

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT**

**JANUARY 7 – JANUARY 11, 2013**

**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*

### **MAYOR GIMENEZ JOINS REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AT GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION ROUNDTABLE**

On Friday, Mayor Gimenez and OIA attended a roundtable discussion, hosted by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, with local public officials and law enforcement agency personnel to discuss ideas to prevent gun violence in local communities and schools. After the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, a national discussion has taken place among community leaders; gun safety advocates the gun and entertainment industries and gun rights groups, about the best way to prevent mass shooting tragedies like Newtown, Columbine and Virginia Tech from occurring again. Some policy proposals that have been mentioned during the ongoing public debate include a reinstatement of the federal assault weapons ban, enhanced universal background checks, closing loopholes in existing law and arming security staff in schools.

The roundtable was held at the Broward Sheriff's office in Ft. Lauderdale. Following the meeting, Rep. Wasserman Schultz and the participants held a media availability to talk about the discussion and next steps. In a comment provided via the Congresswoman's facebook page, Rep. Wasserman Schultz said the roundtable was "...a great start to what I hope will be an ongoing discussion that will lead to real change."

### **REP. GARCIA SENDS LETTER TO DHS SEC. NAPOLITANO REGARDING CBP STAFFING AT MIA**

In one of his first official acts after being sworn in as the newly elected Representative of Florida's 26th congressional district, Rep. Joe Garcia sent the following letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano, stressing the importance of adequate Customs and Border Protection (CBP) staffing at Miami International Airport (MIA).

OIA, the Aviation Department, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Gov. Scott's Washington D.C. office and the county's congressional delegation have been working together to impress upon DHS the need for increased CBP staff at MIA. The

Congressman has indicated the staffing shortage is an issue he intends to be fully engaged with until it is resolved. The Secretary has indicated she plans to visit MIA in the near future to view firsthand the obstacles international travelers face when entering the United States through MIA.

The need for additional CBP staff is spurred, in part, from a January 19, 2012 Executive Order signed by President Obama which directed his Administration to develop a national strategy to make the U.S. the world's number one travel and tourism destination. A signature piece to the President's order includes tasking the Departments of State and Homeland Security with increasing non-immigrant visa processing from China and Brazil by 40 percent in 2012. At current CBP staffing levels, MIA (like other large international gateway airports across the U.S.), will not be adequately equipped to appropriately handle the increased volume that could result from the President's order. (Copy of the letter sent by Rep. Garcia, below)

*Dear Secretary Napolitano,*

*I am writing to express my strong interest in working with you and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to address the immigration and customs issues at Miami International Airport (MIA).*

*As the busiest airport in the United States for international flights and the "Gateway to the Americas," MIA is a vital economic engine for the region. In order to address the lengthy customs delays that many international passengers continue to experience, it is essential that the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) dedicate greater resources to expedite passenger processing. Doing so will enable MIA to ensure the best possible experience for international travelers and ultimately help ensure that we can grow our international tourism industry to its full potential.*

*Recognizing MIA's important economic role, the Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD) has invested more than \$180 million to construct a new 400,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility in the North Terminal. This is the final phase of a nearly \$3 billion investment that will solidify MIA's place as a premier international gateway and a major player for international passenger and cargo traffic. To ensure, however, that MIA can take full advantage of this new facility's potential, it is critical that CBP more effectively utilize current CBP staff and ultimately increase staffing levels at MIA.*

*It is my understanding that CBP and MDAD enjoy a strong working relationship and have worked effectively and collaboratively in the past to address issues. Although we all recognize that more needs to be done to expedite passenger processing, I very much appreciate CBP's efforts thus far, as well as your decision to visit MIA early this year to see first-hand the challenges that remain to be addressed.*

*I know that the Miami-Dade Congressional Delegation has been actively engaged with DHS to address these concerns. I very much look forward to working with you and my colleagues to make additional progress on these issues and to enhance MIA's ability to serve as an economic engine for the region.*

*Sincerely,  
Joe Garcia  
Member of Congress*

## **COMMISSIONER MONESTIME, CHAIRWOMAN SOSA'S OFFICE, OIA ATTEND REP. ROS-LEHTINEN OPEN HOUSE FOR MUNICIPAL LEADERS TO DISCUSS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime, Chairwoman Sosa's staff and OIA joined elected officials from throughout Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen's congressional district at an open house on Thursday. The Congresswoman hosted the open house in her district office to hear about the issues and legislative priorities of local elected officials, and begin discussing ways she can assist them in addressing those concerns within her legislative agenda for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

## **REPS. ROS-LEHTINEN AND DIAZ-BALART TO HOLD IMMIGRATION FORUM**

On Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart will host a forum to listen to ideas and suggestions for immigration reform from the public and a wide range of community stakeholders in the South Florida community. The event will take place at 10 a.m. at the AWS Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 8669 NW 36 Street, Doral, FL 33166.

