

# WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT August 8th - August 12th, 2011

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

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK AND REMAINS IN PRO-FORMA SESSION*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK AND REMAINS IN PRO-FORMA SESSION*

## **SUPER BUDGET COMMITTEE COMPLETE**

This week, House and Senate leadership made their appointments to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction as required by the debt ceiling bill that was passed and signed into law last week. The Joint Select Committee must vote on a final package of deficit reductions by November 23, 2011. A majority of the committee members will have to approve the package before it can be submitted to the House and Senate for consideration. Both chambers must vote on the final deficit reduction package by December 23, 2011. If the joint committee deadlocks or Congress fails to pass the package, it would trigger across-the-board cuts for defense and non-defense spending beginning in 2013.

The 12-member committee will consist of three Senators appointed by the Senate Majority Leader, including one co-chair; three Senators appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; three House members appointed by the Speaker of the House, including one co-chair; and three House members appointed by the Minority Leader. The members of the committee are as follows:

### *Senate Democrats:*

Senator Patty Murray (WA), co-chair of the Joint Select Committee  
Senator Max Baucus (MT), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee  
Senator John Kerry (MA)

### *Senate Republicans:*

Senator Jon Kyl (AZ), Republican Whip and member of the Finance Committee  
Senator Pat Toomey (PA), a member of the Budget, Banking, Commerce, and Joint Economic Committees  
Senator Rob Portman (OH), a member of the Budget Committee, and former Director of the Office of Management under President George W. Bush.

### *House Republicans:*

Congressman Jeb Hensarling (TX), Republican Conference Chairman, and co-chair of the Joint Select Committee

Congressman Dave Camp (MI), chairman of the Ways and Means  
Congressman Fred Upton (MI), chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee

*House Democrats:*

Congressman James E. Clyburn (SC), Assistant House Democratic Leader  
Congressman Xavier Becerra (CA), Democratic Caucus Vice Chair  
Congressman Chris Van Hollen (MD), Budget Committee Ranking Member

## **MIAS - UPDATE**

OIA, the Beacon Council and the Florida Congressional Delegation were informed last week that the Air Force would not grant its approval for the Beacon Council and Miami-Dade County to host the Miami International Aerospace Show at Homestead Air Reserve Base for 2012. In response to the Air Force's decision, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen is now working to arrange a meeting for later this month or in September with Air Force personnel and county officials to determine acceptable next steps to make the MIAS a reality. OIA joined the Beacon Council, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen's staff and members of the DC lobbying team in two conference calls this week to strategize and prepare for the meeting and a path forward.

## **REP. DIAZ BALART COMMENTS ON PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TOURS OF CUBA**

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart issued the following statement as the first people-to-people tours take off to Cuba. His statement is below:

“Regrettably, numerous reports and travel promotions indicate that President Obama's easing of sanctions against the terrorist regime in Cuba have led to numerous abuses amounting to thinly veiled tourism, which is prohibited by U.S. law. As the Obama Administration demonstrates weakness by granting unilateral concessions to the Castro regime; the Castro brothers respond with increased brutality, imprisonment of American humanitarian aid worker Alan Gross, and the murder of political prisoners. It is past time for the Administration to stop providing unilateral concessions to the Castro regime by easing travel regulations and channeling millions of U.S. dollars to the brutal regime.”

## **REP. WILSON VISITS ISRAEL**

On Sunday, Rep. Frederica Wilson departed on an eight-day trip to Israel with a group of over 25 House Democratic colleagues. The visit gives the Congresswoman an opportunity to learn first-hand about the complexities of the region, including the peace process, security situation, and important political and economic trends in the region. This will be the Congresswoman's first visit to Israel.

Remarking on the trip, Rep Wilson said, “I'm thrilled to visit Israel for the first time to learn first-hand about one of our closest friends and allies.” She goes on to say, “As the only thriving democracy in the region, Israel shares core values with the United States –

representative government, freedom, and diversity. District 17 is home to a significant Jewish population and I look forward to deepening the relationship between our two nations and bringing these experiences back to my work in South Florida and in Congress.”

The delegation is scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Shimon Peres, and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. The trip includes high-level sessions and briefings with opposition members, military leaders, defense and economic experts, peace negotiators, and religious leaders as well as visits to Jewish, Christian and Islamic holy sites; key security sites, including the Gaza border and the Golan Heights; cooperative U.S.-Israel defense and technology projects; community centers for new immigrants; military bases; universities; and hospitals.

## **PORT OF MIAMI DEEP DREDGE - UPDATE**

OIA and the D.C. lobbying team continue to work with Seaport Director Bill Johnson to obtain the necessary federal approvals for the next phase of the Port's Deep Dredge Project, a construction advanced funds agreement.

