

WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT MAY 6 – MAY 10, 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

MARKETPLACE FAIRNESS ACT APPROVED BY THE SENATE

The Marketplace Fairness Act of 2013, legislation that would require Internet merchants to collect state and local sales taxes just as brick & mortar retailers are required to do, passed the Senate by a vote of 69 – 27 this week.

Under current law, remote sellers are not required to collect state and local sales taxes. The bill now moves to the House where similar legislation (H.R. 684) sponsored by Representative Steve Womack (AR), is currently pending.

IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL – IT BEGINS

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Thursday began the arduous process of working through hundreds of amendments to the comprehensive immigration reform bill this week. The first amendments being considered dealt with a number of border security provisions that many critics cite as a major shortcoming of the current bill. The lawmakers took up more than 30 amendments on border issues, rejecting a slew of proposals to make the bill's initial provisional legal status for undocumented immigrants already in the United States contingent on beefed-up security.

The bill, S. 744, is sponsored by Sen. Schumer (NY) and is the (un)-finished product of the “closed-door meetings by the bipartisan group of senators dubbed the “gang of eight.” The bill would give most of the roughly 11 million people living in the country illegally a way to become citizens over a 13-year period. The Judiciary panel's consideration of the legislation is expected to continue through the coming weeks, with the next meeting slated for May 14. Sen. Schumer told reporters Thursday that the eight senators will meet each night before the bill comes back before the panel to “discuss which [amendments] are deal-breakers and which aren't.”

Some of the amendments approved by the panel included a proposal from Chairman Patrick Leahy (VT) and Sen. John Cornyn (TX) designed to give DHS more flexibility to spend \$1.5 billion allocated by the bill for fence building. The Leahy-Cornyn measure would let the department use some of the funds for other infrastructure and technology to deter unlawful crossings, but \$1 billion would still have to go towards fencing.

The panel also adopted a full write-through of the legislation that would raise visa application fees and make a range of other minor changes. The substitute amendment's visa fee hike would give the Homeland Security Department an additional \$900 million to implement the bill. The panel also agreed, by voice vote, to a Sen. Grassley (IA) measure to expand a border security strategy to be crafted by DHS to include all border sectors, rather than just high-risk areas. Also adopted was an amendment from Sen. Leahy to prohibit border-crossing fees for pedestrians or passenger vehicles at land ports of entry and to block DHS from studying the use of such fees. Leahy's proposal comes in response to a department request in President Barack Obama's budget to study charging those fees. Finally, the panel added a Sen. Sessions' proposal to direct DHS to provide assistance to victims of crimes committed by undocumented immigrants or of violence near the U.S. border. (Source: CQ News)

COMMISSIONER HEYMAN PARTICIPATES IN LUCC DC FLY-IN

Commissioner Sally Heyman was in Washington this week as part of the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) "fly-in" advocacy effort, which took place from May 7 – 9. LUCC is a bipartisan coalition of county officials from the largest urban counties throughout the country, representing about 130 million people. The Commissioner, in addition to participating in meetings with the LUCC contingent, visited with members of the Miami-Dade Congressional delegation and their congressional colleagues from the State of Florida.

The LUCC leaders carried the "Why Counties Matter" message to Capitol Hill and urged members of Congress and the Administration to support federal funding and legislative priorities affecting large, metropolitan counties and their residents. The priorities included federal funding for housing and community development programs, protecting Medicaid and preserving the tax exempt status of municipal bonds.

The "muni-bond" issue is of particular importance since state and local governments use the bonds to help with the financing of projects that build schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, airports, public transit, water systems and other essential public infrastructure resulting in local job creation and economic development. The advocacy effort was led by LUCC Chair Helen Holton, who is a member from Baltimore City, Md.

APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

Prior to their week recess at the end of April, both the House and the Senate had passed their respective versions of the Fiscal Year 2014 budget resolution. Unfortunately there are massive differences between the two versions. The House budget, supported almost exclusively by Republicans, calls for no tax increases, and significant cuts in both discretionary spending and entitlements. The Senate version, supported primarily by Democrats, features more spending and more taxes.

For the discretionary portion of the budget, the House put a ceiling of \$967 billion while the Senate put a ceiling of \$1.058 trillion. The difference is \$91 billion. As a point of reference the discretionary budget in Fiscal Year 2013 is \$984 billion.

According to the Budget Act, at this point there should be a conference committee appointed to resolve the differences between the two resolutions. There have been a few informal conversations between Senator Murray, the Chair of the Senate Budget Committee and Congressman Ryan, the Chair of the House Budget Committee, but no formal conference has been established. Given the huge differences between the two resolutions, it is doubtful that there ever will be a conference. It should be noted that the Senate Democratic leadership is urging the House to go to conference. However there is a concern within the House leadership that a formal conference could lead to tax increases.

A budget resolution is important because, once it is finalized, it sets ceilings on the amount of money the Appropriations Committees have for discretionary spending. In other words, with a finalized version of the Budget Resolution for FY2014 both the House and the Senate know how much they can spend. Without a completed resolution, the House is bound by the House passed version (through an administrative process called "deeming") and the Senate is bound by the Senate passed version. As mentioned above, the difference between the two versions is \$91 billion. With overall differences this big, it is a safe bet that there will be vastly different bills written by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Despite those facts, we are less than 5 months from the start of Fiscal Year 2014, which begins October 1. There is pressure to start the process to get the 12 appropriations bills written and passed.

The House has already scheduled the first bill. The bill that funds the Veterans Affairs Department will be marked up next Wednesday, May 15. Fortunately both the Administration and Congress tend to agree on funding for the VA. That will not be the case for the rest of the bills.

This is heading towards a big train wreck around the time of the start of the Fiscal Year. The House and Senate bills will be miles apart and the only way to resolve the mess will be to have another end-of-the-year massive omnibus appropriations bill that will be negotiated out by the White House and the House and Senate leadership.

(Information provided by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)

STATEMENT FROM USDOT ON "THE REDUCING FLIGHT DELAYS ACT OF 2013"

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced today that USDOT has determined that the recently enacted Reducing Flight Delays Act of 2013 will allow the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to transfer sufficient funds to end employee

furloughs and keep the 149 low activity contract towers originally slated for closure in June open for the remainder of fiscal year 2013.

The FAA will also put \$10 million towards reducing cuts and delays in core NextGen programs and will allocate approximately \$11 million to partially restore the support of infrastructure in the national airspace system.

REP. WILSON BRINGS CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS ON THE FRONT-LINE OF IMMIGRATION REFORM TO MIAMI

On Monday, May 13, 2013 at 7:30 p.m., Congresswoman Frederica Wilson will be joined, at a forum on immigration reform, by Congressional leaders, from across the nation, who are fighting for change and who will influence, shape and vote on new immigration laws. Congresswoman Wilson urges the thousands of undocumented immigrants living in the shadows in South Florida and the thousands of immigrants waiting and hoping to one day take part in the American dream to attend.

Taking part in the discussion along with Congresswoman Wilson are Congressional colleagues, Rep. Luis Gutierrez (IL), Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX), Rep. Yvette Clarke (NY), and Rep. Marc Veasey (TX). The program will be moderated by Ediberto Roman, Professor of Law at Florida International University.

The event will be held at the Haitian Evangelical Church, led by Pastor David Eugene, in North Miami.

REP. IRL: NEARLY 60 CUBANS ARE ON HUNGER STRIKES TO PROTEST CASTRO DICTATORSHIP'S ABYSMAL HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

On Thursday, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, issued the following statement following reports that the European Union (EU) had sent a representative to Cuba to explore ways on how their member states can improve relations with the 50 plus year Castro dictatorship. The visit of the EU rep occurs at a time when close to 60 people in Cuba are on hunger strikes in protest of the wanton violations of human rights that occur daily in the imprisoned island nation.

