

WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 4 – FEBRUARY 8, 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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS HOLDS HEARING – PORTMIAMI DEEP DREDGE CITED IN OPENING TESTIMONY

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing on Thursday titled, *“Oversight Hearing on Implementation of Corps of Engineers Water Resources Policies.”* The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) testified during the hearing. Part of her testimony included a reference to the PortMiami’s deep dredge project.

*The Assistant Secretary said, “The pending improvements to the Panama Canal will increase the permissible draft of vessels transiting the Panama Canal from 39.5 feet to 50 feet. On the Atlantic coast, the U.S. now has two 50-foot deep ports capable of receiving these ships – Norfolk and Baltimore. The Corps expects to complete the dredging work for deepening the Port of New York/New Jersey to 50 feet in FY 2015. **The Corps is also working with the Port of Miami, which is financing a project to deepen the Federal channel to 50 feet. The Corps expects to complete that project in 2015.** The U.S. also has several other ports with depths of 45 feet on the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf coasts, which will be able to accommodate such vessels when they are less than fully loaded. On the West Coast, the 6 ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Oakland, Seattle, and Tacoma all have channels constructed to depths of 50 feet or greater.”*

Senator Nelson is working with Senator Vitter, of Louisiana, who is the ranking Republican member on the committee, to make draft changes in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill that would make the corps more efficient and jump-start projects in Louisiana and Florida. The legislation would give state and local authorities more control of Corps projects, much like the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) does with highway projects. OIA and the Federal Lobbying Team will continue monitoring the progress of the WRDA bill through the legislative process, while advocating for inclusion of infrastructure financing provisions to be included in any WRDA bill.

SEN. RUBIO TO DELIVER GOP RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH – SEN. PAUL TO DELIVER “TEA PARTY” RESPONSE

House Speaker John Boehner (OH) and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) announced this week that Sen. Marco Rubio will deliver the Republican response following the President's State of the Union address on February 12, 2013.

Sen. Rubio, now in his third year in the U.S. Senate, has been a champion of growing the American middle class through limited government and free enterprise policies, and those will be key principles that the Senator will attempt to convey to reinforce why Republican policies would be more beneficial to Americans than the current and previous four year policy agenda of the President.. The Senator will deliver the address in both English and Spanish.

Another prominent Senate Republican, Sen. Rand Paul (KY), will be delivering the third Tea Party State of the Union response. Sen. Paul will deliver the response from the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., the Tea Party Express political action committee announced on Friday afternoon.

Both Senators Rand and Paul rode the Tea Party wave to victory in 2010 and both are expected to seek the GOP presidential nomination in 2016.

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS HOLDS POLICY RETREAT

President Obama, Vice President Biden, President Clinton, DNC Chairwoman and South Florida Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Stephen Colbert, headlined the gathering of elected Members of Congress and various party leaders in the House Democratic Caucus policy retreat this week. Policy experts, political operatives and elected members and their leadership discussed policy priorities and strategized over how best to accomplish their goals for the 113th Congress, in addition to laying the groundwork for the recruitment and financing that will be required for the mid-term elections in 2014. House Republicans held their retreat in mid-January prior to the Presidential Inauguration.

REP. WILSON INTRODUCES CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION TO STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN HAITI

On Wednesday, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson led 15 fellow Members of Congress in introducing a resolution calling for specific actions to stop the emergency of gender-based violence in Haiti. After the January 2010 earthquake -- which claimed up to 220,000 lives -- Haiti experienced a striking increase in the incidence of gender-based violence. According to a recent study, 14 percent of earthquake-affected households reported at least one member being victimized by sexual violence since 2010.

Congresswoman Wilson offered the following statement:

“Gender-based violence is an emergency in Haiti today. But, thankfully, through smart policy and the strength and courage of Haitian women, it’s a situation that’s within our power to change.

With its "Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence," the Obama administration is on the right track. Congress and the administration must ensure robust funding for these initiatives, including the U.S. Agency for International Development's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, to meet the continuing need.

For me, this issue is personal. I have seen the tent cities firsthand. I have spoken to the women. I have counseled the victims and witnessed the scars of indignation and pain. I feel the anguish in my bones. But I also feel the hope.

Let’s work together to ensure that no woman in Haiti, no woman in this hemisphere or in this world, has to bear the indignity of sexual violence.”

FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

On Monday, February 4, the President was required to submit his budget for the Fiscal Year 2014 to Congress. He did not do it. The reason for this is that the Fiscal Year 2013 budget is not near completion. It is obviously hard to project what the government will spend next year when it does not know what it will spend this fiscal year. In other words, the budget follies continue.

As reported previously, Congress has yet to pass any of the 12 appropriations bill that make up the Fiscal Year 2013 federal budget. The fiscal year started on October 1, 2012. Currently the government is operating pursuant to a Continuing Resolution that runs until the end of March.

