and storm waves and analyze the impact of surge on coastal buildings. In addition to expanding coral and fisheries research, the complex will also house a breeding facility for sea hares, a slug whose simple nervous system makes it important in medical research.”

## **FY13 THUD APPROPRIATIONS – UPDATE**

On Wednesday the House Transportation-Housing Appropriations (THUD) Subcommittee released the text of its FY 2013 spending bill. Below is a list of important programs within the bill and a comparison of the House and Senate spending levels:

**Highway Trust Fund - \$39.1 million (Senate) / \$39.1 million (House) (\$39.1 million in FY2012)**

**TIGER - \$500 million (Senate) / no funding (House) (\$500 million in FY2012)**

**Transit New Starts - \$2.044 billion (Senate) / \$1.8 billion (House) (\$1.955 billion in FY 12)**

High Speed Rail - **\$100 million (Senate)** / no funding (House) **(no funding in FY2012)**

CDBG - **\$3.1 billion (Senate)** / \$3.3 billion (House) 20% admin cap maintained **(\$2.95 billion (+\$400 million for disaster relief) in FY2012)**

HOME Investment Partnership - **\$1 billion (Senate)** / **\$1.2 billion (House)** **(\$1 billion in FY2012)**

Sustainable Communities Initiative - **\$50 million (Senate)** / no funding (House) **(no funding in FY2012)**

Choice Neighborhoods - **\$120 million (Senate)** / no House funding **(\$120 million in FY2012)**

Homeless Assistance Grants - **\$2.1 billion (Senate)** / \$2 billion (House) **(\$1.9 billion in FY2012)**

Section 8 tenant-based - **\$19.4 billion (Senate)** / \$17.2 billion (House) **(\$18.9 billion in FY 12)**

## CLIMATE COMMUNITIES

“Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Best Practices” was the subject of this week’s Climate Communities webinar on Thursday. The webinar highlighted the fact that on June 18, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is accepting applications from communities interested in deploying alternative fuel vehicles. Up to \$5 million is available, in grants ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000, to help cut red tape and streamline permitting processes for homeowners and businesses, provide training for mechanics and first responders, and support community planning to expand fueling infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles. DOE anticipates awarding 10 to 20 projects.

[Click here](#) for more information about the DOE funding opportunity.

## LOOKING AHEAD

*The week of June 11th – June 15th*

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

June 18 – 19, 2012



- Global Cities Initiative, Miami, FL  
Hosted by the Brookings Institute and JP Morgan Chase  
Events at MIA, University of Miami, PortMiami

July 5, 2012 (tentative) – Congressional Delegation Hurricane Center Tour

- OIA is working with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and members of the Miami-Dade County congressional delegation to set up a tour of the National Hurricane Center (NHC) and a meeting with new NHC Director Dr. Richard Knabb in Miami.

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## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT JUNE 11TH – JUNE 15TH, 2012**

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*THE HOUSE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY OFFICIALS COMING TO D.C.**

OIA has been working to coordinate the visits of three Miami-Dade County officials who will be in our nation's capital on official business next week:

1. Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz will be in Washington D.C. to attend a South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force meeting at the Department of the Interior, which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, June 20.
2. Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) Director Ysela Llort and MDT staff will be in town to hold a meeting with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) officials, including FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff, Regional Administrator Yvette Taylor, Associate Administrator in the Office of Planning and Environment Lucy Garliauskas and Associate Administrator in the Office of Program Management, Henrika Buchanan-Smith.

The Director will also be meeting with members of the County's Congressional delegation, the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure – Chairman John Mica and Rep. John Duncan, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.

Director Ylort will be holding a briefing on Capitol Hill for House, Senate and relevant committee staff titled: *"Airportlink: Connecting Metrorail to Miami International Airport"* to discuss the newly completed airport link Metrorail extension from the existing Earlington Heights Station to the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) next to Miami International Airport (MIA). The Director will tout the public benefits of the project which was developed by MDT with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and will provide seamless access to all modes of transportation, including Metrobus, Metrorail, Tri-rail, Amtrak, Greyhound, Tour buses, Taxis, and rental cars.

3. PortMiami Director Bill Johnson will be in D.C. attending the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Congressional Cruise Caucus 2012, which is taking place June 19-20 at the Liaison Capitol Hill. Director Johnson will also be meeting with Army Corps officials.

## **BROOKINGS AND JPMORGAN CHASE BRING GLOBAL CITIES INITIATIVE TO MIAMI**

(From Miami Herald clip and press release - <http://tinyurl.com/cugj25q>) Greater Miami mayors, business, civic, and philanthropic leaders from around the metropolitan area will gather on June 18th and 19th to discuss how to strengthen the region's global economic competitiveness in order to grow the economy and create jobs. The event is part of the Global Cities Initiative, a five-year joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase & Co. that focuses on equipping leaders in the largest metro areas in the U.S. with actionable recommendations to enhance global economic competitiveness.

The first event, on Monday, June 18th, is a roundtable discussion on "Goods Movement & the Global Economy" at the Miami International Airport. The second event, on Tuesday, June 19th, is a forum on "Going Global: Boosting Greater Miami's Economic Future" at the University of Miami. Among the leaders participating in these events are Mayor Carlos Gimenez (Miami-Dade County) and Mayor Tomás Regalado (City of Miami) as well as President of the University of Miami Donna E. Shalala; former U.S. Senator Mel Martinez; His Excellency Arturo Sarukhan, Mexican Ambassador to the United States; Jose Abreu, Miami International Airport Director; and Juan Flores, Florida State Freight & Logistics Administrator.

The Global Cities Initiative is chaired by Richard M. Daley, former mayor of Chicago, who led the city's economic revival by building partnerships across the globe that fostered trade and promoted investment. Visuals and interview opportunities are available. To join the conversation on Twitter, #globalcities.

### **MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2012/10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

EVENT: GOODS MOVEMENT & THE GLOBAL ECONOMY – A Statewide Roundtable

LOCATION: MIA International Airport Auditorium, Concourse D, level 4

To Register: Contact Karen Slachetka, (202) 238-3514, [KSlachetka@brookings.edu](mailto:KSlachetka@brookings.edu)

### **TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2012: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

EVENT: GOING GLOBAL: BOOSTING MIAMI'S ECONOMIC FUTURE - A domestic forum presented by the Global Cities Initiative.

Opening remarks from University of Miami President Donna E. Shalala and presentation from Bruce Katz of Brookings: Greater Miami and the Next Economy.

Panel featuring representatives from Enterprise Florida, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, and Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle on Miami's potential for global engagement.