Said Ros-Lehtinen, "As close to 60 people in Cuba are engaged in hunger strikes to protest the abysmal human rights conditions under the Raul and Fidel Castro tyranny, the EU finds it appropriate to send a representative to explore better relations with the dictatorship. Reports indicate that the EU rep is seeking ways to warm relations between the European community and the Castro family police state. This is shameful and pathetic.

If the EU is truly interested in helping the Cuban people and not perpetuating the Castros' hold on power, here is a start: demand freedom of expression, freedom

of assembly, the immediate end to the criminal and cowardly abuses committed on a daily basis against peaceful human rights activists and hold free, fair, transparent and internationally monitored elections. Only when these basic conditions are met should the EU even consider improving relations with the Cuban nation.

I urge all responsible nations to raise their voices in support of these brave hunger strikers who are so desperate for freedom that they risk their lives so that the world can focus attention on their plight. The Cuban nation needs liberty and democracy, but sadly the actions of entities such as the EU only serve to cement the hold of the octogenarian dictators who have misruled Cuba for more than half a century.”

REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ STATEMENT ON WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

On Monday, more than 150 leading women’s, worker, and civil rights organizations from across the country sent a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives stating their opposition to the Working Families Flexibility Act (also known as the ‘comp time’ bill) – which is slated to be voted on in the House this Wednesday. The bill passed the House by a vote of 223 to 204. The Miami-Dade County Congressional delegation was split along party lines.

U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement:

“Contrary to its name, this bill does not protect working families. Many hourly workers in South Florida depend on the opportunity to collect their hard-earned overtime pay to support their families and make ends meet. This anti-family, anti-worker bill would make it harder for employees to provide for their families and easier for employers to pay less for overtime work with hazy promises of time off later.

“This legislation provides no guarantee that employees would get to use their time off when they need it, or if an employer goes out of business, workers may never get compensated at all. Employees who depend on overtime pay to put food on the table may be forced to compete with fellow employees who are willing to trade their overtime wages for cheaper comp time.

“Women, particularly Hispanic women, are more likely to be hourly wage workers, more likely to be in jobs with higher power differentials between employee and employer, and still represent two-thirds of family caregivers. A worker with a sick child at home gets no benefit from earning comp time if she can’t take it when she needs it. Instead, she deserves pay for the overtime hours she’s worked, paid sick leave, and a fair and living wage.

"I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill that would empower employers to exploit their employees. We need to come together to discuss policies that make meaningful progress for working families."

REPS. DIAZ-BALART AND SIRES REINTRODUCE SAFE BUILDING CODE INCENTIVE ACT

Congressmen Mario Diaz-Balart and Albio Sires (D-NJ) introduced legislation that would strengthen building codes and increase public safety. H.R. 1878, The Safe Building Code Incentive Act, provides a financial incentive to states that are proactive in adopting and enforcing nationally recognized model building codes. States that enact these building codes would qualify for an additional 4 percent of funding for hazard mitigation grants. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ).

Diaz-Balart: *"I am pleased to work with Rep. Sires to reintroduce The Safe Building Code Incentive Act. This legislation helps us protect and prepare our local communities and families in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster. H.R. 1878 simply rewards good behavior, and incentivizes states to make communities safer by enacting these codes. It's time we take proactive steps to encourage states to do more to save lives and hard-earned taxpayer dollars, while making homes and businesses more resilient to natural disasters."*

Sires: *"I am pleased to once again be an original cosponsor of The Safe Building Code Incentive Act. If the devastation from Hurricane Sandy has taught us anything in my region- it is that the damage could have been much worse had New Jersey not already had exemplary standards for building codes in place. Now is the time for every state to ensure that buildings are constructed in a manner that will not only stand the test of time, but stand up to the natural disasters that are bound to occur."*

Menendez: *"Given the frequency of disasters in the United States, having only 16 states complying with and enforcing the most up-to-date building standards is simply unacceptable. The Safe Building Code Incentive Act would provide to states enforcing the most current building codes with additional federal hazard mitigation funds after a disaster strikes. This will save lives, guard against property damage, and reduce the taxpayers' burden following a disaster."*

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN'S CHIEF OF STAFF, ART ESTOPIÑAN, RECOGNIZED BY THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER

On Friday May 3, Mr. Arturo Estopiñan, Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, was recognized by the Spanish Consulate in Miami, Florida for his efforts in expanding relations between the United States and Spain.

Estopiñan was one of six recipients of the prestigious Friend of Spain / Brand of Spain Award. Other recipients were: Governor Rick Scott, Florida Secretary of State Ken Detzner, Mayor Tomas Regalado, Dr. Eduardo Padron, and Armando Codina.

Mr. Estopiñan stressed: *"Spain is a great friend of the United States and the bilateral relationship enjoyed by the two countries is beneficial in every way. I will continue to work hard to expand the ties that bind us because a good relationship between our great nations is important for economic progress with both Latin America and the European Union."*

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of May 13 – May 17:

- The House will be in session this week.
- The Senate will be in session this week.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT MAY 13 – MAY 17, 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 CONTINUES WORK ON IMMIGRATION; REID COMMITS TO FLOOR ACTION IN JUNE – HOUSE REACHES “AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE”

The Senate Judiciary Committee this week continued working through amendments to the “gang of 8” comprehensive immigration reform legislation, which will provide most of the approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States with a pathway to citizenship. The primary focus of this week’s work dealt with the underlying bill’s visa worker programs and employment verification provisions. Meantime, Majority Leader Harry Reid announced that he would like to bring immigration reform legislation to the full Senate for consideration in early June, irrespective of whether or not the Senate completes work on the Farm Bill (which passed out of the Senate Ag Committee last week and was placed on the Senate Calendar Thursday).

Visa Programs

In the second full day of consideration on Tuesday, the panel worked through more than 30 amendments. During the session, the panel rejected an amendment by Sen. Ted Cruz (TX), which would have increased the annual cap on H-1B visas given to high-skilled workers. The proposal would have raised the annual cap to 325,000 after FY13, up from the current level of 110,000, as well as establish fee-funded grants for education and work-study programs in the so-called STEM fields – science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

However, Sen. Cruz’s amendment also proposed stripping bill language designed to protect U.S. workers. Sen. Richard Durbin (IL) opposed the Cruz amendment, arguing the bill must balance the desire for more legal immigration with “*the right of American workers to be employed.*” Sen. Jeff Flake (AZ), one of the bill author’s, also emphasized the need to preserve the language. Sen. Flake and three other GOP members opposed the amendment.

The panel also rejected an amendment by Ranking Member Jeff Sessions (AL) that would have limited the number of new immigrants admitted annually to the U.S. to 1.2 million, as well as cap temporary workers authorized to work per year at 1 million. This

proposal was met with widespread opposition, including from Sen. Cruz, who argued that making the legal system work better decreases illegal immigration.

Also Tuesday, lawmakers added proposals to let U.S. workers submit complaints via a toll-free phone number or website if they feel they were fired to make room for a foreign worker sponsored through an H-1B visa, to raise employment-based green card fees to fund education grants in STEM fields, and to give U.S. consular offices greater access to terrorism records and databases to determine whether a visa applicant poses a threat. An amendment was also adopted to tighten certification requirements for colleges and flight schools accepting visa students, as well as another to suspend issuance of certain student visas until real-time information sharing is in place between the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System database and Customs and Border Protection.

EB-5 Investment Visas

An amendment adopted by the panel designed to bolster foreign investment was offered by Chairman Leahy. The proposal is intended to update a program that sets aside immigrant investor visas for specific U.S. regions in order to create jobs in those areas. The underlying immigration bill includes a permanent renewal of the initiative, known as the EB-5 regional center program. The added measure would let DHS conduct background checks on potential regional managers. It also would require annual reporting to track the progress of investment projects and would add other oversight measures.

Employment Verification

Thursday's work focused primarily on the employment verification provisions of the bill. Notably, the committee rejected efforts to move up a federal mandate for employers to use the E-Verify system. Also rejected was a proposal to delay the mandate's pre-emption of state employment verification laws until the federal mandate is in place.

