

Memorandum**TO:** Miami-Dade County**FROM:** Greenberg Traurig**DATE:** August 31, 2024**RE:** August 2024 Monthly Report

Below please find a summary of Greenberg Traurig's efforts on behalf of Miami-Dade County and the latest news stories and updates in Washington from the month of August. If you have any questions, or if we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Overview

Throughout the month of August, GT has kept Miami-Dade County staff up-to-date on the latest breaking news and developments in Washington with an on the ground presence in the nation's capital. GT has also helped County staff navigate the Congressional Budget and Appropriations process. Our team continues to work with the Delegation and Congressional leadership to advocate for funding and support for programs that are important to the County. GT's efforts on behalf of the County have focused on issues such as Appropriations/Budget, Public Safety, Economic Development, Equity, Justice, WRDA, Housing, Broadband/5G, Immigration, Infrastructure, and Transportation issues among many others.

Our team features former Congressional and White House staff whose strong connections in Washington can enable Miami-Dade County staff to maximize their opportunities to discuss specific high-level priorities with the top decision-makers in the Federal government. Through these connections, GT has also provided County staff with relevant "Dear Colleague" letters, draft versions of legislation, legislative analysis, Congressional Agenda outlines and other insights not available through public means. GT continued to cultivate these relationships in the Federal government this month and maintains an open dialogue with Members of the Florida delegation, Congressional leadership, and key contacts within the Administration.

Farm Bill

The Democratic Women's Caucus urged Speaker Mike Johnson to rework changes to the food stamp program included in the House farm bill, saying the provision could threaten the bill's final passage.

A provision in the House farm bill (HR 8467) would require any changes to the Agriculture Department's Thrifty Food Plan, a tool for setting benefits under Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to be cost-neutral. That would effectively bar benefits from increasing or decreasing except to reflect the cost of living.

The DWC said in a letter to Johnson, R-La., that an estimated nearly \$30 billion cut in potential benefits in food assistance would "disproportionately impact women and children,

who make up the vast majority of SNAP participants.” “SNAP is an essential program that reduces rates of women’s poverty,” the letter states.

DWC vice chair Teresa Leger Fernández, D-N.M., said in an interview that Republicans would lose support if they try to pass “a farm bill that is this detrimental to American families, working families, women on SNAP benefits.”

“You’re going to lose support, and that might mean you cannot get it passed,” Leger Fernández said.

The Congressional Budget Office in August estimated that the changes to the TFP would reduce direct spending by \$29.4 billion from 2025-2033. The CBO said the scheduled reevaluations of the TFP in 2027 and 2032 would increase the baseline projections for the cost of SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs that use the plan.

Adult women accounted for about 38 percent of SNAP recipients, and 40 percent were children in 2022, the Agriculture Department says. The National Women’s Law Center also reported that SNAP moved nearly 1.2 million women out of poverty as measured by the Supplemental Poverty Measure in 2021.

Rep. Hillary Scholten, D-Mich., a member of the DWC, said SNAP is “such a foundational public benefit that helps so many women and young children living in poverty across the United States of America.”

“We are realizing increasingly that food is medicine, and as we think about the importance of not only just having access to any food, but having access to high-quality, nutrient-dense food,” Scholten said.

Leger Fernández said members of the DWC will need to evaluate the final bill before deciding how to vote when it reaches the floor, but she said the “DWC is committed to promoting policies that advance a women’s agenda.”

The farm bill, which the House Agriculture Committee approved in May, is among the measures that could be addressed when Congress returns Sept. 9.

The current farm bill (PL 118-22), which is set to expire on Sept. 30, is an extension of the 2018 farm bill (PL 115-334), including a provision requiring the TFP to be reevaluated every five years based on food prices, food composition data, consumption patterns and dietary guidance.

“The SNAP benefits are about food, and so we must evaluate it based on what is the cost of food,” Leger Fernández said. “That is simply common sense, and to exclude food and not focus on food just does not make sense.”

The Republican push to make the relatively new policy cost-neutral came after the 2021 USDA update to the TFP that resulted in a 21 percent increase in benefits. The boost brought criticism from Republicans. It added \$256 billion to the farm bill baseline, according to House Agriculture Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson, R-Pa.

The House Agriculture Committee's summary says the legislation “corrects egregious Executive branch overreach and disallows future unelected bureaucrats from arbitrarily increasing or decimating SNAP benefits.”

The farm bill is traditionally a bipartisan measure. House Republicans, holding a narrow majority, may need to rely on Democratic votes to ensure its passage.

There are several avenues that can be taken to rework the farm bill, such as the House Rules Committee. The panel could allow the House to vote on an amendment from Rep. Jahana Hayes, D-Conn., to eliminate the Thrifty Food Plan cost-neutral requirement.

Although the Agriculture Committee rejected that amendment, 25-29, at its markup of the farm bill, Leger Fernández said they could be successful at getting the Hayes amendment adopted on the floor because “some of these programs are used more in Republican counties than Democrat counties.”

“It's up to Johnson whether he directs the Rules Committee to allow the amendment through,” Leger Fernández said. “That's why we're calling on him.”

Scholten said the Democrat-led Senate also is going to have to pass its version of the farm bill. While the Senate Agriculture Committee hasn't released the text of its farm bill, a May summary said the Senate version would maintain the five-year TFP update under the 2018 farm bill.