Panel with Mayors Gimenez and Regalado, and former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley on the role of public sector leaders.

A discussion with Mexican Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan on the need to network globally.

**LOCATION:**

Newman Alumni Center, University of Miami  
6200 San Amaro Drive, Coral Gables, FL

**To register:** <http://www.seeuthere.com/globalcities2012/miami>

**FORUM OBJECTIVES:**

Offer a vision for metropolitan-led economic growth, including how global trade and investment can serve as an engine for job creation. Give Miami metropolitan area a platform for launching new global trade and investment. Offer recommendations on how Miami can leverage its position in the global market. Cultivate support among public and private sector leaders for regional actions to strengthen global economic competitiveness.

## **COMMISSIONER HEYMAN INTRODUCES NACo RESOLUTION**

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman introduced a resolution this week for the National Association of Counties (NACo) that calls for the support of the Tax Crimes and Identity Theft Prevention Act, sponsored by Rep. Cathy Castor (FL) in the House (and co-sponsored by Rep. Wasserman Schultz) and Sen. Bill Nelson in the Senate.

The resolution, urges Congress to pass legislation supporting action to reduce tax crimes and identity theft; require the Secretary of the Treasury to take necessary action to correct a tax return or tax information affected by the misuse of a taxpayer's identity within 90 days after receiving notice of such misuse from the taxpayer or government identifying the fraud; increase efforts to prevent and deter such crimes. Increase coordination between all relevant agencies and levels of government.

Identity theft as it relates to tax returns has cost this country over 5.4 billion dollars and directly and adversely affected each individual victimized. Identity theft has resulted in the filing of fraudulent tax returns and the subsequent refunds to individuals by fraudulently using the names, addresses, and social security numbers, which can harm the victims credit and could take years to rectify. Further, deceased individuals, whose records are maintained in the Social Security Death Master File which is made public by the Social Security Administration, are also susceptible to unlawful tax claims. This legislation would allow for the disclosure of tax return information between federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel who are personally and directly engaged in the investigation of identity theft. The bill would impose a fine and/or prison term on any person who knowingly or willfully misappropriates another person's tax identification

information and would increase the civil and criminal penalties for improper disclosure or use of tax information by tax return preparers.

The legislation would require the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to report to Congress on the number of reported tax fraud cases and on actions taken in response to such reports and require the head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons to submit to Congress a detailed plan on how it will use tax information provided by the IRS to reduce prison tax fraud. Authorizes the Commissioner of IRS to transfer appropriated funds to be used solely to prevent and resolve potential tax fraud cases which can in turn make victims whole again. Prohibits the Secretary of Commerce from disclosing information contained on the Death Master File relating to a deceased individual to persons who are not certified to access such information. The Attorney General would also be authorized to award grants to state and local law enforcement agencies for the investigation and prosecution of tax crimes.

## **FY2013 – FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE**

It is assumed that all the Fiscal Year 2013 budget bills will not be completed until after the election. There are three reasons for this. First, time is running out. Between now and the election, both the House and the Senate will be out of session the week of July 4<sup>th</sup> and all of August. While the House has passed several of the appropriations bills, it takes longer for each bill to get through the Senate. Both sides also have other bills they must debate and pass. It is impossible to see how the Senate, in particular, will find the time to fully debate the 12 appropriations bills that make up the federal budget.

Second, as discussed previously, there is a significant difference in the overall level of discretionary spending between the House and the Senate. The Senate has set a budget ceiling of \$1.047 trillion for discretionary spending. The House has set a limit of \$1.028 billion – a difference of \$19 billion. The Senate limit was set by the legislation enacted last year to raise the debt ceiling. The Senate position, taken by both parties, is that since all of Congress passed the debt ceiling law, it is bound by the \$1.047 ceiling established there.

The House Republican position is that the debt ceiling bill did establish a cap for discretionary spending of \$1.047 trillion, but they are free to spend less. Which they are doing. Obviously the Senate leadership disagrees. Also the President disagrees. He has said that he will veto the appropriations bills if they do not spend up to the level already agreed upon last year.

Given that the House Republicans do not want to spend more before the election and the Senate and the President do not want to spend less, it looks like there is a stalemate.

Third, the Republicans in the House have added a number of policy riders -- provisions not related to money but instead to change or amend federal programs. Examples

include preventing EPA from implementing certain environmental rules. The Senate Democrats and the President strongly oppose most of these policy provisions.

So, looking at the big picture, the chances that the budget process will be completed on time (the fiscal year starts October 1) are minimal at best. Perhaps one or two of the less controversial bills will get through the process before the elections, but most will have to wait until the lame duck session, at the earliest, before they are finally enacted.

However, while the big picture is grim. Both sides are working hard on the appropriations bills. In the House, five bills have passed on the floor. They are:

- Commerce, Justice, State
- Energy and Water
- Homeland Security
- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs
- Legislative Branch

Another two bills have been marked up and reported out of the House Appropriations Committee. They are:

- State, Foreign Operations
- Defense

Three more bills have been considered by their respective subcommittees. They are:

- Treasury, HUD
- Agriculture
- Financial Services

That leaves two final bills that have not been considered at all. They are:

- Labor, HHS, Education
- Interior and the Environment

In the Senate none of the bills have passed on the floor. The Senate Majority Leader, Senator Reid, hopes to consider one of them in the near future -- the Commerce, Justice, Science bill.

Seven of the bills have been marked up and reported out by the Senate Appropriations Committee. They are:

- Agriculture
- Commerce, Justice, Science
- Energy and Water
- Homeland Security

- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs
- State, Foreign Operations
- Transportation, HUD

Another two are scheduled to be considered by the full Senate Appropriations Committee by the end of the week. They are:

- Financial Services
- Labor, HHS, Education

Given this level of activity, it is entirely possible that most of the bills will pass the House. In the Senate, all of the them will be reported out by the Senate Appropriations Committee. At that point, the factors described above will kick in and progress on the bills will stop. As a result, the government will operate under a Continuing Resolution for the first part of the Fiscal Year 2013. *(Compiled by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

## **\$619 MILLION FINE FOR SANCTIONS VIOLATORS DOING BUSINESS WITH CUBA, IRAN, SUDAN**

On Tuesday Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, issued the following statement after the Treasury Department announced a \$619 million settlement with ING Group for violations of U.S. sanctions laws banning certain financial transactions with Cuba, Iran, Burma, Sudan and Libya.