## **REP. DIAZ-BALART ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF REP. ROS-LEHTINEN AS CHC VICE CHAIR**

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Conference (CHC), announced the election of Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen as the Vice Chair for CHC.

*Rep. Diaz-Balart said, "I am happy to announce the election of my dear friend Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen as Vice Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Conference. I look forward to working with Vice Chair Ros-Lehtinen in representing and advancing issues important to the Hispanic community in Congress."*

*Rep. Ros-Lehtinen added, "I'm honored to serve as Vice Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Conference. I look forward to working with my friend and South Florida colleague Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart and the other CHC members on the pressing problems our nation faces. I know that we can help*

*solve many of these issues through bipartisan cooperation in Congress and the CHC will be a catalyst in these efforts."*

## **OIA ATTENDS GREATER MIAMI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEETING ON EVERGLADES CONSERVATION AND TOURISM WITH INTERIOR SEC. SALAZAR**

The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce hosted an event that featured Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. OIA attended the event, at which Secretary Salazar spoke about tourism and conservation efforts that have been carried out by his department and the Obama Administration over the last four years, and what the agency has in store for the next four years. The Q&A session included comments from the Secretary about the federal government's possible campaign to persuade international visitors to travel to the U.S. for the purpose of so-called "medical tourism" trips, in addition to the importance of having efficient visa processing for Latin American citizens who wish to travel to the country for traditional tourism purposes.

According to Associated Press reports, Sec. Salazar was also in Miami to join Everglades activists, elected officials and business leaders to discuss government funded restoration projects. The Everglades Coalition Conference opened on Thursday in Coral Gables and is focusing on nudging forward "existing efforts that protect wildlife, preserve clean water and promote the economic benefits of Everglades restoration." Also reported, "the South Florida Water Management District held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a Miami-Dade County canal project that is the first to be completed under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The canal project helps restore freshwater flows to Florida Bay, keeps clean water in Everglades National Park and maintains flood control for communities east of the Everglades." Sec. Salazar was to deliver the keynote address for the conference at the Biltmore Hotel on Friday evening.

## **REP. DIAZ-BALART CELEBRATES DEDICATION OF EVERGLADES RESTORATION MILESTONE: C-111 SPREADER CANAL WESTERN PROJECT**

Today, Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, founder and co-chair of the Everglades Caucus, attended the dedication of the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project, the first project to be completed in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). In 2004, Congressman Diaz-Balart authored H.R. 3785, which authorized the land swap between the State of Florida and Everglades National Park in order to construct the canal. The purpose of the canal is to restore freshwater flows to Florida Bay through Taylor Slough and to preserve clean water for Everglades National Park and maintain flood controls for eastern communities. H.R. 3785 was signed into law later that year.

*The Congressman said, "I am pleased to join the South Florida Water Management District in today's dedication of the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project. The canal is a key component to restoring fresh water flows in the*

*Everglades. Florida is blessed to have a natural treasure like the Everglades, and we have an obligation to preserve it for future generations."*

## **CABINET SHAKEUP FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SECOND TERM ALREADY UNDERWAY**

President Obama has begun the process of altering the makeup of his cabinet with several nominations being announced by the White House this week. In addition to Senator John Kerry, who was previously nominated to replace outgoing Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, the President named former Republican Senator Chuck Hagel to replace Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, White House Chief of Staff Jacob Lew to take over for Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and National Security Advisor John Brennan to head up the Central Intelligence Agency post vacated by Gen. David Petraus. Additionally, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis announced yesterday that she would be leaving her post at the U.S. Department of Labor. President Obama has yet to name a replacement to the Labor Secretary post.