Two weeks ago Director Johnson met with key Administration and Congressional officials to ensure that the construction funds agreement is approved by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees prior to the August recess. The Senate has signed off on the agreement and the House is expected to sign off in the very near future. The Office of Management and Budget has already given its approval for this next phase of the project to proceed. OIA continues to work with the Florida Congressional Delegation, key members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Administration, to complete this critical phase of the Port of Miami's deep dredge project.

## **REP. WILSON TO HOST JOB FAIR AUG. 23<sup>RD</sup> IN MIAMI**

Rep. Frederica Wilson, along with members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) will be hosting town hall meetings and job fairs in several cities across the country. On Tuesday, August 23, 2011 the Congresswoman will serve as the host for an event in Miami, Florida. She will be joined by City of Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado and Commissioner Richard P. Dunn II at the James L. Knight Center, 400 SE 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Congresswoman is encouraging participation and support from community members as they anticipate several hundred eager job seekers to attend and submit applications for employment.

For additional information please visit [www.wilson.house.gov](http://www.wilson.house.gov) and click on the “For the People” Jobs Initiative (H. Res. 348) link or contact her District office at 305-690-5905.

## **COMMISSION ON CATASTROPHIC RISK**

On July 27, Sen. Nelson introduced S. 1429, the Commission on Catastrophic Disaster Risk and Insurance Act of 2011. The legislation would establish a bipartisan Commission to assess the condition of property and casualty insurance and reinsurance markets; the ongoing risks of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and floods; and recommends and reports legislative and regulatory changes to improve the competitiveness of domestic and international markets. Sen. Nelson believes it is a good companion to reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program. Sen. Nelson has reintroduced this legislation in each of the past three Congresses.

## **UASI FUNDING - UPDATE**

On Monday August 1, OIA participated in a conference call with other South Florida jurisdictions to discuss the goals and strategies for adequate UASI funding, and inclusion of the combined Ft. Lauderdale/Miami UASI as a Tier I UASI.

UASI jurisdictions represented on the call were Broward County, City of Ft. Lauderdale, City of Homestead, City of Miami, City of Miami Gardens, City of Miramar, City of Pembroke Pines, Miami-Dade County, Monroe County, and Palm Beach County.

The discussion focused on specific UASI priorities and ensuring a unified lobbying strategy in response to FY2012 reductions in the House Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, with the Senate expected to take up the bill after the August recess. The group plans to reconvene during the last week of August to set a final date for meetings with South Florida congressional delegation members and staff, in addition to relevant committee members and staff.

## **HUD VOUCHER ISSUE**

OIA continues to work with Rep. Diaz-Balart's office and the rest of the county delegation regarding funding discrepancies with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). At issue are provisions within the FY 2009 THUD Appropriations Act which required HUD to rescind \$750 million in unspent Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) funds from 2400 public housing authorities.

Earlier this year, MDPHA discovered that while the department was in HUD receivership, the \$43 million recaptured from MDPHA was the second largest recapture amount of the top ten programs experiencing recapture in the country. The amount was also disproportionate in relation to the size of the other PHA's respective HCV programs.

In May, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Chairman Joe Martinez sent a letter to HUD requesting corrective action and an explanation for the disproportionate recapture amount. HUD's response letter did not provide an explanation regarding the recapture amount, nor did it indicate the agency would take corrective action to address this inequitable treatment. On June 16, Chairman Martinez again sent a letter to HUD,

requesting an adequate explanation regarding HUD's calculation of the recapture amount and lack of corrective action.

Director Gregg Fortner, OIA and the federal lobbying team continue to seek an acceptable response and resolution from HUD.

## **GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD - 2012**

Texas Gov. Rick Perry has all but officially announced that he will throw his ten gallon hat into the ring and pursue the GOP presidential nomination. Gov. Perry is set to give a major speech in South Carolina this weekend, where he is expected to announce his candidacy.

Here is a list of candidates who have announced they will run, and some other potential candidates.

### *OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED WILL RUN:*

Michele Bachmann – Minnesota Congresswoman  
Herman Cain – former CEO of Godfather's Pizza  
Newt Gingrich – former Speaker of the House  
Jon Huntsman – former Gov. of Utah & former Ambassador to China  
Gary Johnson – former Gov. of New Hampshire  
Ron Paul – Texas Congressman  
Tim Pawlenty – former Gov. of Minnesota  
Buddy Roemer – former Gov. of Louisiana  
Mitt Romney – former Gov. of Massachusetts  
Rick Santorum – former Sen. from Pennsylvania  
Thaddeus McCotter – Michigan Congressman

### *YET TO OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE:*

Rudy Giuliani – former Mayor of New York City  
Sarah Palin – former Gov. of Alaska  
Rick Perry – Gov. of Texas

## **FEDERAL LOBBYIST REPORTS**

Please use the following link to access the monthly lobbyist reports for the Washington D.C. lobbying team - [http://www.miamidade.gov/intergov/federal\\_lobbyist.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/intergov/federal_lobbyist.asp)

## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: AUGUST 15 – AUGUST 19**

*The House & Senate will be in pro-forma session for the month of August.*