*“This huge settlement sends an unequivocal message that companies which break U.S. law and conduct business with sanctioned countries will be found out and severely penalized. I congratulate the hard working personnel at the Treasury Department for their stellar work in enforcing our sanctions laws.*

*“ING executives deceived our banking regulators as they sought to profit by doing business with dictatorial and anti-American regimes, including those in Cuba and Iran. ING will now rightly pay the largest fine ever levied by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).*

*“It is not enough to have tough sanctions laws on the books. ING’s actions prove that vigorous enforcement and punishment of violators is necessary to prevent*

*our laws from being willfully ignored and turned into paper tigers. Other firms which may consider doing business with State Sponsors of Terrorism should look at this \$619 million dollar penalty and think twice. If their consciences don't prevent them from doing business with tyrants and extremists, perhaps a \$600 million dollar fine will."*

## **REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ HAILS FEDERAL-STATE AGREEMENT ON EVERGLADES WATER QUALITY**

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz on Wednesday praised a settlement agreement announced today between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and State of Florida partners to further reduce water pollution in the Florida Everglades.

*"Today's announcement underscores the Obama Administration's strong commitment to restoring and protecting South Florida's River of Grass," said Rep. Wasserman Schultz. "Under President Obama's leadership, the federal government has invested more than \$1.4 billion over the last few years for construction projects to improve water flows as part of the larger federal-state Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan created in 2000. The announcement today addresses the other critical component to Everglades restoration – water quality."*

*"Restoration of the Everglades has significant environmental and economic benefits for Florida. In addition to the millions of 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."*

The agreement, to be submitted to a federal judge in South Florida for approval, is welcome news for the seven million people who rely on the Everglades for their primary source of drinking water and for a sensitive sawgrass ecosystem that relies on low nutrient water flows to restore the health of the unique "River of Grass."



After seven months of discussions, and years of litigation over how best to remove harmful nutrients like phosphorus, a plan is now in motion. Phosphorus is a nutrient that comes from both natural sources and fertilizers. Too much phosphorus causes chemical and biological changes that degrade natural systems, such as wetlands, lakes and coastal areas.

To turn the plan into a reality, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) will build and manage an additional 7,300 acres of wetland treatment systems that will filter harmful nutrients out of water entering the Everglades system. The EPA will continue working with the state to ensure water quality targets are met.

*"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,"* said Wasserman Schultz.

## **CALL FOR RELEASE OF CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONER ANTÚNEZ**

On Monday Congressman David Rivera called for the Castro regime to immediately release opposition leader Jose Luis Garcia Perez, known as "Antúnez". Antúnez was arrested and beaten over the weekend and has not been heard from since Saturday. He testified on Thursday by phone at a U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing on "Countering Repression and Strengthening Civil Society in Cuba".

*"Jose Luis Garcia Perez, known as Antúnez, was jailed and brutally beaten and has not been heard from since Saturday evening. His crime? Antúnez expressed his opinion about the Castro regime's repressive tactics and stressed the importance of spreading the word internationally about the efforts of Cuban heroic dissidents. For this, Antúnez was arrested as Castro thugs beat him and doused him with pepper spray.*

*"This is unacceptable as yet another example of the Castro regime's practice of squelching human rights and resorting to violence against those who oppose the dictatorship.*

*"I am greatly concerned for Antúnez's health and safety. I call on human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to not only demand his immediate release, and the release of all of Cuba's political prisoners, but to also bring international attention to his efforts and the plight of Cuba's dissidents,"* Congressman Rivera said.

Senator Rubio also put out the following statement calling for the release of Antúnez:

*“Antunez is a courageous human rights activist. It is clear that he has been jailed and savagely beaten by criminals working for the Castro regime because he testified before the Senate last week. The regime’s thugs will eventually be held accountable for these crimes. History will not wipe away the blood they have on their hands. Antunez should be released immediately, and all threats and acts of violence against him and his family must stop, as they should with any Cubans who are simply demanding their God-given rights.*

*“Furthermore, we should reexamine the unintended yet negative consequences of this administration’s loosened travel and remittance policies. The naïve people-to-people exchanges that have been abused provides Raul Castro’s regime the hard currency it requires to pay thugs to jail, brutalize and even murder innocent Cuban people.”*

## **PRESIDENT OBAMA HALTS DEPORTATIONS OF YOUNG IMMIGRANTS – REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS AND INDEPENDENTS WEIGH IN**

Excerpts below, but to read the full press release, [click here](#).

In keeping with its efforts to enforce our nation’s immigration laws in a firm and sensible manner, the [U.S. Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) announced today](#) that effective immediately, young people who were brought to the United States as young children, do not present a risk to national security or public safety, and meet several key criteria will be eligible to receive deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and will be considered for relief from removal from the country or from entering into removal proceedings. Those who demonstrate that they meet the criteria will be eligible to receive deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and will be eligible to apply for work authorization.

*“Our nation’s immigration laws must be enforced in a firm and sensible manner, but they are not designed to be blindly enforced without consideration given to the individual circumstances in each case. Nor are they designed to remove productive young people to countries where they may not have lived or even speak the language. Discretion, which is used in so many other areas, is especially justified here,”* said DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano.

**Miami-Dade County Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart released the following statement in response to the President's announcement:**

*"More than three and a half years ago, President Obama made a promise to the Hispanic community for comprehensive immigration reform. Today, he offered an executive order that smacks as a desperate and blatant political move.*

*Instead on delivering comprehensive immigration reform, the President's order barely touches on his promise. My office has continually reached out to the White House over the years, and the Administration is nowhere to be found. Once again, he ignored working on the issues in a bi-partisan fashion.*

*This executive order is only a small part of what he promised. His intention to sway Hispanic voters within the last few months before the election is a transparent and politically calculated move."*

**South Florida Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement in response to the President's announcement:**

*"Today the Obama Administration turned part of the DREAM Act into a reality by ordering an end to deporting young people who pose no threat to our society. A crucial component to creating an economy that's built to last is strengthening the middle class and lifting up those who strive for a better life for themselves and for their families. We must recognize the contributions many of these young people have already made to our society, and encourage their potential achievements. America is still a country full of possibility. American ingenuity and the American work ethic are second to none. The American dream of freedom, love of country, prosperity, job security, and access to a quality education should not be denied to those who are giving back to the country they love and have called home for so many years.*

*"As Secretary Janet Napolitano said, this decision enhances the Department of Homeland Security's ability to focus on removing anyone who is considered a risk to*

*national security or public safety. That should be our first priority, rather than utilizing limited resources to punish young people who did not have a voice in the decision to come to America years ago, yet have overcome countless obstacles to become productive members of society.*

