

WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT - JULY 25TH THROUGH JULY 29TH, 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

THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK

DEBT DEBATE CONTINUES TO DOMINATE D.C.

President Obama, Speaker Boehner and Leader Reid are still locked in a battle over how to raise the country's debt ceiling before the U.S. Treasury imposed deadline, which is now just days away. Many economists have predicted that a failure to reach a deal could result in an unprecedented national default that would trigger a recession and cause chaos for the global financial markets.

PORT OF MIAMI DEEP DREDGE

Seaport Director Bill Johnson and the D.C. lobbying team roamed the halls of Congress again this week to continue their strong efforts aimed at obtaining the necessary federal approvals for the next phase of the Port's Deep Dredge Project, a construction advanced funds agreement.

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 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.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AEROSPACE SHOW

OIA continues to work with the Beacon Council in its efforts to secure federal approval to host the Miami International Aerospace Show.

Last month, a letter organized by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen to Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley, was signed by all 27 members of Florida's Congressional Delegation. The letter expressed strong support for the efforts of the County and Beacon Council to host the event, which would be held at the Homestead Air Reserve Base. Last week, the Beacon Council and staff for Sen. Nelson and Rep. Ros-Lehtinen were informed that a formal response to the delegation letter and the Council's application for approval would be forthcoming.

OIA, the Beacon Council, Gov. Scott's Washington DC Office and the congressional delegation, have worked together to support the Beacon Council's efforts.

CONGRESSMAN RIVERA TALKS WITH FIU'S DC INTERNS

FIU's Director of Federal Relations, Carlos Becerra, hosted an event for FIU's 2011 class of Washington D.C. summer interns in the Rayburn House Office Building titled "Capitol Hill 101." Rep. Rivera held a candid discussion about life on Capitol Hill and Florida political history with the students, who are spending their summer working for various federal agencies and Capitol Hill offices. Rep. Rivera (himself an FIU alum) was joined by staff from Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (also an FIU alum), OIA and the private sector, each sharing their personal journey to the nation's capital, answering questions and providing insight to the group of next generation leaders.

CONGRESSMAN DAVID RIVERA CO-SPONSORS 3% WITHHOLDING BILL

Rep. Rivera has joined Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Mario Diaz-Balart as cosponsors of H.R. 674, a bill to repeal the imposition of the 3 percent withholding. Senator Rubio has also signed on as a cosponsor to the Senate version of the legislation.

Commissioner Sally Heyman has submitted letters to committee staff and the county's delegation outlining the detrimental impact the withholding tax would have on the county. Additionally, Department of Procurement Management Director Miriam Singer and OIA continue to advocate for the repeal of Section 511 of the Tax Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005. Final implementation of Sec. 511 would require federal, state and local governments to withhold 3 percent from all payments for goods and services purchased from small businesses. H.R. 674, introduced by Rep. Wally Herger (CA), now has 220 cosponsors.

OIA will continue to monitor any developments concerning the repeal and also work with the rest of the county's congressional delegation to sign on to legislation as cosponsors.

CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON TO HOST JOB FAIR AUG 23RD 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 and click on the "For the People" Jobs Initiative (H. Res. 348) link or contact her District office at 305-690-5905.

HUD VOUCHER ISSUE

OIA continues to work with Congressman 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.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS GAIN SOME TRACTION

There has been a renewed effort by supporters of the Columbia, Panama and South Korean Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to move them before Congress adjourns for the August recess. On Friday, Senators Blunt (MO) and Portman (OH) presented a letter signed by 12 Republican Senators promising to vote with Democrats to move a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) benefits bill, which the President has been planning to attach to one of the FTAs. With those 12 votes, Democrats would be able to overcome any expected filibuster by Senate Republicans.

The House and Senate are scheduled to adjourn on August 5, but that depends on whether or not they reach an agreement on the debt ceiling. Passage of the FTAs is a priority for Miami-Dade County and the business community. OIA will continue monitoring developments and working with the DC lobbying team to advocate for passage of the FTAs.

PUBLIC SAFETY INTEROPERABILITY / D BLOCK SPECTRUM ALLOCATION

Recently, three new spectrum proposals have been released in the House. One bill, H.R. 2482, introduced on July 11 by Reps. John Dingell (MI) and Gene Green (TX), in large part tracks S. 911, a bill reported favorably out of the Senate Commerce Committee on June 8. The House bill differs from S. 911 in that it affords greater protections to broadcasters, who may be relocated to other channels to clear spectrum for future auctions.

A draft House GOP measure released recently differs in several respects from S. 911. Whereas S. 911 would turn the D Block over to first responders for a nationwide public safety broadband network, the GOP draft being considered by the House Energy and Commerce Committee is silent on the D Block. Top Republicans on the committee favor a Federal Communications Commission auction of the D Block spectrum as current law allows. Although the GOP draft would not give public safety additional spectrum for their broadband network, it does

contemplate providing an as yet unspecified amount for construction of the network. The states, through public/private partnerships, would be eligible for grants to build out needed infrastructure and to obtain compatible devices. The House GOP draft also contemplates states serving as the license holders of the existing 24 MHz of spectrum earmarked for public safety and establishes a board of federal, state and commercial members to govern construction and operation of the public safety network.

Meantime, House Democrats floated a competing spectrum draft the day before a July 15 hearing on spectrum and public safety issues held by the House Subcommittee on Communications Technology. The Democratic discussion draft, like S. 911, would reallocate the D Block to public safety agencies. Additionally, similar to S. 911, the Democratic draft would establish a nonprofit corporation to hold the public safety spectrum license and a 15-member government board, with seven members representing state, local or tribal interests.

At the July 15 Subcommittee hearing, much of the testimony and discussion focused on the differences between the Republican and Democratic approaches to the D Block, who would service as the public safety spectrum license holder and the preferred governing body to oversee the deployment and operation of the public safety network.

In recent days, there have been rumors that spectrum auction provisions could be folded into the debt ceiling package being debated by Congressional and White House leaders. Proceeds from a future FCC spectrum auction could be used to offset the federal debt. In February, administration officials estimated that a net \$9.6 billion from spectrum auctions would go into the U.S. Treasury. Despite rumors that spectrum auction language could become a deficit reduction vehicle, Representative Greg Walden (OR), chairman of the House Communications and Technology Subcommittee, said he would prefer to see spectrum move as a stand-alone measure.

CONGRESSMAN DIAZ-BALART CONGRATULATES PERU

Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, marking the Independence Day of Peru, released a statement saying, “I congratulate the people of Peru and the Peruvian community in South Florida as they celebrate their 190th anniversary as a sovereign nation. May their commitment to democratic principles and rule of law prevail above all else, remembering those who fought for the liberties they enjoy today. I look forward to continuing my work with Peruvian leaders and the Peruvian community to strengthen our partnership.”

CONGRESSMAN DIAZ-BALART ISSUES STATEMENT ON MOROCCO

Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Morocco, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart and Rep. Michael Grimm (NY) issued the following statement in response to the crash of a military transport plane in Morocco. “Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims, the families of the victims and the people of Morocco on this tragic day. May they be filled with strength to overcome this horrible incident. The United States stands firmly with Morocco and mourns over the lives lost.”

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR 2012 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

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

NEXT WEEK’S CALENDAR: AUGUST 1 – AUGUST 5

The House & Senate will likely be in session, depending on the outcome of the ongoing debt ceiling debate.

FEDERAL CONTRACT LOBBYISTS JUNE REPORT

Please find attached the June monthly reports from the county’s federal contract lobbyists.