While Lew and Brennan may face some opposition during the nomination process, the announcement of Senator Hagel as Panetta's replacement has been the most controversial among both Democrats and Republicans. The former Nebraska Senator has come under intense scrutiny for comments he previously made regarding homosexuals, Israel, U.S. involvement in Iran and notably bucking his own party in voicing strong opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The third ranking Democratic Senator, Chuck Schumer (NY), has reportedly voiced his concerns about Hagel's nomination to Jewish community leaders in New York, and his support or opposition could make or break the President's choice.

The confirmation process is expected to begin in the next few weeks. Senator Kerry's confirmation won't take place until after Secretary Clinton testifies before Congress regarding the attack on the American consulate in Benghazi.

### **The following is a list of major cabinet changes reported:**

- State – Sec. Hillary Clinton (*Sen. John Kerry nominated*)
- Treasury – Sec. Timothy Geithner (*White House Chief of Staff Jacob Lew nominated*)
- Defense – Sec. Leon Panetta (*former Sen. Chuck Hagel nominated*)
- Labor – Sec. Hilda Solis (*resigned 1/9/13, no replacement named*)
- Central Intelligence Agency – Dir. Michael Morell - Acting (*Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan nominated*)

- Environmental Protection Agency – Admin. Lisa Jackson (*announced 12/27/12 she would be stepping down*)

## **REP. ROS-LEHTINEN CO-SPONSORS FEDERAL RESERVE TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2013**

Rep. Ros-Lehtinen agreed this week to cosponsor Congressman Paul Broun's bill, H.R. 24, to require an audit of the Fed and make it more accountable to the American taxpayer. H.R. 24 is identical to the Federal Reserve Transparency Act (H.R. 459) which passed the House last July by an overwhelming bi-partisan vote of 327-98. It directs the independent Comptroller General to complete, over the next year, an audit of the Federal Reserve System and of the Federal Reserve banks, followed by a detailed report to Congress. H.R. 24 is a great first step in providing the Fed with more responsibility, accountability and transparency to you and other taxpayers.

## **GOV. SCOTT MEETS WITH HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY**

On Monday, Gov. Rick Scott met with U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to discuss how the state can improve cost, quality and access in healthcare for Florida families. Governor Scott said his meeting with Sec. Sebelius focused on the projected \$26 billion state cost of doubling people in Florida's Medicaid program under the president's new healthcare law, and requesting HHS approval for the state's long-term care and Statewide Medicaid Managed Care plans that would make healthcare more affordable.

*Governor Scott said, "We had a great conversation with Sec. Sebelius today about how we can improve cost, quality and access in healthcare for Florida families. We need to know more about how the healthcare choices facing our state would affect families – many who are still struggling to get a job and make ends meet.*

*"I believe that Medicaid is an important healthcare safety net. Florida's Medicaid program today provides health care to over 3.3 million Floridians and is approximately 30 percent of our state budget. The cost of Medicaid has been growing at three-and-one-half times the growth rate of the state's general revenue, which crowds out our ability to invest in K-12 education, higher education and other priorities.*

*"Growing government is never free. Under the new healthcare law, Florida would nearly double the people in our Medicaid program over 10 years. AHCA estimates that this would result in a total cost to taxpayers of more than \$63 billion over 10 years, including \$26 billion in costs to Florida taxpayers. We also know that adding people to Medicaid will affect our state for generations to come*

*because government growth is almost never reversed. The current fiscal cliff debate here in Washington is proof of that.*

*"I also asked Sec. Sebelius to approve our state's Statewide Medicaid Managed Care and long term care proposals, which are currently awaiting HHS approval. We also discussed ideas for lowering health care costs, including tax incentives for individuals to buy insurance, price incentives for healthy behaviors, and flexibility to buy personalized coverage. Our ultimate goal is to lower the cost of healthcare in Florida so all families can access the level of care they desire."*

## **FIU ALUM NAMED INAUGURAL POET FOR PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION**

This week the Presidential Inauguration Committee (PIC) announced that Richard Blanco will serve as the Inaugural poet at the swearing-in ceremony on Monday, January 21. Blanco will be the youngest-ever Inaugural poet and the first Hispanic or LGBT person to recite a poem at the swearing-in ceremony. Born in Spain to Cuban exiles, Blanco's parents emigrated to New York City days after his birth and eventually settled in Miami. Blanco, an alumni of Florida International University (FIU), is the first Latino, first gay man, and youngest person to serve the role as Inaugural poet.