*"While today's news is an important step for creating a more realistic and humane approach to our immigration enforcement policies, I hope my colleagues in Congress will come together so we can finally pass the full DREAM Act as a part of comprehensive immigration reform."*

**New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg released the following statement in response to the President's announcement:**

*"With its action today, the Obama Administration is making a significant portion of the DREAM Act a reality. Ending deportations of innocent young people who have the potential to drive tomorrow's economy is long overdue, as are many common-sense reforms needed to center our immigration policy around our economic needs. We have a system that is choking our economic growth by chasing away the entrepreneurs who can create jobs and the talented people businesses need to succeed and grow. Smart immigration policy protects our borders while ensuring America remains the destination for all those willing to work hard and dream big.*

*"Moving major issues requires action, not rhetoric, and today the Administration took a step towards breaking the Washington logjam on immigration that has hamstrung our economy and made America less competitive in the global marketplace."*

## **MARI CARMEN APONTE CONFIRMED BY SENATE AS AMBASSADOR TO EL SALVADOR**

From the White House:

"Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte has been a highly effective advocate for the United States in El Salvador, earning respect from across the political spectrum, from civilians and military leaders, and from public and private officials. As an honest broker, she has

helped advance programs and policies to enhance citizen security in El Salvador while weakening transnational crime links that affect our own national security. Ambassador Aponte has also been a strong voice for democratic governance throughout the region."

To read the entirety of the President's Statement, please [click here](#).

## **REP. WILSON TO INTRODUCE STAND YOUR GROUND REPEAL ACT NEXT WEEK**

Congresswoman Frederica Wilson announced on Tuesday that she will introduce the Stand Your Ground Repeal Act next week when the U.S. House of Representatives reconvenes.

*"I have been disturbed by the murder of Trayvon Martin for many months. The thought that George Zimmerman could get away with such a horrendous crime is a travesty of justice. I have been contemplating and working on this legislation since the incident that shocked the conscience of the nation – the murder of Trayvon Martin. There are bills in other states known by different taglines that have the same unintended consequences as Stand Your Ground. They should all be repealed. My legislation would withhold a portion of transportation funds from any state that has a law that allows an armed person to pursue, confront and shoot-to-kill an unarmed person in public,"* said Congresswoman Wilson.

## **REP. WILSON TO HOLD WORKSHOP TO HELP FLORIDA'S EX-OFFENDERS REGAIN THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS**

On Wednesday, June 13, 2012, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson held a restoration of rights and voter education workshop, and a job and resource fair with Bishop Victor T. Curry, pastor of New Birth Baptist Church, at New Birth Enterprise in Miami.

*“Those who have paid their debt to society should have the right to vote, obtain employment and enjoy the same civil rights and privileges as do all Floridians and American citizens,” said Congresswoman Wilson.*

Statistics show that close to 90,000 ex-offenders await the restoration of their civil rights. Under current Florida law, there is a five-year wait for ex-offenders to apply to have their rights restored. In Florida, according to the ACLU, a past felony conviction usually means loss of civil rights, including the right to vote, to hold public office, to serve on a jury and to hold certain types of state occupational licenses.

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

This week's Climate Communities webinar was titled “The Last Frontier - Energy Efficiency Standards for Rental Properties.” The webinar focused on how investing in energy efficiency can reduce energy use, cut costs and curb greenhouse gas emissions. However, for rental properties, energy efficiency improvements often don't make economic sense. Climate Communities said, “Owners don't make efficiency investments because it's the renters who pay the energy bills. And renters don't make investments in property they don't own. The result is housing that wastes energy and costs more than it should.”

Laura Hutchings, President, and Matt Wilmoth, Outreach Manager, of Populus of Boulder, Colorado, said approximately 50% of the city's housing stock is comprised of rental property. This presented local officials with a significant opportunity for energy savings and carbon reductions. In 2010, the City Council adopted a first of its kind ordinance that establishes a mandatory set of energy efficiency standards that all rental properties must meet by 2019. Initially resisted by rental property owners, Boulder's SmartRegs program is demonstrating to landlords that simple energy efficiency improvements can help improve the value of their housing portfolio.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

*The week of June 18 – June 22*

*The House will be in session next week.*

*The Senate will be in session next week.*

June 18 – 19, 2012

Global Cities Initiative, Miami, FL

Hosted by the Brookings Institute and JP Morgan Chase  
Events at MIA, University of Miami

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## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT JUNE 18 – JUNE 22, 2012**

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

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON THIS WEEK**

OIA worked to coordinate the visits of three Miami-Dade County officials who were in our nation's capital on official business this week:

1. On Wednesday, Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz was in Washington D.C. to attend a South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force meeting at the U.S. Department of the Interior.
2. Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) Director Ysela Llort and MDT staff met with Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff, Associate Administrator in the Office of Planning and Environment Lucy Garliauskas and Associate Administrator in the Office of Program Management, Henrika Buchanan-Smith. The Director updated Mr. Rogoff on the status of several MDT projects, including the Miami International Airport Metrorail Station which is set to open on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Director also met with members of the County's Congressional delegation, Rep. John Duncan, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and committee staff.

Director Ylort held a briefing on Capitol Hill for House, Senate staff titled: "*Airportlink: Connecting Metrorail to Miami International Airport*" to discuss the newly completed airport link Metrorail extension from the existing Earlington Heights Station to the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) next to Miami International Airport (MIA). The Director touted the public benefits of the project which was developed by MDT with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and will provide seamless access to all modes of transportation, including Metrobus, Metrorail, Tri-rail, Amtrak, Greyhound, Tour buses, Taxis, and rental cars.

3. PortMiami Director Bill Johnson was also in D.C. attending the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Congressional Cruise Caucus 2012, which took place June 19-20.

### **BROOKINGS AND JPMORGAN CHASE BRING GLOBAL CITIES INITIATIVE TO GREATER MIAMI**



The Global Cities (GCI) Initiative, a joint project by Brookings and JPMorgan Chase, came to Miami this past week. Greater Miami mayors, business, civic, and philanthropic leaders from around the metropolitan area gathered for the GCI events on June 18 and 19 to discuss how to strengthen the region's global economic competitiveness in order to grow the economy and create jobs.

The forum sought to provide context on the position of Greater Miami in the global marketplace, highlight opportunities to strengthen global economic competitiveness, and offer insight into how metropolitan leaders can work together and with international partners to expand global trade and enhance the economic prosperity of your region.

In the near future, Brookings will circulate a report with key takeaways from the Miami Global Cities Initiative forum. Meantime, you can visit their [website](#), which will be updated with photos, videos and outcomes from the forum in the coming weeks. You can also [click here](#) to view the introductory speakers and Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program Bruce Katz's powerful presentation, "Greater Miami and the Next Economy."