No one expects that Congress will pass all the detailed appropriations bills, either individually or in a comprehensive omnibus appropriations bill. Instead, everyone acknowledges that Congress will pass another Continuing Resolution which will run until the end of the fiscal year. But there is disagreement on the level of spending that will be included in that Continuing Resolution. Many House Republicans want to reduce the spending levels in the final bill. The Continuing Resolution totals \$1.047 trillion in total spending. The House Republicans are floating totals as low as \$1.018 trillion. The Senate, on the other hand, wants to keep the second Continuing Resolution funding the government at the same level as the first, or at \$1.047 trillion.

However, as contentious as that fight could be, there is a budget fight coming sooner on the sequester (see next weekly item re White House, below). The sequester was created in the bill that raised the debt ceiling in August 2011. That law established a joint House-Senate committee to develop ways to cut the deficit. The law said that if the joint committee failed to do its job, the budget would be cut across-the-board. The joint committee did fail to cut the deficit and so now the cuts are scheduled to start the first of

March. Due to the details of the law, defense spending would be cut 7.9% and domestic spending will be cut 5.3%. Together, the sequester will save about \$85 billion in FY 2013.

No one in Washington likes the sequester, Republicans do not want to cut defense, and Democrats do not want to cut domestic programs. But to avoid the sequester, Congress must come up with a way to eliminate \$85 billion in debt. The President and Congressional Democrats want to do it through a combination of tax increases and spending cuts. The Republicans say that taxes have gone up enough this year and want only spending cuts. Both sides are ratcheting up the rhetoric. Some members on both sides now say that they believe the sequester will occur. It is going to be a hard, loud bitter debate over the next few weeks.

We believe that after both sides have made their cases to the public, they will sit down and work out a deal. Most of the savings will be in future years, and the tax increases will be based on complicated accounting rules. They will not be increasing the tax rates on any taxpayers.

Not to be too cynical, but our bottom line is that there will be lots of noise about the sequester, then a solution that is more show than substance. Then Congress will wrap up the FY 2013 budget with another Continuing Resolution. *(Prepared by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

SEQUESTRATION UPDATE – WHITE HOUSE WARNS OF JOB LOSS FROM SEQUESTER

If Congress doesn't act by March 1st, the sequester (see item above) is scheduled to take effect. According to the White House, the most damaging effects of the sequester will be felt by the middle class, including:

- **Cuts to education:** Our ability to teach our kids the skills they'll need for the jobs of the future would be put at risk. 70,000 young children would be kicked off Head Start, 10,000 teacher jobs would be put at risk, and funding for up to 7,200 special education teachers, aides, and staff could be cut.
- **Cuts to small business:** Small businesses create two-thirds of all new jobs in America and instead of helping small businesses expand and hire, the automatic cuts triggered by a sequester would reduce loan guarantees to small businesses by up to \$540 million.
- **Cuts to food safety:** Outbreaks of foodborne illness are a serious threat to families and public health. If a sequester takes effect, up to 2,100 fewer food inspections could occur, putting families at risk and costing billions in lost food production.
- **Cuts to research and innovation:** In order to compete for the jobs of the future and to ensure that the next breakthroughs to find cures for critical diseases are

developed right here in America, we need to continue to lead the world in research and innovation. Most Americans with chronic diseases don't have a day to lose, but under a sequester progress towards cures would be delayed and several thousand researchers could lose their jobs. Up to 12,000 scientists and students would also be impacted.

- **Cuts to mental health:** If a sequester takes effect, up to 373,000 seriously mentally ill adults and seriously emotionally disturbed children could go untreated. This would likely lead to increased hospitalizations, involvement in the criminal justice system, and homelessness for these individuals.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) now calculates that sequestration will require an annual reduction of roughly 5 percent for nondefense programs and roughly 8 percent for defense programs. However, given that these cuts must be achieved over only seven months instead of 12, the effective percentage reductions will be approximately 9 percent for nondefense programs and 13 percent for defense programs. These large and arbitrary cuts will have severe impacts across the government.

More detailed explanations of these cuts as well as additional areas that will be impacted:

Security and Safety

- **FBI and other law enforcement** – The FBI and other law enforcement entities would see a reduction in capacity equivalent to more than 1,000 Federal agents. This loss of agents would significantly impact our ability to combat violent crime, pursue financial crimes, secure our borders, and protect national security.
- **U.S. Attorneys** – The Department of Justice would need to furlough hundreds of Federal prosecutors. As a result, approximately 1,000 fewer criminal cases nationwide would be prosecuted, and some civil litigation defending the financial interests of the United States would not be pursued, potentially costing taxpayers billions of dollars.
- **Emergency responders** – FEMA would need to eliminate funding for State and local grants that support firefighter positions and State and local emergency management personnel, hampering our ability to respond to natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy and other emergencies.

Economic Growth

- **Small business assistance** – Small Business Administration (SBA) loan guarantees would be cut by up to \$540 million, constraining financing needed by small businesses to maintain and expand their operations and create jobs.