*"I'm honored that Richard Blanco will join me and Vice President Biden at our second Inaugural," President Obama said today. "His contributions to the fields of poetry and the arts have already paved a path forward for future generations of writers. Richard's writing will be wonderfully fitting for an Inaugural Born in Spain to Cuban exiles, Blanco's parents emigrated to New York City days after his birth and eventually settled in Miami. that will celebrate the strength of the American people and our nation's great diversity."*

As a writer, Blanco explores the collective American experience of cultural negotiation through the lens of family and love, particularly his mother's life shaped by exile, his relationship with his father, and the passing of a generation of relatives. His work also explores the intersection of his cultural identities as a Cuban-American gay man.

*"I'm beside myself, bestowed with this great honor, brimming over with excitement, awe, and gratitude," Blanco said today. "In many ways, this is the very 'stuff' of the American Dream, which underlies so much of my work and my life's story—America's story, really. I am thrilled by the thought of coming together during this great occasion to celebrate our country and its people through the power of poetry."*

In addition to writing poetry, Blanco has worked to strengthen communities and support neighbors, from working with students on writing and interpreting poems throughout the country to serving as a member of his town's Planning Board in Bethel, Maine where he currently lives. His commitment reflects the ideals of the National Day of Service, and demonstrates that, as President Obama has said, we can all give back to our communities. The first inaugural poet was Robert Frost at President Kennedy's 1961

inauguration. In 1993, at the inauguration of President Clinton, Maya Angelou became the second inaugural poet and the first to read an original poem at an inauguration. She was followed by Miller Williams in 1997 and Elizabeth Alexander in 2009.

## **OIA TO ATTEND LOCAL SWEARING-IN OF CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS**

On Monday, OIA will attend the swearing-in of five local Members of Congress, two of which represent Miami-Dade County, at the Federal Court House in Fort Lauderdale. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Frederica Wilson, whose districts cover parts of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, will be joined by Reps. Alcee Hastings, Ted Deutsch and Lois Frankel.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

*The week of January 14 – January 18:*

- The House will be in session next week.
- The Senate will not be in session next week.
- Presidential Inauguration - Monday, January 21
- State of the Union Address - Tuesday, February 12

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## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT**

**JANUARY 21 – JANUARY 25, 2013**

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

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*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **THE 57<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION**

President Obama and Vice President Biden were sworn in for their second term on Sunday, taking the constitutionally mandated oath of office in two separate private ceremonies held at their official residences in Washington, DC. The President was officially sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts shortly before noon in the Blue Room of the White House. The Vice President was sworn in by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic to administer a presidential oath, in a ceremony at the U.S. Naval Observatory.

The President and Vice President ceremoniously repeated their oaths on Monday on the west front of the U.S. Capitol. Because January 20 (the officially designated date for a new presidential term) fell on a Sunday, the traditional public inauguration ceremony and parade were delayed by one day to Monday, January 21, the birthday of American Civil Rights icon Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Miami-Dade County

Miami-Dade County Commissioners Sally Heyman and Jean Monestime were in Washington, D.C. for the inauguration and related events, including an open house held for congressional members' constituents in "the country's oldest federal cultural institution," the Library of Congress. The event was hosted by Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz and other members of the South Florida congressional delegation. OIA attended the inauguration and related events, including a pre-inauguration event hosted by Florida International University (FIU) that honored esteemed alum and inaugural poet, Richard Blanco.

### **RICHARD BLANCO – CHILD OF CUBAN EXILES, RAISED IN MIAMI, FIU GRAD, INAUGURAL POET**

Mr. Richard Blanco, who was born in Madrid, Spain and immigrated as an infant with his Cuban exile family to Miami, joined an elite group of people that includes Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, Miller Williams and Elizabeth Alexander, when he was chosen to read a poem at the 57<sup>th</sup> presidential inauguration. Mr. Blanco is only the fifth person ever chosen to recite a poem at an inauguration.

The text of the original poem, "One Today," written and recited at the ceremony, can be found by accessing the following link - <http://tinyurl.com/b7k7ytw>.

Blanco is also the youngest inaugural poet at the age of 44, as well as the first Hispanic and openly gay person. He earned a bachelor's degree from Florida International University (FIU) in Civil Engineering in 1991 and a Master in Fine Arts in Creative Writing in 1997, also from FIU.