Participating in the event were a variety of Miami-Dade County officials and staff, including Mayor Gimenez, Deputy Mayor Osterholt, PortMiami Director Bill Johnson and department staff from Aviation, PortMiami, the Beacon Council, OEDIT and representatives from the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau.

## **AGRICULTURAL MANAGER AND MIAMI-DADE AVOCADO GROWERS TO VISIT D.C. NEXT WEEK**

Miami-Dade County Agricultural Manager Charles LaPradd will be in Washington next week meeting with the Miami-Dade County congressional delegation and USDA officials. Joining Mr. LaPradd on the trip will be avocado growers from South Dade.

The purpose of the trip is to discuss critical federal funding provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which helps combat pests and diseases that negatively impact domestic crops. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) administers funding and programs that greatly benefit avocado growers in Miami-Dade County. The growers will be able to share their stories with members, staff and USDA officials directly, urging protection for this vital USDA-APHIS federal funding.

## **HHS SEC. SEBELIUS ANNOUNCES FEDERAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS IN MIAMI**

On Wednesday, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced awards of new grants made possible by the health care reform law to expand community health centers. The grants awarded to 219 health centers will help expand access to care for more than 1.25 million additional patients and create

approximately 5,640 jobs by establishing new health center service delivery sites, according to a press release by HHS.

Miami received two awards totaling over \$1 million in federal funds. The two awards went to Banyan Community Health Center, Inc., in the amount of \$595,833, and the Community AIDS Resource, Inc./Care Resource for \$487,500.

## **CDBG AND HOME FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION REDUCTIONS AND CENSUS DATA: CONFERENCE CALL**

The City of San Juan, Puerto Rico organized a call this week to discuss the reductions in CDBG/HOME allocations. There were representatives from the City of Miami, North Miami, Miami Gardens, Bloomfield, NJ, San Juan and other entitlement communities in PR on the call as well as the county's Federal contract lobbyists. Annie Lord of the South Florida Community Development Coalition (who OIA and PHCD have worked with on this issue) were also on the call. The purpose of the call was to bring together communities that were similarly affected by HUD's use of ACS data in the FY2012 CDBG and HOME allocations.

San Juan's efforts on this issue were discussed and included a formal appeal they made to HUD on their FY2012 CDBG allocation arguing that the ACS doesn't comply with the law because the ACS data is not collected at the same point in time, i.e. the ACS data they use is an average from a previous 4-5 year period. San Juan has requested that the 2000 Census data be used instead.

Options for a solution were brought up as well as the need to develop a strategy to deal with the cities who will be "losers" under a proposed remedy. For instance, if San Juan's solution is pursued by asking for the 2000 Census data to be used instead – would that apply to all entitlement communities or could they pick that option? If the group decides to move forward together on this then there will need to be a consensus on the option to pursue. There was also a brief discussion on the legal angle behind this and the potential for a legal challenge to HUD down the road.

The group is planning to coordinate a DC "fly-in" in July with mayors or elected officials from the affected entitlement communities to meet with Members to discuss the issue. *(Compiled by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

## **LAND CONVEYANCE FOR MDR PALMETTO BAY FIRE STATION**

Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen recently updated County Commissioners and officials on the movement on obtaining the land to build MDR #74. Miami-Dade County has been trying to purchase a parcel of land from the USDA for some time now, in order to construct the Palmetto Bay Fire Station #74 that would have a response area of parts of Palmetto Bay and Pinecrest and would help to cut down on response times to the areas of Cutler Bay and Coral Gables as well.

The Congresswoman informed OIA this week that the land conveyance language will be included in the Chairman's mark of the Farm Bill, which the House will take up in the next few weeks.

Last Congress a bill was introduced in the House and Senate to try to get this land conveyance done. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen reintroduced this piece of legislation last summer with the hopes of finally getting it passed. The Congresswoman has been actively working to get this legislation passed through Congress and OIA will continue to work in concert with her office.

## **OIA TO PARTICIPATE IN DHS CALL DISCUSSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Next week, OIA will participate in a conference call with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to discuss Human Trafficking. Since 2010, DHS has been improving the battle against human trafficking through the DHS Blue Campaign.

DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano proposed this initiative in order to advance the efforts against human trafficking. Through informational videos, public awareness activities, aiding victims more efficiently and collaborating with the private sector the DHS Blue Campaign is becoming more successful in handling these situations. The campaign is widely endorsed by various groups and elected officials, including Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz, who has been aggressive in his attempts to halt human trafficking.

## **REPS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ AND ROS-LEHTINEN TEAM UP FOR SOFTBALL GAME - RAISE MONEY TO FIGHT BREAST CANCER**

The Fourth Annual Congressional Women's Softball Game was held Wednesday night in Washington, D.C. This annual bipartisan game between female journalists and members of Congress benefits the Young Survival Coalition, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping young breast-cancer survivors. Miami-Dade County Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a breast cancer survivor herself, was joined on the field by female members in both parties from the House and Senate, including fellow South Florida Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

[For more info, check out [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2012/06/20/gJQAACXmsV\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2012/06/20/gJQAACXmsV_story.html)]

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

Thursday's Climate Communities webinar, was joined by Keith Canfield, Energy Manager, and Katie McClain, Building Retrofit Program Director, of the Clinton Climate Initiative to discuss "Financing Home Energy Retrofits through Payroll Deductions" which provided an overview of the successful HEAL program.

The call discussed Winfred Batch, an employee at L'Oréal USA, who is one of hundreds of individuals who have taken advantage of a unique energy efficiency program. Climate Communities said, "Winfred received a free energy audit that identified where energy was being wasted in his home. He also received a zero interest loan from his employer to pay for the recommended energy efficiency improvements. That investment, repaid in less than five months through payroll deductions, is already reaping energy savings for Winfred and helping his community reduce its carbon footprint."

"Businesses and homes across Arkansas are becoming much more energy efficient. Pioneered by the William J. Clinton Foundation's Climate Initiative, the Home Energy Affordability Loan (HEAL) program has helped companies and their employees improve energy performance in commercial and residential buildings through retrofits. The HEAL program is providing Arkansas businesses with facility audits and zero interest financing for energy efficiency improvements. Participating businesses must also agree to use a portion of their energy savings to develop a zero interest employee loan fund to finance residential energy improvements, specifically targeted at low-to-moderate income employees. Those employee loans are repaid through payroll deductions."