- **Economic development** – The Economic Development Administration's (EDA) ability to leverage private sector resources to support projects that spur local job creation would be restricted, likely resulting in more than 1,000 fewer jobs created than expected and leaving more than \$47 million in private sector investment untapped.
- **International trade** – The International Trade Administration (ITA) would be forced to reduce its support for America's exporters, trimming assistance to U.S. businesses looking to increase their exports and expand operations into foreign markets. In addition, ITA would not be able to place staff in critical international growth markets, where there is a clear business opportunity for many American businesses to increase their sales and create jobs at home. These staff would have been part of a key program working to promote and facilitate global investment in the U.S., supporting thousands of new jobs through Foreign Direct Investment.

Education

- **Title I education funds** – Title I education funds would be eliminated for more than 2,700 schools, cutting support for nearly 1.2 million disadvantaged students. This funding reduction would put the jobs of approximately 10,000 teachers and aides at risk. Students would lose access to individual instruction, afterschool programs, and other interventions that help close achievement gaps.
- **Special education (IDEA)** – Cuts to special education funding would eliminate Federal support for more than 7,200 teachers, aides, and other staff who provide essential instruction and support to preschool and school-aged students with disabilities.
- **Head Start** – Head Start and Early Head Start services would be eliminated for approximately 70,000 children, reducing access to critical early education. Community and faith based organizations, small businesses, local governments, and school systems would have to lay off over 14,000 teachers, teacher assistants, and other staff.

Economic Security

- **Social Security applicant and beneficiary services** – The Social Security Administration (SSA) would be forced to curtail service to the public and reduce program oversight efforts designed to make sure benefits are paid accurately and to the right people. Potential effects on SSA operations could include a reduction in service hours to the public, the closure of some offices, and a substantial growth in the backlog of Social Security disability claims.
- **Senior meals** – Federally-assisted programs like Meals on Wheels would be able to serve 4 million fewer meals to seniors. These meals contribute to the overall health and well-being of participating seniors, including those with chronic illnesses

that are affected by diet, such as diabetes and heart disease, and frail seniors who are homebound. The meals can account for 50 percent or more of daily food for the majority of home delivered participants.

- **Nutrition assistance for women, infants and children** – Approximately 600,000 women and children would be dropped from the Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) from March through September. At least 1,600 State and local jobs could be lost as a result.
- **Rental assistance** – The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher program, which provides rental assistance to very low-income families, would face a significant reduction in funding, which would place about 125,000 families at immediate risk of losing their permanent housing.
- **Emergency unemployment compensation** – People receiving Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits would see their benefits cut by as much as 9.4 percent. Affected long-term unemployed individuals would lose an average of more than \$400 in benefits that they and their families count on while they search for another job. Smaller unemployment checks will also have a negative impact on the economy as a whole. Economists have estimated that every dollar in unemployment benefits generates \$2 in economic activity.
- **Homelessness programs** – More than 100,000 formerly homeless people, including veterans, would be removed from their current housing and emergency shelter programs, putting them at risk of returning to the streets.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL WAITS FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

The Senate continued debate on Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) on Thursday, but are out of session until Monday. Next week the chamber is expected to take up the remaining amendments that would renew and update the 1994 law. The five-year renewal of the law combats domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

The amendments included a proposal for the authorization funds to combat human trafficking and other changes related to child victims of sex trafficking, rape cases, notifications of exposure to sexually transmitted disease and tribal provisions. The bill also seeks to counter high rates of violence against American Indian women.

Senator Grassley (Iowa) has also introduced an amendment that would allow immigrant victims of abuse to pursue legal status without the need for sponsorship by their U.S. citizen or permanent-resident spouses. The proposal would also introduce new requirements for "U visas," which are given to immigrant crime victims who are willing to help aid in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity.

The House and Senate passed competing reauthorization measures last year but both chambers never agreed on a final version of the bill. OIA will continue to monitor and update the county as progress is made to reauthorize VAWA.

PRESIDENT NAMES NEW INTERIOR SECRETARY NOMINEE

President Obama announced this week that he will nominate Sally Jewell to be the next Secretary of the Interior. For the past eight years, Ms. Jewell has been the CEO of REI, one of America's most successful and environmentally conscious retailers.

The following is a list of major cabinet changes reported:

- *State* – **Sen. John Kerry confirmed to replace Hillary Clinton**
- *Treasury* – **White House Chief of Staff Jacob Lew nominated to replace Timothy Geithner**
- *Defense* – **Sen. Chuck Hagel nominated to replace Leon Panetta**
- *Labor* – Sec. Hilda Solis (announced 1/9/13, no replacement named)
- *Interior* – **Sally Jewell nominated to replace Ken Salazar**
- *Transportation* – Sec. Ray LaHood (announced 1/29/13, no replacement named)
- *Central Intelligence Agency* – **Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan nominated to replace Acting Director Michael Morell**
- *Environmental Protection Agency* – Admin. Lisa Jackson (announced 12/27/12, no replacement named)
- *Energy* – Sec. Steven Chu (announced 2/1/2013, no replacement named)

SEN. RUBIO OFFICE HOURS IN MIAMI – DADE COUNTY

Sen. Rubio's staff will be hosting "Mobile Office Hours" to meet with constituents and assist them with federal issues in Miami-Dade County. For constituents who cannot visit the regional office, these Mobile Office Hours offer a more convenient way to seek federal casework assistance.