The Committee did pass language from Sen. Al Franken (MN) to require annual audits of the E-Verify system's accuracy. Sen. Franken explained that his proposal would pressure DHS to improve the system by creating a trigger that would lower fines brought in by the department if the annual E-Verify error rate goes above 0.3 percent.

Also added were provisions to develop a mechanism to notify workers when their E-Verify records are accessed, the creation of a small-business and employee advocacy office and a requirement for more information sharing within DHS about those deemed ineligible to work.

(Source: CQ News)

HOUSE GROUP REACHES DEAL ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

Following hours of tense negotiating, the House settled on an “agreement in principle” to pave the way for its own immigration reform bill. Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart tweeted the breaking development on Thursday evening:



Mario Diaz-Balart 
@MarioDB



The bipartisan group working on [#immigration](#) in House has made a deal in principle.

6:21 PM - 16 May 2013

The bipartisan eight-member House immigration group has met for months in secretive meetings that allegedly came close to falling apart this week. However, members of the group, led by Rep. Diaz-Balart, emerged from an hour's long closed-door session Thursday evening to announce the deal.

REP. WILSON BRINGS CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS ON THE FRONT-LINE OF IMMIGRATION REFORM TO MIAMI; COMMISSIONER MONESTIME COMMENDS THEIR EFFORTS

On Monday, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson was joined at a forum on immigration reform by Congressional leaders who will influence, shape and vote on new immigration laws. Taking part in the discussion were the Congresswoman's congressional colleagues, including Reps. Luis Gutierrez (IL), Sheila Jackson Lee (TX), Yvette Clarke (NY) and Marc Veasey (TX). The program was moderated by Ediberto Roman, Professor of Law at Florida International University. The event was held at the Haitian Evangelical Church, led by Pastor David Eugene, in North Miami.

The event was held in Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime's commission district. Commissioner Monestime is the first Haitian-American to ever serve on the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners. The Commissioner released the following statement regarding the Congresswoman's event:

"Representative Wilson is one of our community's strongest advocates in Washington. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that any discussion of comprehensive immigration reform include changing America's policy toward Hispanics, Haitians and people from the Caribbean. I commend her for her work on this issue," said Commissioner Monestime. *"Immigration reform is the human rights issue of our generation."*

"I salute the members of the U.S. House who came to District 2 to discuss this important issue and I thank them for their support of comprehensive immigration reform," Commissioner Monestime said.

COUNTY CONGRESSIONAL DELGATION SENDS DHS SECRETARY LETTER ON CBP STAFFING ISSUE

This week OIA worked with Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and all members of the Miami-Dade County House delegation to draft the below letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, in support of Miami International Airport's application to participate in the Customs and Border Protection Reimbursable Services Program:

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

We are writing to express our support for Miami International Airport's (MIA) request to participate in the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Reimbursable Services Program. This program, which is part of the recently passed Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013 (P.L. 113-6), authorizes the CBP Commissioner to enter into up to five agreements to provide services on a reimbursable basis by December 31, 2013.

As you know from your recent visit, adequate CBP staffing is critical for the daily operations at MIA, our nation's busiest airport for international passengers and cargo arrivals. Unfortunately, based on the growing number of passengers arriving or transitioning through the airport, CBP staffing remains insufficient, and threatens travel and tourism to the U.S.

As the "Gateway to the Americas," our ports-of-entry serve as the doorstep to the United States, welcoming 9.3 million international passengers in 2011. However, passengers at MIA are experiencing long wait times for immigration and customs processing. As time passes by, this endemic problem will only deteriorate, hurting the economy and setting back efforts to make Florida competitive to attract international business and tourism. More than one million jobs in Florida rely on international trade and commerce, and therefore it is crucial to have our airport properly staffed to welcome the many businesses and international travelers that arrive at MIA.

In accordance with all applicable rules and regulations, we respectfully ask that you give full and fair consideration to MIA's verbal and written request to participate in the program. MIA's selection among the five entities to participate in the reimbursement program would be a positive step in our ongoing effort to work with the Department of Homeland Security to ensure adequate resources for CBP staffing at U.S. ports of entry.

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE HOLDS ROUNDTABLE ON FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

On Wednesday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Panel on 21st Century Freight Transportation held its second roundtable meeting to examine the

efforts made by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to coordinate freight transportation policy across federal agencies. As part of the implementation of the most recent transportation reauthorization bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), the Committee formed the Panel on 21st Century Freight Transportation in order to make recommendations to the Committee on how to improve U.S. freight transportation, which may then be considered for future legislation. Witnesses were Deputy Secretary of Transportation John Porcari and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo-ellen Darcy.

The Panel has six months to develop its recommendations and report back to the Committee with its findings. Its first meeting was held on April 24 and the next meeting will be in the coming weeks.

Deputy Secretary Porcari noted that freight transportation is a “lifeline” of the U.S. economy given that 48 million tons of freight is moved across the country every day. He explained that it will be important to make the freight transportation system more efficient in order to accomplish the President’s National Export Initiative that aims to double U.S. exports by 2015. As part of MAP-21, USDOT has set up a Freight Policy Council within the Department and will soon be convening the Freight Advisory Committee which will be made up of 30-40 stakeholders from all modes of transportation. As USDOT looks to implement a national freight strategic plan, the Deputy Secretary stated that it will be looking closely at the state freight plans to build a coherent and comprehensive strategy for freight movement in the future. He also highlighted how the TIGER grant program is helping with freight transportation issues by working to alleviate bottlenecks and allowing commerce to travel more efficiently. Deputy Secretary Porcari stated that one-third of the TIGER awards from the past four rounds of the program have gone to freight-related projects.

Assistant Secretary Darcy stated that one-third of the USACE civil works budget goes to support waterborne transportation projects and explained that this is an important, and often forgotten, part of the freight transportation network. She noted that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that exists between USDOT and USACE has helped the two agencies to coordinate on projects and to support upgrades to multimodal projects across the U.S. Part of this coordination includes USACE’s participation in the TIGER grant review process for all projects related to marine transportation. The Assistant Secretary explained that \$2 trillion of commerce each year is supported by marine transportation and USACE is looking for ways to expand freight transportation in this area. A portion of these efforts will be working with ports across the country to ensure that they are deepened to reach their authorized dredging level in order to meet the needs of the increasing number of deep-water vessels.

Of note from the roundtable were issues related to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) and Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Assistant Secretary Darcy stated that it would take \$2 billion per year for five years in order to dredge all of the ports to their authorized levels. She also explained that the current balance in the HMTF is around \$6 billion.

Concern was expressed about a local water resources projects that rely on state funding and private investment since there has not been a WRDA bill in several years. Assistant Secretary Darcy said that USACE is looking at opportunities that exist at other agencies to find funding for projects that have not been authorized in a WRDA bill given the lack of movement on this legislation in the past.

(Information provided by the Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team)

HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS BILL

The House Appropriations Committee has released its draft Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for FY2014. The text of the bill is available here: <http://goo.gl/tzw4G>

The bill was marked up by the Homeland Security Subcommittee and approved by voice vote. The committee report will not be released until after full Committee markup.

The law enforcement/first responder highlights of the bill include:

FEMA State and Local Programs: Provides \$1.5 billion for State and Local Programs, which below the President's budget request of \$2.12 billion, but slightly more than the final FY2013 amount of \$1.4 billion.

Of this amount, \$1,264,826,000 will be distributed, according to threat, vulnerability, and consequence, at the discretion of the DHS Secretary among the following grant programs:

- State Homeland Security Grant Program;
- Operation Stonegarden (\$55 million);
- Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI);
- Non-profit organizations at high risk of a terrorist attack;
- Public Transportation Security Assistance and Railroad Security Assistance;
- Port Security Grants;
- Over-the-Road Bus Security Assistance;
- Metropolitan Medical Response System;
- Citizen Corps Program;
- Driver's License Security Grants Program;
- Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program;
- Emergency Operations Centers;
- Buffer Zone Protection Program;
- Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants.