This employer-assisted energy benefit program is already producing significant benefits, including:

- Reducing energy and utility costs;
- Increasing the disposable income of homeowners;
- Stimulating the local economy through increased investment by homeowners;
- Helping to meet community affordable housing needs; and
- Improving indoor air quality and public health.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

*The week of June 25 – June 29*

*The House will be in session next week.*

*The Senate will be in session next week.*

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## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT JUNE 25 – JUNE 29, 2012**

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

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS FEDERAL HEALTH CARE LAW – CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN ROBERTS AUTHORS MAJORITY OPINION**

Thursday marked an historic day in U.S. Supreme Court history as the High Court announced its much-anticipated ruling on the legal challenges against the Affordable Care Act (ACA) brought by 26 states and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). The Court upheld the health care reform law's individual mandate in a 5-4 opinion authored by Chief Justice John Roberts, who was joined by Justices Elena Kagan, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Sonia Sotomayor.

The Court ruled that the individual mandate is a constitutional exercise of Congress' taxing authority, although the Court found the individual mandate exceeded Congress' authority to regulate commerce. Further, the Court held that Congress could not withdraw existing Medicaid funds from States for failure to comply with the ACA's expansion of Medicaid, but federal funding remains available to any State that affirms its willingness to participate.

The Court noted that Congress did not intend the payment to be treated as a "tax" for purposes of the Anti-Injunction Act and found that the Act did not bar its consideration of the suit. Under the law, the penalty for failing to obtain health insurance would be collected by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) through individual tax returns.

**A copy of the decision and the Justices' opinions can be found here <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/11-393c3a2.pdf>. A comprehensive analysis of the decision's impact provided by the Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team is attached to this report. (Provided by Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team)**

#### **Potential Impact on Florida and Miami-Dade County**

While a majority of justices upheld the vast majority of the law as Constitutional, they also ruled (7-2) that States may opt out of the ACA's expansion of Medicaid without losing all of their federal Medicaid funds. It is this part of the ruling that would likely have the most impact on the County. The Public Health Trust/Jackson Health Trust is the largest safety net provider in the State of Florida. The expansion of Medicaid was strongly supported by Jackson during the health care reform debate to ensure that more

people would have access to coverage under Medicaid and help to reduce the amount of indigent care at Jackson.

Shortly after ACA was enacted, States filed suit challenging the expansion of the Medicaid program. Under the health reform law, States are required to expand Medicaid coverage to persons under age 65 with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level. While the federal government will initially pay for the expansion – they will cover 100 percent of the cost of expansion for the first three years, from 2014 to 2016, and no less than 90 percent after that. Beginning in 2017, States would be responsible for approximately 10 percent of the expansion costs. While the federal government would be paying most of the costs, this additional 10 percent could cost States billions in additional Medicaid costs.

Under the law, the federal government could have penalized States that did not participate in the expansion by taking away their existing Medicaid money. While the Court upheld the expansion of Medicaid, it was this penalty that a majority of the justices objected to in today's decision. In the 7-2 ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government could not coerce the States to expand their Medicaid rolls by taking away their existing Medicaid funding. Because of this ruling, States, including Florida, could decide not to participate in the part of the law that expands Medicaid coverage. (In the Court's decision, Chief Justice Roberts also made clear that the problem with the Medicaid provision could be "fully remedied" by prohibiting the Department of Health and Human Services from taking away Medicaid funding.)

There have already been news reports in Florida that indicate Gov. Rick Scott will likely not seek expansion of the Medicaid program, but the issue will likely be debated by the Florida legislature next year. Florida already covers pregnant women and infants above 133 percent of the federal poverty level, but the ACA would require Florida to cover more people in families with older children and some childless adults. There are currently about 3.2 million people on Medicaid in Florida, costing the State approximately \$20 billion per year. According to reports, the expansion is estimated to increase the state's Medicaid rolls by approximately one-third, or more than 1 million people during the first 10 years. While the estimates vary, the State has estimated that the increased cost would be \$5.7 billion over six years.

It's not clear what States will ultimately decide to do. It may be difficult for States to walk away from significant amount federal Medicaid funding. There are currently seven states and the District of Columbia already offering expanded Medicaid coverage. They are using their own state funds to pay for the expanded coverage until the federal government begins paying all of the costs in 2014. However, major budget concerns in Florida will likely lead to a debate in the Florida legislature next year. Whether the State of Florida opts in or out, will determine what the direct impact will be on Miami-Dade County. *(Provided by Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

**AGRICULTURAL MANAGER AND SOUTH DADE AVOCADO GROWERS  
PAY WASHINGTON A VISIT**

Miami-Dade County Agricultural Manager Charles LaPradd was in Washington this week meeting with the Miami-Dade County congressional delegation, Gov. Rick Scott's Washington D.C. staff and USDA officials, including Senior Adviser to USDA Sec. Vilsack, Max Holtzman. Joining Mr. LaPradd on the trip were three avocado industry representatives from South Dade – Medora Krome, Avocado Grower, Homestead - Neal "Pal" Brooks, President of Brooks Tropical Inc., Homestead – Jonathan Crane, University of Florida Professor, Tropical Fruit Crop Specialist and Mr. Diego Rodriguez, President of Rodriguez Grove Services, Florida City.

The purpose of the trip was to advocate for emergency federal funding to be provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help in combating an invasive pest (the Ambrosia Beetle) that is spreading a disease (Laurel Wilt) that destroys infected avocado trees. In meetings with USDA officials and the congressional delegation, the growers shared their stories and provided an outline of their plan to prevent this threat from destroying the second largest fruit industry in the State of Florida. OIA will continue to work with Miami-Dade Agricultural Manager LaPradd and USDA to identify programs that could assist the County's avocado industry.

## **REP. RIVERA LAUDS HIGH COURT DECISION ON UNIVERSITY TRAVEL BAN TO TERRORIST STATES – A VICTORY FOR FLORIDA TAXPAYERS**

Rep. Rivera released the following press statement regarding the United States Supreme Court's decision to not hear an appeal regarding the Travel to Terrorist States Act, which prohibits private colleges and universities from using state funds, and public colleges and universities from using any funds to plan, organize or implement travel to countries designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism by the U.S. State Department. Currently, Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria are designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism. Congressman Rivera sponsored the Travel to Terrorist States Act in the Florida House of Representatives in 2006.