Tuesday - February 19, 2013

Miami-Dade County
10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
Stephen P. Clark Government Center
111 NW 1st Street
Lobby area
Miami, FL 33128

Thursday - February 21, 2013

Miami-Dade County
10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
Miami-Dade County Public Library
West Flagler Branch
5050 West Flagler Street
Miami, FL 33134

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of February 11 – February 15...and beyond:

- The House will be in session next week.
- The Senate will be in session next week.
- President Obama State of the Union Address - Tuesday, February 12.
- Florida Congressional Delegation Meeting re Florida's Ports – Thursday, February 14.
- The NALEO Educational Fund's Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala and reception – Tuesday, February 26.

If you would like to stop receiving this report please send an email to the following address - intergov@miamidade.gov - with "REMOVE" in the subject line.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 18 – FEBRUARY 22, 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

DHS SECRETARY NAPOLITANO TOURS FEDERAL INSPECTION FACILITY AT MIA

On Wednesday, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano visited Miami International Airport for a tour and a briefing on the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) staff shortage at the new Federal Inspection Services (FIS). At the invitation of Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who requested she visit the facility, and along with Miami-Dade Congressional delegation members Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Frederica Wilson and Joe Garcia and staff for Mario Diaz-Balart. Joining the Congressional delegation will be Mayor Gimenez, Chairwoman Sosa, Commissioner Dennis Moss, Chair of the Transportation and Aviation Committee and Aviation Director Jose Abreu.

OIA has been working with the county's Congressional delegation, the BCC, the Aviation Department, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Gov. Scott's Washington D.C. office and the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau in recent months to impress upon the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the need for increased Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) staff at Miami International Airport. This need 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.

While at MIA, Secretary Napolitano, joined by the Miami-Dade Congressional delegation, toured the Federal Inspection Services operations and met with local airport authorities and stakeholders to discuss collaborative efforts to streamline the processing of travelers arriving from overseas. DHS continues to work closely with the Miami International Airport to address staffing at peak arrival times, automate the inspection process wherever possible, and increase enrollment in trusted traveler programs.

"Travel and tourism are critical to Florida's economy. That's why we're doing everything we can, alongside our state, local and airport partners, to make this vital transport hub secure and efficient," said Secretary Napolitano. "We've

moving from a one-size-fits-all approach to one where we identify and expedite the lowest risk travelers and cargo more quickly, which not only keeps our ports secure but ensures fast, efficient movement of lawful travel and trade.”

Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who invited the Secretary to visit MIA issued the following statement:

“Passengers arriving at MIA on international flights continue to face the longest wait times for immigration and customs processing of any U.S. airport,” said U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz. “This is partly due to understaffing, which results in unstaffed inspection booths during peak arrival times. On Wednesday, following my request for a visit, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano came to see and hear first hand what’s happening at Miami International Airport, Port Everglades, and FLL airport. Miami now has the largest international traffic in the country and Port Everglades freight and passenger traffic requires more resources, however, staffing levels and Congressional funding for Customs and Border Patrol has lagged. I thanked Secretary Napolitano for her efforts to help alleviate these issues and look forward to hearing more about how we can continue to improve wait times and efficiency.”

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart released the following statement after taking the tour with Department of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano.

“I’m grateful that Secretary Napolitano is visiting Port Everglades and Miami International Airport to fully witness the insufficient staffing at our ports. Customs and Border Patrol staffing at Port Everglades and Miami International Airport has been a continual problem that needs to be adequately addressed. Our CBP agents are working diligently to protect us from any security threats, illegal substances, and invasive pests and diseases entering the United States, but the lack of staffing is creating long and disorganized lines for travelers, and discouraging travelers from visiting and using South Florida’s ports.

“Tourism is the backbone of Florida’s economy, and DHS must do more to adequately staff our ports. I urge Secretary Napolitano to review the customs process; a streamlined operation with increased staff would not only be more efficient, but would help to prevent any threat from slipping by overworked and understaffed CBP agents.”

Governor Rick Scott today welcomed Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano to Florida. Governor Scott sent a letter to Secretary Napolitano in September outlining the issues facing MIA and asking her to visit the airport to see the challenge first hand.