## **SEN. FEINSTEIN, REP. MCCARTHY, LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS AND GUN VIOLENCE VICTIMS GROUPS PUSH FOR ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN**

Senator Dianne Feinstein (CA) yesterday was joined by a broad coalition representing Congress, law enforcement, doctors, clergy and gun violence victims to announce the introduction of the *Assault Weapons Ban of 2013*. The bill bans military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition feeding devices capable of holding more than 10 rounds.

The Senate bill includes original co-sponsors: Senators Charles Schumer (N.Y.), Dick Durbin (IL.), Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.), Richard Blumenthal (CN.), Carl Levin (Mich.), Barbara Mikulski (MD.), Barbara Boxer (D-CA.), Jack Reed (R.I.), Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), Robert Menendez (N.J.), Ben Cardin (MD.), Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.), Chris Murphy (CN.) and Elizabeth Warren (MA.).

*"The bill introduced today is the product of more than a year of work, with input from across the country," Feinstein said. "Getting this bill signed into law will be an uphill battle, and I recognize that—but it's a battle worth having. We must balance the desire of a few to own military-style assault weapons with the growing threat to lives across America. If 20 dead children in Newtown wasn't a wakeup call that these weapons of war don't belong on our streets, I don't know what is."*

### **The *Assault Weapons Ban of 2013* has two principal goals:**

- First, the bill prohibits the sale, manufacture, transfer and importation of more than 150 of the most commonly-owned military-style assault weapons. It also bans an additional group of assault weapons that can accept a detachable ammunition magazine and have one or more military characteristics.
- Second, the bill bans large-capacity magazines and other ammunition feeding devices that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. These devices allow shooters to fire numerous rounds in rapid succession without having to stop and reload.

The legislation also protects the rights of law-abiding citizens who use guns for hunting, household defense or legitimate recreational purposes. The *Assault Weapons Ban*

includes a grandfather clause that specifically exempts all assault weapons lawfully possessed at the date of enactment from the ban. The legislation also excludes:

- More than 2,200 legitimate hunting and sporting rifles by specific make and model;
- Any gun manually operated by bolt, pump, lever or slide action; and
- Weapons used by government officials, law enforcement and retired law enforcement.

**Other key provisions in the bill:**

- Requires background checks on all future transfers of assault weapons covered by the legislation, including sale, trade and gift.
- Requires that grandfathered assault weapons be stored safely using a secure gun storage or safety device in order to keep them away from prohibited persons.
- Prohibits the sale or transfer of high-capacity ammunition feeding devices that are currently in existence.

*"I believe this bill is a big step toward ending the mass shootings that have devastated families across the country—from Newtown to Aurora, from Tucson to Virginia Tech, from Columbine to Oak Creek," Feinstein said. "It's time for Americans to stand up and tell the gun manufacturers that the lives of our children are more important than their profits and get these dangerous weapons out of our schools, our workplaces, our malls and our theaters. It's time to take action and we'll get it done, no matter how long it takes."*

Senator Feinstein was joined at the press conference by Senators Durbin, Schumer, Blumenthal and Murphy; Reps. Carolyn McCarthy (N.Y.), Rep. Ed Perlmutter (CO.) and Elizabeth Esty (CN.); Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter (also president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors); Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey (also president of the Major Cities Chiefs Police Association); and a wide range of groups that have endorsed the bill.

For additional information please use the following link: [Summary of the bill](#)

## **SENATOR RUBIO TO INTRODUCE IMMIGRATION INNOVATION ACT OF 2013**

On Tuesday, Senator Rubio, along with Senators Hatch, Klobuchar and Coons will introduce the *Immigration Innovation (I<sup>2</sup>) Act of 2013*.