*"Today's Supreme Court decision is a victory for Florida taxpayers. The Travel to Terrorist States Act was passed unanimously by the Florida legislature and upheld by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. By denying another appeal on this case, the Supreme Court sends a clear message that the Florida legislature, the people's elected representatives, has the right to decide how the state's taxpayer dollars are spent and how they should not be spent. Floridians do not want their money or publicly-funded resources to be utilized for travel to terrorist nations, or to enrich terrorist regimes."*

## **HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON TAX ID THEFT**

The U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security held a hearing Thursday to discuss the growing problem of identity theft and income tax preparation fraud. The focus of the hearing was a bill introduced by South Florida Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz. "The Stopping Tax Offenders and Prosecuting Identity Theft Act" (H.R. 4362), introduced in April by U.S. Reps.

Wasserman Schultz and Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (TX) would strengthen criminal penalties and increase the prosecution rate of tax return identity thieves.

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman is planning to introduce a resolution through the National Association of Counties in support of federal legislation to combat tax return fraud.

In a statement released after the hearing, Wasserman Schultz said:

*"We have seen countless news stories about how tax refund identity theft is on the rise across the country, particularly in my district in South Florida. We must do something to protect Americans from ever having to go through the headache of identity theft. This is why Chairman Smith and I have introduced legislation that protects Americans and their tax dollars, while discouraging would-be thieves from perpetuating this crime."*

Among the panel of witnesses for the hearing was Sanford Zinman, the national chair of the Tax Committee of the National Conference of CPA Practitioners. He spoke in support of Rep. Wasserman Schultz's bill, noting that in 2009, the Identity Protection and Specialized Unit (IPSU) of the IRS had a total of 80,637 cases, and in 2010 the number of cases increased to 184,839. By 2011, the caseload increased to 226,356. The drastic increase in cases over just two years shows the magnitude of the tax return identity theft problem, and why federal legislation like Wasserman Schultz's bill is needed immediately. Additional witnesses at the hearing included Rebecca Sparkman, the Director of Operations Policy and Support of the IRS Criminal Investigation Division, Nina Olsen of the National Taxpayer Advocate and Michael Robinson, a victim of tax preparation fraud.

## **SEN. RUBIO JOINS BIPARTISAN GROUP OF SENATORS INTRODUCING RESOLUTION AGAINST INTERNATIONAL INTERNET REGULATION**

On Wednesday, Sens. Marco Rubio and Claire McCaskill (MO), along with Sen. Bill Nelson and others, introduced a Senate resolution calling on the U.S. government to reinforce its commitment to Internet freedom by opposing international efforts to cede greater Internet regulatory power to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

The concurrent resolution expresses *"the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, should continue working to implement the position of the United States on Internet governance that clearly articulates the consistent and unequivocal policy of the United States to promote a global Internet free from government control and preserve and advance the successful multi-stakeholder model that governs the Internet today."*

The measure is co-sponsored by Senators McCain (AZ), Kerry (MA), DeMint (SC), Bill Nelson, Johanns (NE), Udall (NM), Ayotte (NH) and Warner (VA). Sen. Rubio released the following statement upon introducing the resolution:



*"The Internet as we know it has transformed our societies and economies, and it has thrived because it is open, free, and encourages innovation and information sharing. An international regulatory regime goes against the very nature of the Internet and its purpose of sharing ideas and connecting people. The United States must lead an international effort to prevent authoritarian governments and regimes from diminishing Internet freedom."*

## **TRANSPORATION BILL HEADS TO THE WHITE HOUSE – NACo & USCOM BILL SUMMARIES – COUNTY BRT LANGUAGE VICTORY**

Today, both the House and the Senate passed "The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act." The House vote was 373-52. The Senate vote was 74-19 with one Senator voting "present."

Miami-Dade Transit Director Ysela Ylort, OIA and the Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team worked closely with Sen. Bill Nelson's office to maintain favorable bus rapid transit language that preserves eligibility for the Miami-Dade Transit enhanced bus projects. Some bill highlights provided by the National Association of Counties (NACo) include the following:

- The bill provides a slight funding increase – the federal highway program is funded at \$39.699 billion for FY 2013 and \$40.256 for FY 2014 and the transit program for \$10.584 in FY 2013 and \$10.701 in FY 2014. What was not in the final legislation was any provision addressing the Keystone Pipeline nor any provision concerning the regulation of coal ash, two controversial items included in the House bill.
- The off-system bridge program, which has funneled \$650 million annually to bridges not on the federal-aid system, mainly county-owned bridges, is retained. This is a major NACo victory and will help address 80,000 deficient off-system bridges.
- A number of proposed changes to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning process title, including the Senate approach which changed the process dramatically and in some cases eliminated certain regions, were rejected and much of the current MPO planning language was continued. The population threshold for MPOs remains at 50,000 and rural regions get new authority in the planning process.
- A series of provisions relating to project or environmental streamlining were adopted, which should lead to a faster approval process for federally funded highway and bridge projects on county highways. There are a number of provisions relating to the broadening of categorical exclusions for those projects in the right-of-way. There is also a provision eliminating from an environmental review any federally funded project of less than \$5 million and those projects of not more than \$30 billion receiving federal funds comprising less than 15 percent of the total project costs.

- The transportation enhancement program is reduced substantially, though metro areas over 200,000 fare better than smaller communities with project selection in the larger areas residing with MPOs and in areas under 200,000 decisions will be made by the state DOTs.
- TIFIA is increased dramatically to \$750 million in FY 2013 and \$1 billion in FY 2014.
- The federal transit program keeps its basic structure with some reforms. Per current law, urban areas over 200,000 cannot use funds for transit operating expenses and a Senate provision providing these communities with flexibility on this issue in times of high unemployment was not included in the final bill. Areas under 200,000 can continue to use their formula funds for operating assistance.
- The New Starts program streamlines the approval process to accelerate project delivery. The Elderly and Disabled and New Freedom programs are consolidated and the rural formula program is maintained with a slight increase in funding.

In a statement following the bill's passage, Miami-Dade County Rep. David Rivera said, *"this legislative package keeps interest rates on student loans low for another year and reauthorizes the National Flood Insurance Program—giving peace of mind to many of my constituents. The bill also implements enhancements and consolidation measures to streamline our nation's transportation programs and give state and local governments more control over their funds. Most importantly, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act is fully paid for and does not raise taxes on the American people."*

The bill now goes to the President for his signature. A summary of the bill provided by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Democratic Staff, via the U.S. Conference of Mayors, is attached to this report.