Governor Rick Scott said, *“Miami International Airport is the nation’s number one airport for international flights and I am pleased Secretary Napolitano has decided to accept my invitation to visit the airport to take a closer look at staffing needs there. We must ensure Florida is well-positioned to welcome new and returning visitors to the Sunshine State.*

“If this staffing problem is not corrected immediately, it has the potential to damage Florida’s international competitiveness. More than 1 million jobs in Florida depend on international trade and investment, which is one of the healthiest and fastest growing sectors of our economy. We look forward to hearing Secretary Napolitano’s solutions to improve this important customer service issue because we want to ensure that those who visit Florida and who conduct business here are able to clear customs efficiently.”

MAYOR GIMENEZ AND CHAIRWOMAN SOSA TO TRAVEL TO DC

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa will be in Washington for a series of official meetings with the County’s Congressional delegation, key congressional committee leadership and the Administration, to advocate for Miami-Dade County’s critical federal policy priorities. The Mayor and Commissioner will be joining Commissioner Juan Zapata (member of the NALEO Educational Fund Board of Directors) at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) annual Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala as the organization presents their Award for Outstanding Public Service to Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

PORTMIAMI DIRECTOR JOHNSON IN WASHINGTON

PortMiami Director Bill Johnson was in Washington for official meetings this past week to discuss PortMiami federal issues. Director Johnson was joined by OIA and the Federal Lobbying Team in meetings with the county’s Congressional delegation, congressional committees and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

THE PRESIDENT’S PLAN TO MAKE AMERICA A MAGNET FOR JOBS BY INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE (As released by the White House)

Investing in infrastructure not only makes our roads, bridges, and ports safer and allows our businesses and workers to be as competitive as they need to be in the global economy, it also creates thousands of good American jobs that cannot be outsourced. Since the President took office four years ago, America has begun the hard work of rebuilding our infrastructure. But there’s more to do, and that’s why the President’s plan ensures that the money we invest in infrastructure is spent wisely by adopting a “fix-it-first” policy.

Repair and maintenance of our existing roads, bridges and public transportation systems should take priority before we consider investing in new facilities. This will ensure that our cities are safer and more modern. But taxpayers shouldn’t have to shoulder the entire burden either. We also know that America works best when we’re tapping the resources and ingenuity of a vibrant private sector.

That’s why the President’s infrastructure plan calls for a Rebuild America Partnership that will attract private capital to build the infrastructure our businesses need most. By

acting on the President's plan, together we can prove that there is no better place to do business and create jobs than right here in the United States of America.

- **Investing in a “fix-it-first” policy:** The President's plan will immediately invest \$50 billion in our nation's transportation infrastructure, with \$40 billion targeted to the most urgent upgrades and focused on fixing our highways, bridges, transit systems, and airports most in need of repair.
 - The national transportation system faces an immense backlog of state-of-good-repair projects, a reality underscored by the fact that there are nearly 70,000 “structurally deficient” bridges in the country today. The President's plan for \$50 billion in frontloaded transportation infrastructure investment would direct \$40 billion towards reducing the backlog of deferred maintenance on highways, bridges, transit systems, and airports nationwide. For example, the President's proposed investments could bring almost 80 percent of structurally deficient bridges up to date, getting Americans home faster and making the flow of commerce speedier.
- **Attracting private investment through a “Rebuild America Partnership”:** The President's plan will partner federal, state, and local governments with businesses and private capital to provide America with the best transportation, electric, water, and communications networks in the world.
- **Cutting red tape:** The President's plan will cut timelines in half for infrastructure projects and create incentives for better outcomes for communities and the environment through a historic modernization of agency permitting and review regulations, procedures, and policies.

GOV. SCOTT AGREES TO EXPAND MEDICAID COVERAGE, FULLY IMPLEMENT OBAMACARE

Gov. Rick Scott has agreed to expand Medicaid coverage in Florida, accepting one of the key elements of the health care law passed by President Obama. The Governor's to allow the federal government's expansion of Medicaid is a big win for implementation of Obamacare in one of the biggest health care markets in the country. Gov. Scott, a former health care executive, campaigned hard against the law when he ran for governor in 2010.

INFORMATION ON SEQUESTRATION

If Congress doesn't act by March 1st, the sequester, is scheduled to take effect. Below please find an interesting link to a *Washington Post* primer on everything you could possibly need or want to know about sequestration.

[Sequestration Info](#)

UPDATE ON THE PRESIDENT'S CABINET

There were no departure announcements or nominations made this week by President Obama regarding his cabinet.

The following is a list of major cabinet changes reported:

- *State* – **Sen. John Kerry confirmed to replace Hillary Clinton**
- *Treasury* – **White House Chief of Staff Jacob Lew nominated to replace Timothy Geithner**
- *Defense* – **Sen. Chuck Hagel nominated to replace Leon Panetta**
- *Labor* – Sec. Hilda Solis (announced 1/9/13, no replacement named)
- *Interior* – **Sally Jewell nominated to replace Ken Salazar**
- *Transportation* – Sec. Ray LaHood (announced 1/29/13, no replacement named)
- *Central Intelligence Agency* – **Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan nominated to replace Acting Director Michael Morell**
- *Environmental Protection Agency* – Admin. Lisa Jackson (announced 12/27/12, no replacement named)
- *Energy* – Sec. Steven Chu (announced 2/1/2013, no replacement named)

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of February 25 – March 1...and beyond:

- The House will be in session next week.
- The Senate will be in session next week.
- The NALEO Educational Fund's Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala and reception – Tuesday, February 26.