The remaining amount (\$235,174,000) is provided to maintain current operations for training, exercises, technical assistance and other programs. Of this amount, \$157,991,000 is set aside for training of State, local, and tribal emergency response providers.

National Preparedness Grant Program (NGPG): The House bill rejects again the Administration's proposal to consolidate the various homeland security grant programs into one program – the National Preparedness Grant Program, which the Administration has been requesting for the last few years.

Firefighters Assistance Grants: Provides \$675 million for these grants (\$337.5 million for SAFER, \$337.5 million for AFG). This is the same as FY2013, but above the President's request of \$670 million.

Emergency Management Performance Grants: Provides \$350 million, same as the President's budget request and FY2013.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants: Provides \$22.5 million for these grants. The President's budget proposes to eliminate these grants. The FY2013 amount was \$36 million.

FEMA Disaster Relief: Provides \$6.2 million, same as the President's budget request, \$883 million below FY2013.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program: Provides \$120 million, same as FY2013, but more than the President's budget request of \$100 million.

First Responder Stabilization Fund: The President's budget proposes \$1 billion for a new program to fund retention and hiring of firefighters with a focus on veterans. The House bill does not appear to include funding for this new program.

(Information provided by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)

WHITE HOUSE HOLDS CONFERENCE CALL ON MANUFACTURING

On Wednesday, the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs hosted a call to discuss the competition for the three new Manufacturing Innovation Institutes announced by President Obama last week.

Special Assistant to the President for Manufacturing Policy Jason Miller and White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs David Agnew led the conference call. They were joined by Brett Lambert, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing and Industrial Base Policy at the Department of Defense (DOD), and Rob Ivester, Program Director of the Advanced Manufacturing Office at the Department of Energy (DOE).

The recent funding announcement builds off of the success of the pilot manufacturing innovation institute in Youngstown, Ohio. The National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute (NAMII) was awarded \$30 million in August 2012 and consists of a consortium of manufacturing firms, universities, community colleges, and non-profit organizations in Ohio and Pennsylvania. This Institute was the first pilot project that

came out of the President's proposal for a National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) that was articulated in his FY 2013 budget.

The following topics were discussed on the call:

Role of Local Governments

In response to a question on the call, Jason Miller emphasized the importance of having a local and state governments participate in the manufacturing innovation institutes. He highlighted the need for local communities to step into a "convener" role to bring together private companies, universities, small businesses and other entities that are interested in the institutes. He explained that the collaboration among different community groups and companies was a very important part of why NAMII was chosen as the first institute, especially given the assistance that the City of Youngstown provided in bringing together the entities involved.

The White House expects there to be a lot of applications given the high demand for the original institute. Jason Miller emphasized the importance of working with a large consortium of partners within a region and noted that it will be important for these partners to show their willingness to co-invest in the institute.

DOD Institutes

The announcement notes that DOD will lead two institutes, the Institute on Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation, as well as the Lightweight and Modern Metals Manufacturing Institute. DOD has not yet released the criteria for these institutes and is currently collecting information through its Request for Information (RFI) released last week.

On the call, Deputy Assistant Secretary Lambert noted that DOD intends to compile the information received from the RFI and issue a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) at the end of June. There will be an industry day for all potential applicants this summer and final awards are likely to be announced in the 4th quarter of this year. It is likely that the BAA will be very similar to the solicitation that was used during last year's competition, including specific provisions that encourage small business participation as important part of the criteria that DOD will use to evaluate the applications.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Lambert also emphasized the importance of investing in manufacturing given that the Pentagon does not have the capabilities to manufacture all of the supplies that it needs. He noted that it will be important for applicants to keep in mind the core functions of DOD as they apply for the institutes, stating that the most competitive applications will be those that will have a specific and tangible benefit to war fighters to help them complete their missions in a cost effective way.

DOE Institute

DOE will lead the third institute and the solicitation for this institute is currently active. DOE's institute will focus on Next Generation Power Electronics Manufacturing to encourage technologies that are currently coming out of the basic research stage to move forward in the next stages of development. Proposals for the DOE Institute are due August 29. DOE anticipates making its selection in the 3rd quarter of this year.

The Future of NNMI

As part of the original NNMI plan, the President would like select 15 manufacturing innovation institutes around the country which would include the three institutes that will be awarded through the recent announcement. Yet, without Congressional action to fund these institutes, it is currently unclear what the future of NNMI will be. Jason Miller noted that there is some bipartisan progress being made on the President's legislative proposal to create the NNMI but stated that it will be very difficult for agencies, such as DOD and DOE, to fund future institutes without Congressional support. He encouraged the participants on the call to talk to their Members of Congress about the importance of manufacturing innovation and the need for the President's NNMI proposal.

(Information provided by the Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team)

HOUSE AGAIN VOTES TO REPEAL OBAMACARE

On Thursday, the House passed a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act by a vote of 229 - 195. The House has voted 37 times to repeal or defund all or part of the health care reform law that was enacted in March 2010. The House passed a similar repeal bill last year by a vote of 244-185. House leadership decided to bring the bill up again to give newly elected members an opportunity to vote to repeal the law. The Senate is not expected to take up the bill.

SEN. RUBIO INTRODUCES LEGISLATION IN RESPONSE TO IRS MISCONDUCT

In response to the widely reported misconduct by the Internal Revenue Service revealed last week, Senator Marco Rubio introduced S.941, a bill to amend United States Code to prevent discriminatory misconduct against taxpayers by Federal officers and employees. The bill, introduced by the Senator on Tuesday, already has 12 cosponsors.

THE INTERNET SHOULD BE FREE & OPEN, SAYS REP. ROS-LEHTINEN

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen voted this week for legislation affirming that United States policy should be to maintain and promote a multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance.

Statement:

“Governments, whether here at home or abroad, should not be in the business of controlling the Internet. In order to promote innovation, democratization, and access to information, we must ensure the Internet is kept free from the kind of government overreach and stifling regulations that have become all too common. The Internet must remain an unconstrained environment in which all sectors of society can compete, freely express their ideas, and not have to wonder whether their safety or human rights are in jeopardy.

“United States policy should reflect the fact that a free and open world depends on a free and open web. I am proud to vote for legislation that affirms this policy and urge my Senate colleagues to do the same.”

CONGRESSWOMAN FREDERICA WILSON HONORS SOUTH FLORIDA’S MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM ON ARMED FORCES DAY

On Saturday, May 18, 2013, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson, will pay tribute to South Florida’s men and women in uniform, in observance of Armed Forces Day. More than two hundred servicemen and women are expected to attend the celebration, which will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the American Legion Post 29, 6445 NE 7th Avenue, Miami FL 33138. Each of the servicemen and women being recognized will be presented with a Congressional Record acknowledging their contributions to the nation, and their names will be entered into the archives of the Library of Congress, permanently marking their place in American history.

“I am honored to celebrate the accomplishments of these brave men and women, who put their lives on the line for the freedoms and privileges we enjoy today,” said Congresswoman Wilson.

“Now, we must show our gratitude and thanks by ensuring that our servicemen and women—and their families—receive all the support and benefits they deserve, especially those in need of rehabilitative services, housing and jobs. Last year, I formed the Congresswoman Frederica Wilson District 24 Federal Veterans Advisory Council. It is comprised of veterans from the district, who will work closely and meet regularly with representatives of veteran services, to connect our veterans with resources and suggest legislation to improve their overall quality of life.”

Armed Forces Day was first celebrated on Saturday, May 20, 1950. It stemmed from the unification of the armed forces under the Department of Defense and was established to end separate celebrations by each branch of the military.

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of May 20 – May 24:

- The House will be in session this week.

- The Senate will be in session this week.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT MAY 20 – MAY 24, 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

PUBLIC WORKS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT MEETS WITH COUNTY'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

On Wednesday, OIA joined the Public Works and Waste Management Department of Miami-Dade County in meetings with Miami-Dade's Congressional delegation to discuss a proposed EPA regulation that is required under the Clean Air Act of 1990. Under the Act, EPA is required to develop Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) Standards for a variety of industry facilities, including Municipal Waste Combustor (MWC) MACT Standards, which would have a direct impact on a facility located within Miami-Dade County.