## **FYI – FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS IS (AGAIN) RUNNING OUT OF TIME**

There are twelve appropriations bills that, when taken together, make up the entire federal budget. These bills should be passed before the federal fiscal year starts, which is on October 1. If some, or all, of the twelve bills are not passed in time, Congress continues the activities of the unfunded agencies by a Continuing Resolution until the regular bills are passed. Ideally the twelve bills are considered and passed individually. However they are often combined into an Omnibus Appropriations bill. So far this year the House has passed six of the twelve bills on the House floor. They are:

- Commerce, Justice, Science
- Energy and Water
- Homeland Security
- Legislative Branch
- Military Construction/Veterans Affairs

- Transportation, HUD appropriations bill

This week the House may also begin consideration of the Agriculture appropriations bill. However, it is not expected to complete action on the Agriculture bill before Congress adjourns for the Fourth of July recess. Congress will be out of session all next week.

Thus by the end of June, the House will have passed six of the twelve bills, and will have started consideration of the seventh. In addition, another three bills have been marked up and reported out by the House Appropriations Committee. They are:

- Defense
- State and Foreign Operations
- Financial Services

Another bill, the Interior, Environment bill, was marked up in the Full House Appropriations Committee this week. That only leaves one bill that has not started the process -- the bill that funds the Departments of Labor, HHS, and Education. It is expected that the bill will be extremely controversial as the House Republicans want to make significant cuts in the various programs funded by the measure.

In the Senate, none of the bills have been considered on the floor. The Senate leadership continues to say that it wants to debate the appropriations bills, but other legislation fills up the available floor time. It is possible that as many as three appropriations bills may be considered before the Congress adjourns for the elections, but certainly not more.

The Senate has marked up and reported out nine of the bills from the Senate Appropriations Committee. They are:

- Commerce, Justice, Science
- Energy and Water
- Homeland Security
- Transportation, HUD
- Financial Services
- Labor, HHS, Education
- Agriculture
- Military Construction/Veterans Affairs
- State, Foreign Operations

Three bills have yet to be considered. They are:

- Legislative Branch
- Defense
- Interior, Environment

Time is becoming a factor. After the Fourth of July break, Congress will be in session four weeks in July then out all of August and through September 11. At that point, it will be in session about three or four weeks before adjourning for the elections. It is clear that most of the twelve bills will remain uncompleted when the fiscal year starts. Almost all of the government will operate under a Continuing Resolution. The only real question is whether even one of the bills will be completed in time this year. *(Provided by Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

## **REP. WILSON ANNOUNCES \$ 1.7 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING TO CITY OF MIAMI AND MIAMI GARDENS**

Rep. Frederica Wilson announced a \$1,250,000 COPS Hiring Program grant to the City of Miami Gardens, and a \$487,500 Affordable Care Act (ACA) grant to the Care Resource Community Health Center in Miami. The grant funding was made available through the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services.

According to Attorney General Eric Holder, all of the newly hired law enforcement officers through the 2012 COPS Hiring Program will be military veterans who have served at least 180 days in the U.S. armed forces since September 11, 2001. Rep. Wilson released the following statement upon announcing

*“These grants could not have gone to two more deserving entities,” “Miami Gardens’ COPS grant will not only help make its streets safer – it will also support the hiring of veterans. As a lifelong veterans advocate, I commend President Obama for his unwavering support of veterans in Miami Gardens and throughout the nation.”*

*“Also, I am pleased to announce that Care Resource, the largest HIV/AIDS service organization in South Florida, through the ACA grant, will be able to serve more members of our community who are living with HIV/AIDS.”*

## **DHS CONFERENCE CALL TALKS ABOUT EFFORTS TO CURB HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

OIA participated in a conference call with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to discuss the issue of human trafficking this week. Since 2010, DHS has been improving the battle against human trafficking through the DHS Blue Campaign.

DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano proposed this initiative in order to advance the efforts against human trafficking. Through informational videos, public awareness activities, aiding victims more efficiently and collaborating with the private sector the DHS Blue Campaign is becoming more successful in handling these situations. The campaign is widely endorsed by various groups and elected officials, including Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz, who has been aggressive in his attempts to halt human trafficking.

During the call, DHS provided information about national efforts to train state and local law enforcement, with many programs being offered through DHS via the Internet at [http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc\\_1298390940581.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1298390940581.shtm).

*Some additional notes from the call:*

- Encouraged state and local law enforcement agencies to complete their online training programs.
- Increased gang involvement reported by local law enforcement, due to the high profitability of trafficking (upwards of \$32B annually).
- Centered around the Three P's of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act: Prevention (of the crime), Protection (of the Victim), and the Prosecution (of the Perpetrator). A fourth P, Partnership, has been added to signify the collaboration among local, state, federal and non-governmental organizations, that is key to fighting human trafficking.
- Stressed importance of the inclusion of both sexual trafficking as well as forced labor trafficking.
- Discussed victim visas (U-Visas and T-Visas) which grant immigration protection to victims who assist law enforcement in the investigation and prosecution of human traffickers.

## **“HEAT” WAVE IN D.C. AND CONGRESSIONAL BASEBALL**

In a week where temperatures in our nation’s capital approached 100 degrees and the Supreme Court handed down a decision on one of the most hotly debated issues since our country’s founding, cooler heads prevailed to enjoy the collegial comity provided by sport.

First, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (along with Senators Nelson and Rubio) introduced a resolution recognizing the 2012 NBA Champion Miami Heat. The Congresswoman’s resolution recognized Heat ownership and players, along with local

officials, including Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chairman Joe Martinez and the entire BCC. A full copy of the resolution can be found here - <http://miamiherald.typepad.com/files/heat-resolution-6.26.12.pdf>. The resolution states, in part:

*“(4) ...the Clerk of the House of Representatives (will) transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to –*

*(A) each of the Miami Heat players;*

*(B) Pat Riley, Miami Heat president;*

*(C) Micky Arison, Miami Heat owner and managing general partner;*

*(D) Eric Woolworth, Miami Heat president of business operations;*

*(E) Andy Elisburg, Miami Heat senior vice president of basketball operations;*

*(F) each of the Miami Heat coaches and trainers;*

*(G) the Honorable Tomas Regalado, Mayor of the City of Miami, Florida;*

*(H) the Honorable Carlos Gimenez, Mayor of Miami-Dade County, Florida;*

*(I) the Honorable Joe Martinez, Chairman of the Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners;*

*(J) all of the Commissioners of the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County; and*

*(K) the Honorable Rock Scott, Governor of Florida”*

And, hot on the heels of last week's congressional softball game to raise funds and awareness for the fight against breast cancer, Members of Congress gathered at Washington National's Stadium on Thursday evening to partake in our "national pastime" – the annual Congressional Baseball Game. In the 51<sup>st</sup> game, which raises money for the Boys and Girls Club and the Washington Literacy Council, Democrats routed the Republicans 18 – 5.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

*The week of July 2 – July 6:*

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

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

*Happy Fourth of July!*

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