

## **WEEKLY WASHINGTON JUNE 27TH THROUGH JULY 1ST, 2011**

**Below is an informal overview of the Weekly Washington activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.**

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN RECESS THIS WEEK*

### **MIAMI-DADE UASI HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING**

On June 30, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Chairman Joe Martinez joined Mayors and County officials from Florida and throughout the country in the attached letter to Senate leadership, urging them to protect critical Homeland Security programs. OIA continues to advocate on behalf of the County to ensure adequate funding of the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) in the Senate's version of the FY 2012 House Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

An amendment was attached to the House version of the legislation that stripped language from the bill that would have restricted funding to only ten urban areas throughout the country. The entire Miami-Dade County Congressional Delegation strongly supported the amendment. This came in response to a May 18 letter, where Chairman Martinez joined mayors from throughout the country, including Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado, in a letter to U.S. House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (KY) which strongly opposed the restrictive language. Currently, Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami receive funding under this program; however, under the provisions of the House bill, they would have been removed from the funding list. Prior to that vote, OIA and the County's federal contract lobbyists worked with a broad coalition of cities and counties throughout Florida and the nation to advocate on behalf of the amendment and will now do so as the bill heads to the Senate for consideration.

### **THE DREAM ACT**

This week the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security held a hearing on the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act of 2011 (S 952). The bill would, under certain conditions, make permanent residents of select alien minors. A former version of the bill was passed by the House last year, but could not overcome a Senate filibuster in the final days of the 111th Congress. However, House leadership says that the Act stands no chance of passage in their chamber.

The witness panel included Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and Dr. Clifford Stanley, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. All three witnesses were strongly in favor of the DREAM Act. Secretary Duncan suggested that the bill is a key component to US prosperity and economic competitiveness. There are 3 million jobs that will need to be filled in the coming few years in the technology industry and these youth would provide a great source to fill these vacancies, according to the Education Secretary. Duncan went as far as to call on the federal government to

provide these students with grants for education and work study, which is not provided for in the legislation. Napolitano asserted that the Act would allow DHS to focus on larger immigration priorities such as the deportation of criminal aliens. She stated that it is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. The US has a long and storied history of accepting US immigrants into the military that goes back to the Civil War. According to Dr. Stanley, more than 25,000 immigrants currently serve in the US military. The Department of Defense, like the rest of the Administration, strongly supports the DREAM Act.

OIA will continue to follow this bill and all immigration issues to identify developments and opportunities for advocacy.

## **FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION REIMBURSEMENT**

Following a June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting with Peter Rogoff, Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Joe Martinez along with County Manager Alina Hudak, the county received news that the reimbursement of \$65 million will be released next week. This is a result of the county addressing the ongoing efforts to restore Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) federal drawdown privileges. The consideration of limited drawdown status comes as MDT has made many administrative and procedural improvements that are near full implementation in response to requirements set forth by DOT and the FTA.

## **LAHOOD ANNOUNCES \$527 MILLION FOR TIGER GRANT PROGRAM**

Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT), Ray LaHood, announced that \$527 million will be available for a third round of TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) competitive grants. This program funds innovative transportation projects aimed at creating jobs that have a significant impact on the nation, a region or a metropolitan area. States, cities, local governments, and other partnerships have until this fall to apply for the TIGER III program, which in the past has funded projects including roads, bridges, freight rail, transit buses and streetcars, ports, and bicycle and pedestrian paths. According to the DOT, “The previous two rounds of the TIGER grant program provided \$2.1 billion to 126 transportation projects in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Demand for the program has been overwhelming, and during the previous two rounds, the Department of Transportation received more than 2,500 applications requesting more than \$79 billion for transportation projects across the country.” Miami-Dade County has submitted applications for the prior TIGER programs and OIA will work with the Miami-Dade County Congressional delegation and DOT to help secure funding for any potential County projects during the current round of grants.

## **FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS STALL...AGAIN**

The Senate Finance Committee was scheduled to hold a “mock” markup Thursday afternoon to consider the South Korea, Colombia and Panama trade deals, in addition to a reauthorization of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) benefits. However, Senate Republicans and Democrats could not reach an agreement to hold the informal markup to consider the three major trade deals. According to various reports, the disagreement concerns the inclusion of the TAA

benefits to the trade package. This is the latest in a long series of battles involving the stalled deals, which cannot seem to avoid the political headwinds on Capitol Hill. Each Republican member of the Senate Finance Committee sent a letter to President Obama earlier Thursday, urging him to exclude the TAA benefits as part of a deal.

## **MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY**

OIA continues to work with the Miami-Dade County Congressional 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 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 will continue to seek an acceptable response and resolution from HUD.

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES WEEKLY CALL**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in partnership with the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities and the Office of the Deputy Secretary, have issued a FY11 funding requirements advance notice for the Sustainable Communities Regional Grant Program. The FY11 Continuing Resolution supported funding for the grant in the amount of \$100,000,000, which HUD will use to approve Sustainable Communities Initiatives supporting regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decision-making principles. Of the total grant amount, \$70,000,000 will fund the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program, which supports metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, transportation, workforce, and economic infrastructural development projects. No less than \$17.5 million will be awarded to regions with populations of less than 500,000. The remaining total grant amount (\$30,000,000) will be applied towards funding the Challenge Planning Grant Program. These grants are strictly planning dollars and cannot be used for implementation. Eligible teams should consist of multi-jurisdictional and multi-sector partnerships, which should include government entities and non-profit partners.

## **PORT OF MIAMI DEEP DREDGE**

OIA continues to work with the Miami Seaport and Director Bill Johnson to obtain the necessary federal approvals for the next phase of the Deep Dredge Project, a construction advanced funds agreement. Last week, Director Johnson met with Sally Ericsson from the Office of Management and Budget in Sen. Nelson's office. OIA continues to work with the Florida Congressional Delegation, key members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Obama Administration, to complete this phase of the Port of Miami's deep dredge project.

## **NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION**

Congress continues to work on the National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization with the introduction of H.R.1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011, which was introduced by Rep. Biggert (IL). On September 30, 2010, the President signed the National Flood Insurance Program Re-extension Act of 2010, which Congress passed on September 24, 2010 and expires on September 30, 2011. OIA and the Federal lobbying team will work to ensure that issues of importance to Miami-Dade County and the State of Florida are addressed in this legislation.

## **REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE**

### *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  
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  
Buddy Roemer – former Gov. of Louisiana

## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: JULY 4 – JULY 8**

*OIA will participate in an Operations Brief and tour of the National Response Control Center at FEMA on Wednesday, July 6th in Washington.*

*Congress will be in recess on Monday for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.*

*The House will be in session next week.*

*The Senate will reconvene on the evening of Tuesday July 5<sup>th</sup> and be in session throughout the week.*