If you would like to stop receiving this report please send an email to the following address - intergov@miamidade.gov - with "REMOVE" in the subject line.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 25 – MARCH 1, 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 & CHAIRWOMAN SOSA GO TO WASHINGTON – MEET WITH CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, HOUSE T&I CHAIRMAN, USDOT SECRETARY

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Board of County Commissioners Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa traveled to Washington D.C. on Tuesday for a jam packed 30 hours of official meetings with the County's congressional delegation, key congressional committee leadership, and White House and Obama Administration officials. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the County's critical federal legislative and regulatory policy priorities, highlight accomplishments within the County and attend the Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala, which honored Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen with the organization's 'Outstanding Public Service' award.

The Mayor, Chairwoman, Deputy Mayor Chip Iglesias, Comm. Sosa Chief of Staff Hiram Barroso, county staff and OIA attended over a dozen official meetings over the course of Tuesday morning and mid-day Wednesday with Representatives Ros-Lehtinen, Wasserman Schultz, Diaz-Balart, Wilson and Garcia, along with both Senators Nelson and Rubio.

In addition to the meetings with the county's congressional delegation the group had the opportunity to meet directly with House Infrastructure and Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (PA) and Subcommittee Chairman Bob Gibbs (OH). The group also met with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Deputy Sec. Porcari, FTA Administrator Rogoff and White House officials.

Below is a snapshot of some of the issues that were discussed (among other County priorities) in the meetings:

Transportation, Transit and Bridge-repair Funding – Discussed County's interest in resources or participation in demonstration programs to bolster efforts to connect West Dade and the Beaches to the city center, address urgent bridge repair needs and continued investment in successful programs like TIGER and TIFIA.

WRDA/WIFIA – Expressed County’s strong support that any WRDA bill includes a WIFIA program to finance extensive wastewater infrastructure improvements.

CBP Staffing Shortage at MIA – Discussed the possibility of a statutory fix that would allow MIA to pay for CBP staffing overtime during peak hours of service.

Port Deep Dredge – Advocated for inclusion of a “technical fix” in the upcoming stop-gap funding bill that would allow the Army Corps to overcome a remaining obstacle related to timely completion of the deep dredge project.

Sequester – Discussed the potential impact of sequestration on Miami-Dade County services.

VICE CHAIRWOMAN BELL & COMM. HEYMAN VISIT WASHINGTON FOR NACO LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Vice Chairwoman Lynda Bell and Commissioner Sally Heyman are in Washington D.C. for the NACo Legislative Conference, which is being held at the Washington Hilton Hotel from March 2 – 6. The annual conference brings together over 2,000 elected and appointed county officials from across the country to focus on legislative issues facing county government. Attendees hear from key Administration officials and members of Congress and are offered a myriad of additional educational opportunities addressing current and hot topic issues.

SEQUESTRATION ARRIVAL

Today, March 1, marks the beginning of the sequestration cuts. The sequester is a series of automatic, across-the-board cuts to government agencies, totaling \$1.2 trillion over 10 years. Signed into law on August 2, 2011 by President Obama, the Budget Control Act of 2011 included these automatic cuts as part of a brokered deal between Democrats and Republicans to resolve the debt-ceiling crisis. The cuts would be split evenly between defense and domestic discretionary spending, but excludes Social Security and Medicare. Economists suggest that the full brunt of sequestration won’t be felt until the end of the month, which coincides with the March 27 expiration of the continuing resolution that is currently funding the federal government. In mid-May the Federal government will again come up against the debt-ceiling, and if Congress can’t come to an agreement to allow the President to raise it, credit rating agencies have warned that a downgrade of the United States’ credit rating would be inevitable.

IMPACT OF SEQUESTRATION ON MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

On the heels of her visit last week to view the CBP staffing shortage at Miami International Airport (MIA), Secretary Napolitano warned that sequestration would drastically impact the number of agents at points of entry in to the United States as the result of furloughs and hiring freezes at the airport. Up to 1,000 passengers a day miss their connecting flights at Miami International Airport due to the under-staffing of Border

and Customs agents. This would result in longer wait times at MIA and other airports, causing more passengers to miss their connecting flights across the country and affect tourism to South Florida.

Rep. Garcia issued the following statement on the impact of sequestration at MIA:

"The looming sequestration cuts will result in the furloughing of our Customs and Border protection officials at Miami International Airport which process incoming international travelers. This will increase wait times for passengers at our airport and harm tourism to our community which is the backbone of South Florida's economy. At a time when South Florida's economy is beginning to recover, thanks in large part to investments by tourists in our real estate, the last thing we need is to cut workers at our airport. Once again, I urge my colleagues from both parties to put political games aside and come together to avert these dangerous cuts to our economy."