This facility, Covanta Dade Renewable Energy, began commercial operations in 1982 and serves the municipal waste disposal needs of the County, while generating power for residents. The facility processes 3,000 tons of municipal solid waste per day and 1,200 tons-per-day of biomass fuel, generating 77 megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity from two 38.5 MW turbine generators. Approximately 26,000 tons of ferrous (steel) metal and 2,000 tons of non-ferrous (tin, copper) metal are recovered and recycled by the facility each year.

Over the past five years, EPA has promulgated MACT rules for Medical Waste Incinerators, Utilities, Industrial Boilers and Cement manufacturers. Generally, the time period from initial release of draft rules to final promulgation is one year or less. The window for compliance is typically three years. And while it's not clear when the rules for the next MWC MACT Standards will be issued, there have been reports that the rules have been drafted by EPA and that the rule will be issued sometime within the next six to nine months.

Covanta, Public Works and Waste Management and OIA are engaging in early discussions with federal officials and key members of the House and Senate, along with the County's congressional delegation to help ensure that the rule is not drafted in manner that would have a negative impact on Miami-Dade County's facility. The delegation was sympathetic to the possible implications of the rule and agreed to help where possible to assist the county by speaking directly with EPA officials about the issue.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE PASSES IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

The Senate Judiciary Committee backed a bipartisan immigration bill Tuesday evening by a vote of 13-5 that would create an eventual path to citizenship for most of the roughly 11 million immigrants living in the United States illegally. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has said he'll move to bring the bill to the Senate floor in June

The bipartisan House negotiators are putting the final touches on legislation that still must advance through the House Judiciary Committee. There are lingering concerns by House members regarding the bill and many obstacles (i.e. potential "poison pill" amendments) to overcome in both the committee and in the full House. OIA and the federal lobbying team will continue to update the county as immigration reform proceeds through the two chambers.

REP. GARCIA PRAISES SENATE COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

Congressman Joe Garcia issued the following statement praising the Senate Judiciary committee's passage of the immigration reform bill:

"Tonight, our country is one step closer to achieving comprehensive immigration reform. I applaud the bipartisan group of senators for their hard work. As a member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, I look forward to working with my colleagues from both parties to produce a bill that will fix our broken immigration system and replace it with one that will help grow our economy and offers a fair pathway to citizenship for the millions of hard-working families who are American in every way except on paper."

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE APPROVES HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS BILL

On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee approved the FY2014 Homeland Security Appropriations bill. It provides \$38.9 billion for the Department of Homeland Security. This about \$1.2 billion above FY2013, but \$35 million below the President's budget request for FY2014. Of the total, the bill would provide \$10.6 billion for Customs and Border Patrol, \$5.4 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and \$4.8 billion for the Transportation Security Administration. The Committee's summary of the bill is attached for your reference.

There were a few changes to the bill by the full Committee. One of the amendments adopted would effectively block the federal government from approving any immigration visa petitions from Brazil. The amendment offered by Congressman Tim Ryan (OH) attempts to pressure Brazil to extradite a person involved in a 2007 Ohio murder investigation. While approved by the Committee, the provision is unlikely to be included in the final version of the Homeland Security appropriations bill.

Included below are the law enforcement/first responders highlights of the bill:

FEMA State and Local Programs: Provides \$1.5 billion for State and Local Programs, which is \$623.2 million below the President's budget request, but \$35.4 million above FY2013.

Of this amount, \$1,264,826,000 will be distributed, according to "threat, vulnerability, and consequence", at the discretion of the DHS Secretary among the following grant programs:

- State Homeland Security Grant Program;
- Operation Stonegarden (\$55 million);
- Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI);
- Non-profit organizations at high risk of a terrorist attack;
- Public Transportation Security Assistance and Railroad Security Assistance;
- Port Security Grants;
- Over-the-Road Bus Security Assistance;
- Metropolitan Medical Response System;
- Citizen Corps Program;
- Driver's License Security Grants Program;
- Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program;
- Emergency Operations Centers;
- Buffer Zone Protection Program;
- Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants.

The remaining amount (\$235,174,000) is provided to maintain current operations for training, exercises, technical assistance and other programs. Of this amount, \$157,991,000 is set aside for training of State, local, and tribal emergency response providers.

The Committee report states that in accordance with the 9/11 Act, at least 25 percent of funds allocated to the State Homeland Security Grant Program and Urban Area Security Initiative shall be used for Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention activities. In addition, each State and Puerto Rico shall pass on no less than 80 percent of their grant funding to local units of government within 45 days of receiving the funds.

The Committee report also states that the UASI program should be further focused on the areas under the greatest threat and at the greatest risk, providing funding to a maximum of 25 regions, which will ensure that only those regions at highest-risk of terrorist attack receive funding under UASI in the current fiscal environment.

National Preparedness Grant Program (NGPG): The House bill again rejects the Administration's proposal to consolidate the various homeland security grant programs into one program – the National Preparedness Grant Program, which the Administration has been requesting for the last few years. The proposal was denied again due to lack of Congressional authorization and the lack of necessary details that are required to initiate a new program.

Firefighters Assistance Grants: Provides \$675 million for these grants (\$337.5 million for SAFER, \$337.5 million for AFG). This is the same as FY2013, but above the President's request of \$670 million.

Emergency Management Performance Grants: Provides \$350 million, same as the President's budget request and FY2013.

* The Administration had proposed including Firefighter Assistance Grants and Emergency Management Performance Grants under State and Local Programs, but the House Appropriations Committee again rejected that proposal and provides both grant programs separate appropriations as in previous years.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants: Provides \$22.5 million for these grants. The President's budget proposes to eliminate these grants. The FY2013 amount was \$36 million.

FEMA Disaster Relief: Provides \$6.2 million, same as the President's budget request, \$883 million below FY2013.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program: Provides \$120 million, same as FY2013, but more than the President's budget request of \$100 million.

First Responder Stabilization Fund: The President's budget proposes \$1 billion for a new program to fund retention and hiring of firefighters with a focus on veterans. The House bill does not appear to include funding for this new program.

As the County knows, the bill also includes additional funding to hire 1,600 new Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers. The President's FY2014 budget proposed funding for 1,600 additional CBP officers to help reduce growing wait-times at ports of entry. Funding for these officers is included in the bill. The Administration also requested 1,877 additional new CBPOs to be paid for through increased immigration and customs inspection user fees. The House bill does not include funding for these additional officers.

The full House is expected to take up the bill in June. Congress is out of session until June 3rd for the Memorial Day recess.

(Information provided by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)

FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

This week all of the action on the FY 2014 appropriations bills is occurring in the House. The House, by longstanding tradition, always goes first on spending bills. The House leadership hopes to get a few of the bills reported out of the House Appropriations Committee before they leave on the Memorial Day recess, which starts at the end of the week. Congress will reconvene the first week of June.

As discussed previously, there is a massive difference between the spending levels allocated for appropriations bills between the House and the Senate. The Senate, and the President, want to spend a total of \$1.058 trillion on all the federal discretionary programs. The House wants to spend \$967 billion. The difference is \$91 billion.

The trick is to write bills that can get through both houses of Congress. As has been reported previously, there are 12 appropriations bills that, taken together, make up the federal budget each year.

The House leadership is currently planning to pass four of the twelve bills where there is relative agreement on the levels of spending between the House and the Senate. They are the following:

- Defense
- Homeland Security
- Veterans Affairs
- Agriculture

However, to fund those four bills at a level acceptable to the Senate, the House moved money from the other eight bills. Thus, the differences between the two houses are even bigger on the remaining eight bills. The reductions are so large in the House that it is not clear that they will even pass there. For example, the House is proposing to cut the budget for the Department of Interior by 14% less than the final FY2013 budget, and to cut the budget for the Departments of Labor, HHS and Education by 18%.