*Below is a draft summary of the major provisions of the bill:*

### ***H-1B Visas***

- Increase H-1B cap from 65,000 to 115,000
- Establish a market-based H-1B escalator, so that the cap can adjust – up or down – to the demands of the economy (includes a 300,000 ceiling on the ability of the escalator to move)
- Uncap the existing U.S. advanced degree exemption (currently limited to 20,000 per year)
- Authorize employment for dependent spouses of H-1B visa holders
- Increase portability of high skilled foreign workers by:
  - Removing impediments and costs of changing employers;
  - Establishing a clear transition period for foreign workers as they change jobs; and,
  - Restoring visa revalidation for E, H, L, O, and P nonimmigrant visa categories

### ***Student Visas***

- Allow dual intent for foreign students at U.S. colleges and universities

### ***Immigrant Visas and Green Cards***

- Enable the recapture of green card numbers that were approved by Congress in previous years but were not used
- Exempt certain categories of persons from the employment-based green card cap:
  - Dependents of employment-based immigrant visa recipients
  - U.S. STEM advance degree holders
  - Persons with extraordinary ability
  - Outstanding professors and researchers
- Provide for the roll-over of unused employment-based immigrant visa numbers to the following fiscal year so future visas are not lost due to bureaucratic delays
- Eliminate annual per-country limits for employment based visa petitioners and adjust per-country caps for family-based immigrant visas

### ***U.S. STEM Education & Worker Retraining Initiative***

- Reform fees on H-1B visas and employment-based green cards; use money from these fees to fund a grant program to promote STEM education and worker retraining at the State level

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT REINTRODUCED IN 113TH CONGRESS**

On Wednesday, the Violence Against Women Act was reintroduced in the 113th Congress. Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who is an original co-sponsor, released the following statement:

*"I'm proud to stand with my fellow House Democrats as we introduce the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. With the help of a bipartisan coalition in the Senate, this bill will provide needed resources and support to all victims of domestic violence, and ensure that we continue working to prevent abuse from happening in the first place. With nearly 1.3 million victims of domestic violence each year, it's imperative that this bill not face another moment of delay. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and its swift passage."*

## **PRESIDENT NAMES NEW CHIEF OF STAFF, STREET GETS NEW WATCHDOG AND USTR AMB KIRK TO LEAVE POST**

This week President Obama made several new appointments to his Administration. On Friday, the President named Denis McDonough as his new Chief of Staff, succeeding Jacob Lew, who is the nominee to head the Treasury Department following the departure of Timothy Geithner. McDonough, the deputy national security adviser, is a foreign policy expert who worked for Obama during his time in the Senate and later advised the president's 2008 campaign.

The President also named Mary Jo White to lead the Security and Exchange Commission, and Richard Cordray to continue leading the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau this week. Ms. White, the first United States Attorney in Manhattan, spent more than a decade as a top federal prosecutor in New York City, overseeing the prosecution of crime boss John Gotti and the perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Mr. Cordray has led the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for the last year as a temporary recess appointment which may complicate his confirmation in the Senate.

Also this week U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk announced he would be leaving the administration at the end of February. *The Washington Post* reports possible successors to the Ambassador include "Fred Hochberg, a businessman who had been acting Small Business Administration chief in the Clinton Administration and is now chairman of the Export-Import Bank; Francisco Sanchez, currently Commerce undersecretary for international trade and before that assistant secretary of transportation in the Clinton administration; and Jeff Zients, former CEO of The Advisory Board Co. and now acting director of the Office of Management and Budget." Commissioner Joe "Pepe" Diaz has worked closely with Ambassador Kirk as he is currently serving a four-year term on the Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee on Trade at USTR.

**The following is a list of major cabinet changes reported:**

- State – Sec. Hillary Clinton (**Sen. John Kerry nominated**)
- Treasury – Sec. Timothy Geithner (**White House Chief of Staff Jacob Lew nominated**)
- Defense – Sec. Leon Panetta (**former Sen. Chuck Hagel nominated**)
- Labor – Sec. Hilda Solis (*resigned 1/9/13, no replacement named*)
- Interior – Sec. Ken Salazar (*resigned 1/16/13, no replacement named*)
- Central Intelligence Agency – Dir. Michael Morell - Acting (**Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan nominated**)
- Environmental Protection Agency – Admin. Lisa Jackson (*announced 12/27/12 she would be stepping down*)

## **REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ WILL SERVE AS RANKING MEMBER OF APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

For the 113th Congress, the House Committee on Appropriations recommended U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz to serve as a ranking member of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee. The Appropriations subcommittees determine the Congressional appropriations of funds for particular parts of the federal government. Rep. Wasserman Schultz will serve on the subcommittee that determines the funding level for the entire legislative branch.