Rep. Wasserman Schultz released the following statement regarding sequestration:

"The effects of the drastic cuts included in sequestration will be felt in ripples – some will be noticeable immediately, some one month from now, others six months from now, or down the road. We cannot balance our deficit on the backs of seniors and the middle class while letting special interests and big corporations continue to enjoy tax loopholes. We must find a balanced approach to this challenge. Our economy is still fragile as we work toward recovery, and we can't afford to be reckless with indiscriminate across-the-board cuts."

WHITE HOUSE RELEASES SEQUESTRATION STATE FACT SHEETS

Earlier this week the White House released a state-by-state analysis of the impact of sequestration on each state. You can find a link to Florida's factsheet here: [Florida Sequestration](#)

SECRETARY NAPOLITANO SENDS LETTER TO GOV. SCOTT FOLLOWING VISIT TO KEY SOUTH FLORIDA PORTS

Following her visit to key South Florida ports, including Miami International Airport, Secretary Napolitano sent the attached letter to Governor Rick Scott. The letter is based on her discussions with those in attendance and listed the key, near-term items that the Department of Homeland Security will be pursuing collaboratively with constituents and stakeholders at the airport. Those officials who were in attendance for Sec. Napolitano's visit include Miami-Dade Congressional delegation members Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Frederica Wilson and Joe Garcia and staff for Mario Diaz-Balart. Joining the Congressional delegation from Miami-Dade County was Mayor Gimenez, Chairwoman Sosa, Commissioner Dennis Moss, Chair of the Transportation and Aviation Committee and Aviation Director Jose Abreu.

HOUSE PASSES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

On Thursday, the House joined the Senate in passing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization bill by a vote of 286-138. The Senate passed the bill 78-22 two weeks ago. The five-year renewal extends the law's protections to LGBT, Native American and immigrant victims. Additionally the legislation provides for more rape kits as well as a national registry of forensic evidence from sexual assault cases, strengthens criminal anti-trafficking statutes and addresses domestic violence on American college campuses. Senator Nelson voted in favor of the legislation while Senator Rubio voted against it. In the House, all five members of the county's Congressional delegation voted for the bill.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement upon passage of the bill:

"Today we stood up for women by passing the comprehensive and bipartisan Violence Against Women Act. When this bill becomes law, we will be able to provide the necessary resources and support to all victims of domestic violence, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation."

"Hundreds of groups and thousands of concerned citizens across the country worked tirelessly to make sure the voices of women could be heard over partisan debate. With today's vote, we can reduce domestic violence, help rape victims, give Native American tribes the tools to hold abusers accountable, LGBT survivors the protection they need to access services, and immigrant survivors the independence necessary to escape violence."

"I was proud to vote to protect ALL victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, for my constituents, and for my children."

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on Wednesday to discuss the Assault Weapons Ban of 2013.

The Assault Weapons Ban of 2013 (S. 150) is sponsored by Senator Dianne Feinstein (CA), who also chaired the meeting, and has 21 Senate cosponsors. It would ban the sale, transfer, and manufacture of 157 specifically-named semi-automatic assault weapons. It would also ban any other semiautomatic firearm that can attach a magazine and has at least one military characteristic. The bill excludes 2,000 specifically-named firearms for hunting or sporting purposes. Senator Feinstein emphasized that the bill will not take away any weapons currently in possession, but would ban the future sale or transfer of these weapons. The bill has been supported by the Conference of Mayors, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs of Police, and other civic groups.

Senator Feinstein sponsored and successfully passed a ban on assault weapons in 1994. However, it was written with a 10-year sunset clause, and it has not been renewed since. Research about the efficacy of the first assault weapons ban is not conclusive. *(As provided by the Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team)*

REPS. ROS-LEHTINEN & SHERMAN INTRODUCE BI-PARTISAN BILL TO ENHANCE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS AROUND THE GLOBE

On Thursday, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, and Rep. Brad Sherman (CA), Ranking Member of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade Subcommittee, introduced H.R. 893, the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Accountability Act.

The Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Accountability Act of 2013:

- Increases sanctions on any person or entity transferring goods, services, or technology for the chemical, biological, or advanced conventional weapons program of Iran, North Korea, and Syria;
- Prohibits assistance to any foreign government that has provided assistance to Iran, North Korea or Syria; or
- Has failed to prevent individuals or entities under its sovereignty from aiding Iran, North Korea or Syria's proliferation activities;
- Calls on the U.S. permanent representatives at the U.N. Security Council, and the IAEA to submit resolutions stating that these three regimes have forfeited their privileges under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
- Requires the imposition of proliferation sanctions under the Iran Sanctions Act by removing waiver authority

Statement by Ros-Lehtinen:

"As a nation, we should come to the conclusion that when it comes to these rogue regimes, diplomacy and engagement have not and will not work. Iran has taken steps to continue its enrichment process, North Korea continues its nuclear and ballistic testing, and Syria's arsenal may land in the wrong hands. This bill will really step up the pressure on these regimes and hit them where it hurts: in the pockets. By prohibiting U.S. assistance to any foreign government that provides assistance to Iran, North Korea, or Syria, we can tighten the screws against these regimes and cripple their illicit weapons programs."