In short, what the House is doing is passing the few bills where they can agree on numbers with the Senate at the expense of the rest of the budget. We would be surprised if all eight of the other bills were marked up and reported out the House Appropriations Committee. We are confident that most of them will never be debated on the House floor. The House leadership is clearly waiting to see if a "grand deal" can be reached that cuts entitlements, maybe raises some revenue and allocates more money for discretionary spending. If that doesn't happen, they may be forced to accept another Continuing Resolution.

(Information provided by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)

HOUSE MEMBERS SEND LETTER TO OMB REGARDING HARBOR MAINTENANCE TAX FUND

On Monday, a bipartisan group of House members sent the following letter to Director Sylvia Mathews Burwell of the Office of Management and Budget in response to the White House's Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) issued last week for S. 601 (WRDA 2013). OMB has and continues to defend the use of monies in the Harbor Maintenance Tax Fund (HMTF) for purposes other than investments in waterways.

The letter reiterates the important role waterways will play in expanding exports and improving the U.S. economy. It also points out that the Harbor Maintenance Tax is paid specifically for the purpose of maintaining our waterways. The HMTF will collect more than \$1.7 billion in FY2014 but only \$900 million will be spent on waterways maintenance. This practice hurts businesses and consumers alike and directly impacts PortMiami. Miami-Dade County Congressional delegation members Wasserman Schultz, Ros-Lehtinen, Wilson and Garcia joined 23 of their House colleagues in signing the letter.

Dear Director Burwell,

We write in response to the Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) recently issued for S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act of 2013. As Representatives from states that rely on our waterways to transport cargo to and from domestic and international markets, we understand the need to adequately dredge and maintain our nation's shipping channels. We are concerned with the Administration's reluctance to fully allocate the Harbor Maintenance Tax for its intended purposes.

Shippers have paid billions of tax dollars into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) specifically for the purpose of keeping channels dredged to authorized dimensions (width and depth). The HMTF is estimated to have a surplus of \$8.09 billion at the start of Fiscal Year 2014. Unfortunately, much of this funding has been siphoned off for other uses and, as a result, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) estimates that the nation's busiest ports are dredged to authorized dimensions less than 35% of the time. This increases the cost of shipping, as vessels are forced to carry less cargo in order to reduce their draft. Inadequate channel maintenance also increases the risk of a ship grounding or collision, possibly resulting in a pollution event.

In January 2010, President Obama announced his intent to double exports by 2015. By letter dated March 11, 2011, the President's Export Council identified the need for increased investments in port infrastructure and channel maintenance in order to maximize exports. The President reiterated his support for "modern ports to move our goods" in his 2013 State of the Union address. However, without proper maintenance of these shipping super-highways, we are concerned that the goal of doubling trade by 2015 will become an impossible promise to keep.

It has been well documented that the maintenance of deep-draft channels offers strong return on investment to the taxpayer. Numerous studies have found that each foot of lost depth increases the cost to ship those goods. This increase unfairly penalizes those already paying into the HMTF; makes U.S. products shipped overseas more costly and less competitive; and increases the cost of products for American consumers.

In addition, the United States is not doing enough to take advantage of the Panama Canal expansion. The country of Panama has financed nearly \$6 billion

in infrastructure improvements so that the canal can be utilized by ships with draft of 50 feet. Unfortunately, there isn't a single port in the Gulf of Mexico and only a handful on the East Coast that can accept the larger vessels that will be traveling through the expanded Panama Canal.

We understand that the current fiscal environment makes it very difficult to maintain federally regulated channels. However, we must reemphasize the importance of waterways to local and national economies and we look forward to working closely with you to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to maintain America's trade super-highways.

REP. DIAZ-BALART COMMEMORATES CUBA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart released the following statement on Monday in honor of Cuba's Independence Day.

"Today marks the 111th anniversary of Cuba's Independence Day, a day when the Cuban people finally and fully achieved independence from Spain. Sadly, less than 60 years after winning their independence, the Cuban people were enslaved by the brutal Castro dictatorship. As we appreciate our common Cuban culture and heritage on this day, Cubans stand united in demanding essential liberties and human rights for those who continue to languish under the Castro dictatorship's oppression. We stand in solidarity with brave heroes such as Antonio Rodiles, Berta Soler, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez ("Antunez"), Dr. Oscar Biscet, and Sara Marta Fonseca, among others, who lead the struggle for freedom. The time is quickly approaching when the island will forever be rid of the Castro brothers and their atrocities. I look forward to the day when the Cuban people finally and fully achieve their independence."

REPS WASSERMAN SCHULTZ & ROS LEHTINEN INTRODUCE BILL TO HELP HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

An estimated 120,000 Holocaust survivors live in the United States today, at an average age of 80; 3 in 5 survivors are women; and approximately two thirds of Holocaust survivors live alone.

Many rely on local agencies to help them afford basic necessities such as food and health care, which is why U.S. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Ted Deutch (FL), David Joyce (OH), and Henry A. Waxman (CA), introduced a bill this week that would bolster agencies that work to provide support services to Holocaust survivors in the U.S., from improved home care services to transportation options.

The Responding to the Urgent Needs of Survivors of the Holocaust Act, or the RUSH Act, supports the goal of ensuring that Holocaust survivors are able to live with dignity, comfort, and security in their remaining years. To do so, this bipartisan bill would add Holocaust survivors to a priority list for social services that are provided as part of the

Older Americans Act, including nutrition services, mental health counseling, and home modifications.

The bill would also designate someone within the Administration on Aging to oversee the implementation of all the services to survivors to ensure the full intent of the bill is carried out, and ensures that meals provided by the Older Americans Act meet special cultural and religious dietary needs. Because transportation is one of the greatest needs of these seniors, another integral part of the bill invests in resources and services to provide improved transportation options for this vulnerable group.

“As a nation that upholds the values of freedom, liberty, and justice, we have a moral obligation to acknowledge the plight and uphold the dignity of Holocaust survivors to ensure their well-being,” said Rep. Wasserman Schultz. *“Our children’s generation will be the last to know Holocaust survivors and hear their stories first hand. We must do all we can to honor their struggles and their lives by improving their access to transportation to get them where they need to go, and improve their home-care options so that they can have peace of mind. This bill does just that, and it’s time to make it happen.”*

Rep. Ros-Lehtinen said, *“I’m proud to join Debbie, my South Florida colleague, in her strong leadership on this issue as we introduce the RUSH Act. Holocaust survivors have endured unspeakable atrocities and have persevered through unparalleled hardships. They have withstood it all for decades. They deserve to live out the remainder of their days in dignity and comfort. This bill will provide them with a broad array of social services from improved transportation options to mental health and nutritional services. It is an important measure that will help ease survivors’ daily burdens.”*

A Senate version of the RUSH Act was introduced by U.S. Sens. Ben Cardin (MD), Mark Kirk (IL) and Barbara Mikulski (MD).

“As survivors of terror and torture, these Holocaust survivors came to our country seeking the American Dream,” said Sen. Cardin. *“They have enriched our nation and now they have special needs and would benefit from additional social service programs that will allow them to age in place in their current residences. I believe we have an obligation to provide them with access to the community support and services they need.”*

The RUSH Act is supported by the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA); Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty; American Jewish Committee (AJC); Survivor Initiative; Association of Jewish Family and Children’s Agencies; Anti-Defamation League (ADL); the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA); and Selfhelp Community Services, Inc.

In December 2010, Wasserman Schultz introduced a resolution that passed in the House that recognizes the needs of aging Holocaust survivors and the work of the agencies that help support them. This bill takes that idea and turns it into a reality by

making it possible for these agencies to provide the support that is so vital to these Holocaust survivors.

REP. WILSON INTRODUCES RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE MONTH OF MAY AS HAITIAN HERITAGE MONTH

On Monday, May 20th, in commemoration of Haitian Heritage Month, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson announced a resolution that would establish the month of May as Haitian Heritage Month. The resolution declares May a time to recognize the history, culture, and achievements of the global Haitian community.