“The Senate is going to have to pass their version. It's going to have to come back to the House for reconciliation, and we will have an avenue to do that. And when it does, Republicans are going to have to answer for the type of future that they're willing to fight for our children,” Scholten said.

WRDA 2024

The Senate in early August approved via unanimous consent its 2024 water resources development bill, which would authorize U.S. Army Corps of Engineers programs and projects.

The biennial legislation introduced by Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., and ranking member Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., authorizes projects to dredge ports, rehabilitate levees and address flooding throughout the country. It requires the corps to conduct feasibility studies and report to Congress on a range of issues.

Carper noted that the Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA, bill includes projects and programs in all 50 states and that the committee received more than 1,200 project requests this cycle. Capito said she and Carper worked with members after the committee marked up the bill (S 4367) in May to set several priorities, which were addressed in the substitute amendment adopted on the floor.

The bill is named after Carper, who last year announced he would not seek reelection.

“It can’t be overstated just how important the Army Corps work is for communities across America,” Carper said earlier on the floor. “Bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions, and WRDA continues to be proof of that.”

Earlier this year, Carper and Capito said they intended to avoid a “policy-heavy bill” after the WRDA bills in both 2020 and 2022 contained several policy directives.

Carper said the bill includes 83 feasibility studies and 13 new or modified construction projects. He pointed to a provision that would authorize a study on helping Maui, Hawaii, recover from the devastation of last year’s wildfires through flood protection and ecosystem restoration efforts. He also touted authorization for a project in Maricopa County, Ariz., to protect and restore major wetlands and provide flood control, as well as another in Galveston, Texas, that would help the corps study the expansion of ship channels and barge lanes.

Carper said the bill also includes a provision that would direct the corps to execute a plan to fully implement past reauthorizations as soon as possible, as some projects are behind schedule.

“While the corps has made some important progress, there’s much more that the corps needs to do to implement past reauthorizations, and we don’t have a lot of time to spare,” he said. “In fact, we don’t have any time to spare. The effects of climate change are all around us.”

Capito praised provisions in the bill that would avoid a “one size fits all” solution to projects to help the corps address the unique water resources needs of all communities.

The House passed its water resources bill (HR 8812) in a 359-13 vote in July. That bill includes authorizations requested by House members.

Tax Reform

The Senate fell short as expected of the 60 votes needed to start debate on a \$79 billion tax bill that would deliver financial relief to businesses and low-income families, amid opposition from most Republicans and some on the majority side of the aisle as well.

Though the procedural vote was expected to go down, Democrats hope Republicans’ opposition to expanding the child tax credit will hurt the GOP on the campaign trail and give their own vulnerable members facing tough races a boost. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York also accused Republicans of voting against the bill to avoid giving Democrats a win so close to the election.

“Senate Republicans love to talk about they are the party of family and business, so it’s very odd to see them come out so aggressively against expanding the child tax credit and rewarding businesses with the [research and development] tax credit, but that seems to be what they’re doing,” Schumer said on the floor ahead of the vote. “Senate Republicans can either choose bipartisanship and get this done now, or they can choose partisanship [and] leave families hanging out to dry.” The measure wouldn’t affect separate R&D credits, but it would restore companies’ ability to claim full deductions for research expenses in the first year, something a broad coalition of industries has been angling for

since that tax break got less generous at the start of 2022.

The Senate voted 48-44 on cloture on the motion to consider the tax bill (HR 7024) negotiated by Senate Finance Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and House Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith, R-Mo. Schumer changed his vote to ‘nay,’ to allow the option to reconsider the cloture motion at a later date.

Schumer hinted that he might bring the motion up again after lawmakers return from August recess.

“I’m hopeful that Republicans when they go home will feel the heat,” Schumer said at a press conference following the vote. “I’m hopeful that they will come back and stop their intransigent position that they’re not going to do anything because Donald Trump doesn’t want to see any accomplishments here.”

The bill would revive a trio of business tax breaks, including the full upfront deduction of research and development expenses, and expand the child tax credit to make it more generous to low-income families. The House passed the legislation on a 357-70 vote in January.

GOP senators, including Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, dismissed the vote as a political ploy, citing the timing of holding a cloture vote right before the Senate leaves town for August recess.

“Today’s vote doesn’t seem intended to produce a legislative outcome. The Democratic leader himself admitted this week that losing the vote would be a political benefit to vulnerable Senate Democrats running for reelection,” McConnell said on the floor. “Well, I’m not so certain the American people are impressed by message votes, and I don’t think they give out points for incomplete work.”

Non-Governmental Partners and Coalitions

Throughout August, GT continued to work with organizations like NACo, the Large Urban County Caucus, the National League of Cities, and the United States Conference of Mayors to push for additional state/local aid that would benefit Miami-Dade County and their residents.

GT staff have attended many meetings and been on regular calls with the organizations mentioned above and others this month on the County’s behalf. Partnering with these and other organization allows Miami-Dade County officials the opportunity to amplify their voices and help attain County policy priorities at the federal level.

Media Updates

GT continues to send daily media updates on legislative and political issues to the County in order to ensure that the Commission and staff remain up-to-date on developments within the Beltway. We conduct careful daily monitoring of the federal legislative calendar, executive orders, and other policy directives from the White House, action by the federal regulatory

agencies, and key decisions issued by the federal courts. We will continue to monitor the issues most relevant to the County and provide timely and accurate information in order to make certain that the County is aware of any developments which may provide an opportunity to accomplish established goals.