Wasserman Schultz was also recommended to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, where she will advocate for funding for security, economic, and humanitarian assistance, as well as work to reduce poverty around the world.

*"I look forward to working on behalf of our nation as we shape and determine the appropriations for the "people's house" - the Legislative branch of the government," said Rep. Wasserman Schultz. "It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of the committee that determines funding for some of the important landmarks and operations in Washington D.C. – from the Government Printing Office which prints official government documents including passports, to the Library of Congress and the Capitol Visitors Center, to the Capitol Police who protect our nation's Capitol and the thousands who visit every year."*

*"As a member of the subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, I will support initiatives that strengthen our ally Israel, expand our country's Pan American ties, increase access to basic education and economic development; prevent and treat infectious diseases; promote democracy in developing*

*societies; and encourage the export of U.S. products around the world,” said Wasserman Schultz.*

## **CONGRESSMAN GARCIA NAMED TO HOUSE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION**

Freshman Congressman Joe Garcia, was named to the House Judiciary subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security. The committee is responsible for drafting immigration legislation in the United States House of Representatives.

*“As a member of the Immigration Subcommittee, I will help lead the effort to ensure that we achieve comprehensive immigration reform that will strengthen our economy by providing 11 million people with a pathway to citizenship,” Garcia said. “The time has come to resolve this issue and afford citizenship to those immigrants who are Americans in every other way and want to work to move our country forward.”*

## **REP. DIAZ-BALART JOINS LEADER CANTOR ON DELEGATION TRIP TO THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM**

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart joined House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (VA) on a Congressional delegation trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland from January 23-26:

*Leader Cantor announced, “I am pleased to lead a diverse group of members from the U.S. House of Representatives to the World Economic Forum. We look forward to engaging in an exchange of ideas with our global partners to ensure a better, more prosperous and secure future for America. Our focus remains how to deliver on the goal of American competitiveness and leadership in innovation.”*

*Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart said, “The World Economic Forum is the preeminent international economic symposium. Among the 2,500 participants this year, there will be nearly 50 heads of state and 1,500 business leaders in attendance. I am proud to once again represent our nation alongside Majority Leader Cantor and the Congressional delegation.”*

The members participating in the trip include: Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) of the House Oversight Committee, Chairwoman Kay Granger (R-TX) of the House Appropriations State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and Chairman McHenry of the Financial Services Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Learn more about the World Economic Forum here: <http://www.weforum.org/>

## **PRESIDENT OBAMA TO HONOR NBA CHAMPION MIAMI HEAT AT THE WHITE HOUSE**

On Monday, January 28, President Obama will welcome the NBA Champion Miami Heat to the White House to honor the team and their 2012 NBA Championship victory. The President will also recognize the Heat's ongoing support to the men and women who serve in our military and their families, continuing the tradition begun by President Obama of honoring sports teams for their efforts on and off the court. While in Washington, the Heat will also meet with wounded warriors.

## **WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA) TOPS HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE'S 2013 AGENDA**

New chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Rep. Bill Shuster (PA) indicated earlier this week that reauthorizing the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), would be among the first tasks taken up by the committee. WRDA authorizes Army Corps of Engineers projects dealing with navigation, flood protection, and water infrastructure. The last WRDA legislation was enacted in 2007. Projects are typically authorized through an earmark, which has complicated the process since Congress instituted a ban on congressional earmarking in 2011.

A draft WRDA bill has been floated by Sen. Barbara Boxer (CA), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee. The draft provides insight into the makeup and intent of the legislation, especially with the earmark ban in place. According to a statement by Boxer the draft legislation included a new financing program to "provide loans and loan guarantees for flood control, water supply, and wastewater infrastructure projects." The pilot program would last for five years and is based in part on a similar loan program for surface transportation projects.

WRDA is of particular interest to Miami-Dade County as it would include possible language for the Water Infrastructure Financing Innovations Authority (WIFIA). WIFIA represents an opportunity for the county to receive assistance for the overhaul of the water and sewer infrastructure in Miami-Dade. OIA will continue to monitor these developments and work with the federal contract lobbyists on this issue.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

*The week of January 28 – February 1...and beyond:*

- The House will be in session next week.
- The Senate will not be in session next week.
- President Obama State of the Union Address - Tuesday, February 12
- The NALEO Educational Fund's Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala and reception

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