Congresswoman Wilson issued the following statement:

“It’s fitting that May, the month when Haiti’s first flag was flown in 1803, should serve as a time to celebrate the rich history, culture, and achievements of this proud and unique nation.

The Republic of Haiti—the first nation in human history founded by slaves—was born out of a desire for independence and dignity for all. It is truly an honor to commemorate Haitian Heritage Month alongside my Haitian friends and family.

This month and every month, let us recognize the extraordinary contributions of the Haitian people to our community, and celebrate their continued success and prosperity.”

REP. GARCIA REACHES ACROSS AISLE TO SUPPORT THE SMARTER SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS ACT

Congressman Joe Garcia reached across the aisle on Thursday in an effort to find solutions and prevent the doubling of student loan interest rates on July 1st.

The Congressman issued the following statement

“South Florida’s families sent me to Congress to solve problems and support ideas based on their merits, not political parties. Unless Congress acts, interest rates on student loans will double in July and make life harder for middle class families who are already struggling to make ends meet. That is why I reached across the aisle today to support the Smarter Solutions for Students Act. While I support extending the current low rate of 3.4%, this bill will prevent student loan rates from doubling in July.”

REP. DIAZ-BALART PROMOTES NATIONAL HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK

As National Hurricane Preparedness Week begins on May 26 and runs through June 1, Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart encouraged South Florida residents to prepare for Hurricane Season. Hurricane Season starts next Saturday, June 1.

"With the start of another Hurricane Season, Florida and other coastal states in the U.S. face the threat of these natural disasters. National Hurricane Preparedness Week is a great opportunity to begin taking the steps to ready ourselves against Mother Nature. With the appropriate measures, we can reduce the effects that hurricanes can have on our communities, homes, and families..." Diaz-Balart said in statement released Friday.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) kicked off their annual National Hurricane Preparedness Week to create awareness leading up to the start of the season. More information and ideas can be found at www.ready.gov/hurricanes. Information on the different types of severe weather such as tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, and flooding is available at www.weather.gov and www.ready.gov/hurricanes or the Spanish-language web site www.listo.gov.

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee (MENA), released the following statement on the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2012. Said Ros-Lehtinen:

"The State Department's latest International Religious Freedom Report for 2012 highlights some very disturbing trends in the Middle East and North Africa regions. Perhaps the most disturbing trend from this report is the continued rise in anti-Semitism, not just in the MENA regions, but worldwide. Holocaust denial and glorification are not only condoned, but have become common practice by government officials, religious leaders and the media in these countries, most notably Egypt and Iran.

"Sadly, this report comes as no surprise, as we have witnessed blatant discrimination against various religious minorities throughout that region, particularly against Jews and Christians. In Egypt, Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood cronies systematically target religious minorities, most notably the Coptic Christians, and repeatedly recite prayers that call for the destruction of Jews and their supporters, while Ahmadinejad and the Iranian government continue to deny the Holocaust occurred and blame the 'Zionists' for all of the world's ills.

"Saudi Arabia is once again a 'Country of Particular Concern' as the government there continues its discriminatory policies and practices against Jews, Christians, Shiites and any other religious minority, and there has been no substantial progress for religious freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, even in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

“I continue to urge the Administration to implement proper sanctions on countries that continue to egregiously violate the religious rights and freedoms of their people, and to also reevaluate our foreign assistance to these nations, leveraging our money to promote real reforms.”

REP. FREDERICA WILSON INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO ADVANCE RESEARCH TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS

On Thursday, Ranking Member of the Technology Subcommittee, Frederica Wilson, introduced H.R. 2132, the *Natural Hazards Reduction Act of 2013*. H.R. 2132 reauthorizes the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) and the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP).

“As a Floridian and a survivor of Hurricane Andrew, I know firsthand that natural hazards are a leading threat to America’s economy and American lives,” said Congresswoman Wilson. “In recent years, Americans have seen flooded subway stations in New York City, earthquake damage in the Nation’s Capital, the great American city of New Orleans submerged under water, and now entire neighborhoods in Oklahoma flattened to the ground. Tens of millions of Americans live in areas of the country prone to earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires, and other natural disasters. We as a nation must invest in preparedness. The Natural Hazards Reduction Act would reauthorize two important interagency programs that strengthen American communities’ ability to withstand disaster. This measure will create jobs, save tax dollars, and ultimately save lives.”

NEHRP, was created in 1977 and has been responsible for the development of seismic codes and standards to enable buildings and other infrastructure to better withstand earthquakes. The reauthorization will allow the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the U.S. Geological Survey, and FEMA to continue their efforts to develop and promote earthquake mitigation measures. Specifically, this reauthorization addresses key challenges in earthquake mitigation, including developing methods to retrofit existing structures, securing infrastructure, and working with households, businesses, and communities on the adoption of hazard mitigation measures.

NWIRP, was created in 2004 to study wind hazards and help develop building codes and practices to prevent damages caused by hurricanes, tornadoes, and other severe windstorms. The National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program continues to support NSF, NIST, and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and FEMA in efforts to reduce damage from windstorms.

Science Committee Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), the original cosponsor of the bill, said, *“By reauthorizing the earthquake and windstorm impact reduction programs, we can minimize the number of Americans who are*

harmed or killed by natural disasters or who have to face the challenge of putting their homes, businesses, and communities back together. I hope the Committee will take up this piece of legislation soon."

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of May 27 – May 31:

- The House will not be in session this week.
- The Senate will not be in session this week.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT MAY 27 – MAY 31, 2013

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

*THE SENATE WAS **NOT IN SESSION** THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS **NOT IN SESSION** THIS WEEK*

MAYOR GIMENEZ NAMED BY DOT SECRETARY LAHOOD TO NATIONAL FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced the members of the National Freight Advisory Committee, a diverse group of professionals that will provide advice and recommendations aimed at improving the national freight transportation system. Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez was among those named to the committee.

“The strength of our economy and the strength of our national freight system go hand in hand,” said Secretary LaHood. “The members of this committee understand firsthand the critical importance of freight movement, and their valuable insight will help ensure that our system is more secure and better connected.”

The Advisory Committee is comprised of 47 voting members from outside the Department of Transportation. The Deputy Secretary and Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy, as well as representatives from other Federal agencies with freight-related obligations will serve as ex-officio members. Members come with various perspectives on freight transportation and represent various modes of transportation, geographic regions, and policy areas. Freight customers and providers, labor representatives, safety experts and government entities are all represented as well.

Among those that the Mayor will be serving with on the committee are City of Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard, Mayor of Philadelphia Michael Nutter, A.C. Warton, Mayor of the City of Memphis, John Eaves, Chairman of Fulton County, GA and Christopher Rodgers, of Douglas County, NE who also serves as the President of the National Association of Counties and others.

Members will serve two-year terms and meet at least three times per year. The U.S. Department of Transportation solicited nominations in February. Secretary LaHood selected members with input from the MAP-21 Freight Implementation Team as well as the Freight Policy Council, an internal body of DOT leadership created to facilitate cross-modal implementation of freight provisions in the recently signed surface transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or MAP-21.

MAP-21 established a national freight policy and called for the creation of a National Freight Strategic Plan. By engaging stakeholders representing diverse interests, the Advisory Committee will provide recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation on how DOT can improve its freight transportation policies and programs.

The collaboration of stakeholders will serve to promote involvement and compliance with proposed plans and performance measures and will support the implementation of larger freight policy initiatives.

Over the last four years, the Obama Administration has made considerable investments in our national freight network. Through four rounds of the TIGER Grant program, DOT has directed \$1 billion toward projects that primarily address freight. This includes more than \$650 million to projects that strengthen freight rail infrastructure, reduce freight bottlenecks, and alleviate congestion issues, and more than \$350 million to our port system.

