

**TO:** Alina Gonzalez, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

**FROM:** Jim Davenport, Partner  
Greg Burns, Partner

### RECENT TRP ACTIVITIES

- Participated in a prep meeting with the Mayor and County staff to discuss her upcoming meeting with incoming USACE SAJ Commander Bowman as he toured Florida local sponsor communities. Discussed status of County USACE projects and the Water Resources Development Act.
- Shortly thereafter, shared that the House would pass their version of WRDA via the House suspension calendar. However, it remains unlikely to be passed in a final version prior to the end of the year.
- Discussed the recent listing of the Queen Conch as threatened under the Endangered Species Act with County staff, which will likely have impacts on County projects in coastal areas as it has already slowed or stopped projects in adjacent south Florida counties.
- Continued to engage with the Miami-Dade congressional delegation as well as additional members of the Florida congressional delegation asking to support FY 2025 funding for the resiliency restudy of the Central & South Florida flood control project for improved flood control for the region as well as the Section 216 study for the same purpose.
- Shared information on the Biden Administration's rule relating to extreme heat for workers, including that it interestingly would not cover public employees.
- Engaged with EPA regarding their Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program selections, which unfortunately did not include the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact submission.
- Shared that the University of Miami is receiving funding from NOAA (\$7.7 million in first year; up to \$16 million total over 3 years) for a project aiming to increase the heat tolerance of restored corals.
- Provided daily *Tip Sheet* and periodic *TRP Grants Newsletter*.

### CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

#### HOUSE PASSES INTERIOR-ENVIRONMENT SPENDING BILL

On July 25, the House passed the chamber's fifth fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations bill, sending the Interior-Environment measure to the Senate along party lines. The House does not plan to consider any additional spending bills on the floor given some of the ongoing disagreements over pending bills within the GOP conference. With lawmakers well behind the ball on government funding, it is likely that attention will shift to passing a continuing resolution (CR) before the September 30 deadline.

#### HOUSE PASSES WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

On July 22, the House approved the Water Resources Development Act of 2024, legislation that authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Civil Works Program for projects to improve the nation's ports and harbors, inland waterway navigation, flood and storm protection, and other

aspects of our water resources infrastructure. The bill authorizes 160 new feasibility studies for locally proposed projects and 12 projects that have been thoroughly reviewed by the Corps and have culminated in a final report to Congress with approval by the Chief of Engineers or the Director of Civil Works. It includes language to expedite the completion of the feasibility study for the Miami-Dade Back Bay project, which is awaiting a final Chief's Report in late August. We do not expect to see any activity on the Senate WRDA until after the August recess.

## **HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE ADVANCES LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORTS FAMILIES AND CHILDREN LIVING IN VULNERABLE CIRCUMSTANCES**

On July 24, the House Ways and Means Committee approved The *Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families Act* (H.R. 9076), which reauthorizes and reforms the Title IV-B child welfare program. The Committee also advanced The *Strengthening State and Tribal Child Support Enforcement Act* (H.R. 7906), which overturns an IRS policy change that would make it more difficult for custodial parents to receive child support payments. The IRS established an October 1 deadline to block state agencies from using contractors for the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program, which serves nearly 13 million families and 18 percent of all children. The bill also provides parity for tribes operating child support enforcement programs.

Details on each bill are below.

The *Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families Act* (H.R. 9076) – Introduced by Work and Welfare Subcommittee Chairman Darin LaHood (R-IL) and Ranking Member Danny K. Davis (D-IL), reauthorizes and reforms child welfare programs under Title IV-B.

- The last time these programs were authorized was fiscal year 2021 and the program last received significant reforms in 2008.
- The legislation includes [16 bills from a bipartisan coalition of Republican and Democrat members that update and reform the programs](#).
- Reauthorizes Title IV-B for five years and makes reforms to modernize the program.
- Reduces paperwork and data reporting for state agencies and caseworkers by at least 15 percent.
- Strengthens support systems for the 2.5 million grandparents and relatives providing kinship care for children who would otherwise enter foster care.
- Improves access for Indian tribes by streamlining funding, as well as improving state compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.
- Addresses the caseworker crises by ensuring caseworkers have access to technology and training that support a strong workforce.
- Improves outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care, including by allowing foster youth up to age 26 to be eligible for services and incorporating lived experience in the state planning of child welfare plans.
- Supports the expansion of evidence-based services to prevent child abuse and neglect and ensures children are not separated from parents solely due to poverty-related neglect.
- Supports adoption services by evaluating the effectiveness of pre- and post-adoption services available under Title IV-B to adopt the more than 65,000 children waiting to be adopted.

Read a one pager on the legislation [here](#).

Read a section-by-section on the legislation [here](#).

The *Strengthening State and Tribal Child Support Enforcement Act* (H.R. 7906) – Introduced by Rep. Kevin Hern (R-OK), along with Reps. Darin LaHood (R-IL), David Schweikert (R-AZ),

Lloyd Smucker (R-PA), Gwen Moore (D-WI), and Suzan DelBene (D-WA), blocks an IRS rule making it more difficult for parents to receive child support payments.

- The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program is a federal-state partnership dedicated to obtaining child support on behalf of custodial parents. This vital support system serves 13 million families and 18 percent of all children in the U.S.
- As one of the most cost-effective federal programs, in fiscal year (FY) 2023, for every \$1 spent on program operations, nearly \$5 was collected for families. The program collected nearly \$30 billion in payments from non-custodial parents.
- Conflicting federal laws threatens the ability of states and tribes to efficiently run their CSE programs using contractors.
- Starting on October 1, 2024, the IRS will require states to discontinue use of contractors. This could result in hundreds of millions of dollars in costs to states and the federal government, and suspend child support payments to millions of families, including tribes.
- The bipartisan bill formally authorizes state use of contractors for purposes of child support enforcement and gives tribes the same access to information needed to operate their child support enforcement programs.
- The Congressional Budget Office estimates this bill would save \$777 million.

Read a one pager on the legislation [here](#).

Read a section-by-section on the legislation [here](#).

Read a letter of support from 26 Republican and Democrat governors [here](#).

## **OTHER RELEVANT NEWS**

### **The Associated Press: Appeals judges rule against fund used to provide phone services for rural and low-income people**

Calling it a “misbegotten tax,” a federal appeals court in New Orleans ruled Wednesday that a method the Federal Communications Commission uses to fund telephone service for rural and low-income people and broadband services for schools and libraries is unconstitutional. The immediate implications of the 9-7 ruling by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals were unclear. Dissenting judges said it conflicts with three other circuit courts around the nation. The ruling by the full 5th Circuit reverses an earlier ruling by a three-judge panel of the same court and sends the matter back to the FCC for further consideration. A Supreme Court appeal was likely by advocates for media access. ... At issue in the case is the Universal Service Fund, which the FCC collects from telecommunications providers, who then pass the cost on to their customers. A conservative advocacy group, Consumer Research, challenged the practice. ... The 17-member court is dominated by members nominated by Republican presidents. Three Republican nominees joined four nominees of Democratic administrations in dissent.

Please let us know if you have any questions.