CONGRESSIONAL EVERGLADES CAUCUS CO-CHAIRMEN HASTINGS & DIAZ-BALART INTRODUCE COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION – SEN. NELSON INTRODUCES COMPANION BILL

Congressmen Alcee L. Hastings (FL) and Mario Diaz-Balart, Co-Chairmen of the Congressional Everglades Caucus, introduced the bi-partisan *Everglades for the Next Generation Act*. The legislation authorizes sorely needed Central Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects that are shovel-ready, but have been delayed by Congressional inaction. It also provides the Army Corps of Engineers with the flexibility it needs to avoid Congressional bottlenecking in the future.

“Congressional inaction has been a roadblock for far too long despite bi-partisan support for restoration,” said Hastings. “An awkward state of limbo is not the future Congress had in mind for the Everglades when it passed CERP, and it is not the future that the American people deserve.”

“I am committed to getting Everglades restoration back on track, and this Act does just that. By authorizing the next suite of projects, we are helping strengthen Florida’s ecosystem and economy. It is our responsibility to protect and restore the Everglades, and I am proud to work with Congressman Hastings and my other colleagues to ensure this happens,” said Diaz-Balart.

On Feb. 28, Sen. Nelson introduced S. 414, “a bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 to provide for expedited project implementation relating to the comprehensive Everglades restoration plan.”

REP. DIAZ-BALART REMEMBERS ORLANDO ZAPATA TAMAYO

On Monday, Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart released the following statement in remembrance of the third anniversary of the death of pro-democracy activist Orlando Zapata Tamayo.

“Saturday, February 23 marked the third anniversary of the death of pro-democracy activist Orlando Zapata Tamayo, one of freedom’s greatest heroes. Orlando Zapata Tamayo was a member of the pro-democracy organizations Movimiento Alternativa Republicana and the Consejo Nacional de Resistencia Cívica.

“The brutal Castro regime imprisoned Zapata Tamayo on March 20, 2003 during Cuba’s notorious “Black Spring.” He began a hunger strike on December 3, 2009 to protest the cruelty in Castro’s prisons and arbitrary extensions of his sentence. Zapata Tamayo died on February 23, 2010 after he was denied water and forced to lay naked under an air conditioner until he developed pneumonia.

“While we mourn the loss of this great hero, his mission on behalf of the Cuban people continues. Shortly after his death, other pro-democracy activists, including Jorge Luis Garcia Perez ‘Antunez’, established the ‘Orlando Zapata Tamayo National Front for Civic Resistance and Civil Disobedience’ in his honor.

“Orlando Zapata Tamayo’s hope for Cuba has been kept alive by Cuba’s pro-democracy activists who refuse to let his sacrifice be in vain. Over the weekend, more than fifty Ladies in White were brutally arrested by Castro’s thugs for commemorating his death. Despite the regime’s efforts to silence him, Orlando Zapata Tamayo’s legacy of courageously opposing oppression and demanding essential liberties for the Cuban people has only grown stronger in the three years since his death.”

DIAZ-BALART: WE MUST REDOUBLE OUR COMMITMENT TO CUBAN DEMOCRACY IN HONOR OF ‘BROTHERS TO THE RESCUE’

Also on Monday, Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart released the following statement in remembrance of the seventeenth anniversary of the “Brothers to the Rescue” plane shoot-down. Two American civilian planes were flying over international waters and were shot down by the Castro regime.

“Yesterday marked the seventeenth anniversary of the brutal shoot-down by the Castro dictatorship of two “Brothers to the Rescue” planes, which claimed the lives of Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro, Mario de la Peña, and Pablo Morales.

“The anniversary of this heinous, terrorist act over international waters is a grim reminder of the true nature of the Castro regime, and is one of many reasons that the regime remains a U.S.-designated state sponsor of terrorism. Not only have the Castro brothers increased their violent oppression of the Cuban people; they have opposed U.S. interests worldwide and actively aided America’s enemies for decades.

“While we mourn the loss of the four generous humanitarians whose lives were lost seventeen years ago, we must redouble our commitment to their mission of promoting liberty for the Cuban people and continuing our resolve to hold their murderers accountable for their crimes and acts of terror.”

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of March 4 – March 8...and beyond:

- NACo Legislative Conference at the Washington Hilton Hotel (March 2 – 6)
- The House will be in session next week.
- The Senate will be in session next week.

If you would like to stop receiving this report please send an email to the following address - intergov@miamidade.gov - with "REMOVE" in the subject line.