REP. FREDERICA WILSON ANNOUNCES \$1,015,974 GRANT FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Late last week, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson announced more than \$1 million in federal grants for Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue (MDFR). Miami-Dade Fire Rescue will receive a \$1,015,974 grant through the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program to make much-needed upgrades to its dispatch system. The upgrades will help reduce response times and enable MDFR to better serve Miami-Dade's growing population.

"I am delighted that Miami-Dade Fire Rescue will receive these critical resources," said Congresswoman Wilson. "The men and women of Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue regularly risk their lives to ensure the safety of our communities. They deserve the best equipment and training available."

According to DHS, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program is an important component of the broader effort to strengthen the nation's overall level of preparedness with regard to fires and related hazards. Since 2001, the AFG has provided approximately \$5.25 billion in grants to first-responder organizations to obtain much-needed emergency response equipment, personal protective equipment, firefighting and emergency vehicles, and training. During fiscal year (FY) 2012, the AFG will award another \$337.5 million to first-responder organizations that need support to improve their capability to respond to fires and emergencies of all types.

REP. WILSON CONGRATULATES SOUTH FLORIDA AGENCIES RECEIVING CRITICAL FUNDING TO ASSIST HOMELESS VETERANS

This week Congresswoman Frederica Wilson announced that the Miami-Dade County Department of Public Housing and Community Development and the Broward County

Housing Authority will receive over \$1.2 million in federal funding to provide housing and case management to 145 homeless veterans in South Florida.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are working together to provide permanent supportive housing to homeless veterans through the [HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\) Program](#). This program combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by Veterans Affairs. Since 2008, a total of 48,385 vouchers have been awarded and 42,557 formerly homeless veterans are currently in homes because of HUD-VASH.

The Miami-Dade County Department of Public Housing and Community Development will receive \$327,024 to assist 45 homeless veterans. Broward County Housing Authority will receive \$895,956 to serve 100 homeless veterans. Both housing agencies will partner with the Miami VA Health Care System and other organizations to help these veterans' access additional services.

"Every veteran deserves a place to call home," said Congresswoman Wilson. "This funding will provide a suitable home, access to additional services, and hope for 145 veterans in South Florida. This brings great joy to my heart, and I am committed to ensuring that our veterans receive the help and resources they need and deserve."

SEN. NELSON, ALONG WITH REPS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ AND GARCIA, DISCUSS REGION'S PREPAREDNESS FOR HURRICANE SEASON WITH FEMA

On Friday, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz was joined by Sen. Bill Nelson, Rep. Joe Garcia, FEMA Director Craig Fugate and Rick Knabb, the Director of the National Hurricane Center and others from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to discuss the importance of having a hurricane plan. National weather forecasters are predicting an above-average storm season, with 13 to 20 named Atlantic storms predicted, and 7 to 11 that could strengthen into hurricanes and 3 to 6 that could become major hurricanes.

REP. WILSON LAUNCHES NEW PUSH FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS LEGISLATION

Also as hurricane season is about to begin, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson is launching new efforts in support of two innovative disaster-preparation and risk-reduction bills that she has authored in the U.S. Congress. Through upcoming congressional hearings and official briefings, she is leading a push in Congress to seek to reduce the impacts of natural disasters on the U.S. economy and American lives.

As Ranking Member of the U.S. House Technology Subcommittee, Congresswoman Wilson recently introduced H.R. 2132, the *Natural Hazards Reduction Act of 2013*,

which would authorize new funding for the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP) and the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP).

These programs develop better building codes and new methods to strengthen existing homes and infrastructure. They also help households, businesses, and communities work together to promote the adoption of hazard risk-reductions measures. In early June, Congresswoman Wilson will promote this legislation as part of a comprehensive hearing on disaster risks, sponsored by the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Congresswoman Wilson will also be leading a new effort in support of H.R. 737, the *Homeowners' Defense Act of 2013*, which she authored in January. Next week, Congressional Research Service will be hosting a briefing featuring public and private sector insurance experts to discuss this proposal. The bill would establish a national consortium for state-sponsored insurance funds to voluntarily combine their insurance risk, and then transfer that risk to private markets through catastrophe bonds and reinsurance contracts. It would save money for state governments and taxpayers, as well as consumers who face record high premiums and widespread exclusion from insurance markets. This will enable more homeowners to obtain insurance at a lower cost.

"As a lifelong Floridian and a survivor of Hurricane Andrew, this issue is personal for me. These measures will not only create jobs by employing people to upgrade buildings to meet higher safety standards—these measures will also ultimately save billions in tax dollars and save precious lives."

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN STATEMENT ON CUBA REMAINING ON THE STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM LIST

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, made the following statement on the release of the State Department's 2012 Country Reports on Terrorism. Statement by Ros-Lehtinen:

"The release of the State Department 2012 Country Reports on Terrorism continues to rightfully designate Cuba on the State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST) list. The report reaffirms that the Cuban dictatorship provides safe haven to foreign terrorist organizations such as the FARC and ETA and harbors fugitives wanted in the United States, one of them being Joanne Chesimard who is wanted for the murder of a New Jersey State Trooper.

"While the report reminds us that the Cuban regime supports acts of international terrorism, I am disappointed that the report failed to mention the unjustly detainment of U.S. citizen Alan Gross, the fact that Cuba collaborates with other SST regimes such as Iran and Syria, and operates an extensive spy network that poses a significant threat to our national security. The Administration should immediately stop giving concessions to the regime and deny U.S. visas to their

operatives who will never respond to diplomatic niceties. The Castro brothers will always take any step to undermine U.S. interests, harm U.S. citizens, and support our enemies.”

Note: Earlier this month, a bipartisan group of Congressional Members (Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Mario Diaz-Balart, and Albio Sires) sent a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry explaining the reasons why Cuba should remain on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

REP. GARCIA VISITS HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE

On Wednesday, Congressman Joe Garcia visited the Homestead Air Force Base to tour the facilities with military personnel, review the base’s operations and see the new SOCSOUTH headquarters.

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN LEADS BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO UAE AND AFGHANISTAN

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, led a bipartisan Congressional delegation comprised of Reps. Michael Burgess (R-TX), Joseph Kennedy (D-MA), Blake Farenthold (R-TX), and Ami Bera (D-CA) to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Afghanistan.

Statement by Ros-Lehtinen:

“The UAE continues to be one of our strongest and important allies in the Middle East. Even with tensions high in the region, the UAE remains a steadfast U.S. partner that plays an important role to combat terrorism, promotes democratic values, and protects our national security.

“I commend the UAE for being proactive and leading the effort to decrease business dealings with Tehran and supporting efforts to sanction the Iranian regime. The UAE has also made significant progress aimed at cracking down on the ability for its territories to be used as a transshipment point for sensitive articles to be sent to Iran.

“We must continue to strengthen the common bonds of our bilateral relationship and work together to achieve peace and stability in the region.”

REP. WILSON HONORS LATE PIONEERING JUDGE WILKIE D. FERGUSON JR. AT STREET DEDICATION CEREMONY

On Thursday, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson commemorated the 75th birthday of the late Federal Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr., during an official street dedication ceremony at the Betty T. Ferguson Recreation Complex.

Congresswoman Wilson was joined at the ceremony by Judge Ferguson's family and friends, and elected officials, who will be led by the Carol City High School Marching Band to the unveiling. The portion of N.W. 199th Street from 27th Avenue to 47th Avenue was named in honor of Judge Ferguson by the Florida Legislature.

Judge Ferguson was the first black judge to serve on the 11th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida (Dade County Circuit Court) and the Florida Third District Court of Appeals. He was nominated to the United States District Court for the South District of Florida, in 1993.

"Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr., was a man of honesty, integrity, wisdom and compassion," said Congresswoman Wilson. "He believed that the law should work for everyone, regardless of background, and I am honored to pay tribute to Judge Ferguson for his commitment and contributions to our country."

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of June 3 – June 7:

- The House will be in session this week.
- The Senate will be in session this week.

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