

Dear Mayor and Board of County Commissioners,

With great respect for the institution and the community we serve, I submit this letter to formally express my interest in the position of County Administrator for Palm Beach County. This is a rare and deeply meaningful opportunity that aligns with my lifetime commitment to public service, my executive leadership experience, and my unwavering commitment to the residents of our county.

For the past four and a half years, I have served as the elected Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller for Palm Beach County, where I serve not only as Clerk, but also as the County's Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer, Auditor, Official Recorder, Custodian of County Funds, and Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners.

Executive Leadership

I lead a team of approximately 650 employees and oversee the processing and safeguarding of nearly \$6 billion annually in public assets. I am responsible for conducting statutory pre-audit reviews on all county expenditures, managing payroll for approximately 7,000 employees every two weeks, reporting and analyzing the County's \$4.5 billion in fixed assets, and ensuring full legal compliance across financial operations. I hold fiduciary and financial authority under Article VIII, §1 of the Florida Constitution. I am also personally liable under Florida Statute §129.09, for the authorization of any illegal expenditure of County funds. This legal accountability reinforces the depth of my operational oversight and my commitment to transparency and integrity in public finance.

Under my leadership, Palm Beach County's \$5.6 billion investment portfolio has been managed with a proactive, disciplined approach, prioritizing both the protection of taxpayer dollars and the pursuit of strong returns.

Accomplishments-Driven Strategies and Accountability

When I first took office as Clerk and Comptroller, Palm Beach County was earning approximately \$27 million in investment income annually. Through strategic planning and restructuring, I guided our in-house investment team to achieve a record-setting \$172 million in Fiscal Year 2023. In Fiscal Year 2024, we earned another historic high of \$230 million, marking the second consecutive year of record gains. This represents an increase of more than 750 percent, directly contributing to the County's financial strength. These results reflect sound fiscal stewardship and a firm commitment to delivering real, measurable value for our taxpayers.

My leadership, however, extends beyond fiscal management. I have prioritized building community partnerships to improve access and equity across the County. I have worked with organizations like People of Purpose to support individuals without stable housing and partnered with County departments to expand services at accessible locations like the Vista Center. These efforts reflect my belief that our government should meet people where they are.

We modernized the office with robotic process automation and artificial intelligence to increase efficiency and cut costs. 15 years ago, we became the first public agency in the United States to earn CEFEX fiduciary certification and were honored with the GFOA Triple Crown Award for excellence and transparency in financial reporting and I have been able to maintain that over my tenure in office. These recognitions are not just symbols; they reflect a culture of accountability and performance that I have instilled at every level of our operations.

A Lifetime of Military and Local Public Service

My lifetime commitment to public service began in the United States Coast Guard Reserve, where I served as a Port Security Specialist from 2005 to 2013. It continued in the Florida Legislature, where I served in both the House and Senate and passed dozens of bills that became law. These included statewide programs like the Florida Silver Alert, Nicole's Law, the Yellow Dot Traffic Safety Program, and legislation protecting survivors of sexual assault. I served as Minority Whip in both chambers and held key leadership roles, including Vice Chair of the Committees on Finance and Tax and Commerce and Tourism, Chair of the Public Service Commission Nominating Council, and Chair of the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee. I know the people of Palm Beach County, our cities, the character of our people and have fought for the residents of our county. My work in the legislature has contributed to the success and quality of life we enjoy in Palm Beach County today.

I understand that Palm Beach County's community's strength lies in our economic, ethnic and cultural diversity, where every background and every industry have the opportunity to contribute to the unique fabric of our shared success.

History of Collaboration and Partnerships

During my time in the Florida House and Senate, I secured state appropriations that supported public safety, infrastructure, mental health services, and economic development, including funding for the Pahokee Marina Improvements, Glades Communities Street Resurfacing, and the Jerome Golden Center for Behavioral Health. I also authored and successfully passed over 50 bills covering a range of priorities including economic development, education, housing, public safety, transportation, mental health, water and environmental policy. I believe deeply in the power of collaborative legislation to meet real community needs, and I am proud to have consistently delivered results for Palm Beach County throughout my time in office.

I served on the Palm Beach County Health Care District Board and the County's Consumer Affairs Hearing Board, helping ensure fair and responsive local governance. I am a Certified Florida Clerk and Comptroller and am currently completing my Master of Legal Studies at Pepperdine University Caruso School of Law. I am a proud graduate of Lynn University, where I served as Student Government Association President, an early step in a lifetime commitment to public service.

Technology and Future Focused Administration

Through observing the leadership of your Board, I understand that Palm Beach County is not just growing, it is transforming. Our next chapter will be defined by how we manage complexity, leverage technology, and plan for long-term resilience. We must build on our financial strength to modernize operations, expand housing access, foster innovation, and remain competitive in a global economy. I have already championed many of these values as Clerk and Comptroller, bringing automation, AI, and transparency to core operations, and I am ready to do the same at scale, working alongside each of you, following and implementing your directives and advancing your priorities to shape a forward-thinking government that delivers lasting impact.

Proven, Tested and Ready To Serve

I know Palm Beach County, its neighborhoods, its institutions, and many of the dedicated employees who make it function every day. I have worked closely with our staff, constitutional officers, state and federal partners, and the Board. I know how this government works because I have helped make it work. I fully understand that the role of County Administrator is not to set policy, but to faithfully carry out the policies and priorities established by you and your colleagues that make up the board of County Commissioners.

I recognize that this pivotal moment requires not just administrative skill, but institutional understanding, steadiness, and deep personal investment in the people of Palm Beach County. If given the honor to serve as County Administrator, I will bring experience that is not theoretical, but tested, measured, and proven across every level of government. I am prepared to step into the role quickly and offer an opportunity for a seamless transition to ensure the county keeps moving forward. I am ready to lead today and committed to adapting and growing for our future.

It would be a privilege to support each of you in your leadership and serve your Board with energy, vision, and respect. My commitment is to be responsive, transparent, and deeply engaged in advancing your priorities, not my own, and to ensure that the Board's direction is carried out with integrity and precision.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. I bring a unique combination of statutory authority, financial acumen, operational leadership, and a deep commitment to public service. I am ready to bring that experience to the role of County Administrator and to continue serving the residents of Palm Beach County with integrity, transparency, and vision.

With deep respect,
Joseph Abruzzo

Joseph Abruzzo

Senior Public Service Executive Leader

| () | josephabruzzo@icloud.com

Strategic public sector executive with a proven record of fiscal excellence and innovative leadership, seeking to bring visionary administration to Palm Beach County as County Administrator.

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Accomplished Palm Beach County executive with demonstrated expertise in public finance, strategic leadership, and governmental administration. Currently serving as the Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller, responsible for nearly 650 employees and a \$70.5 million annual operating budget while overseeing \$5.6 billion in public funds. Proven history of fiscal management excellence, policy development, and successful intergovernmental relations across local, state, and federal levels. Dedicated to enhancing quality of life for Palm Beach County residents through innovative public service, economic development initiatives, operational and management strategies and transparent financial stewardship.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Financial Leadership & Stewardship

- Manage the third-largest county investment portfolio in Florida (\$4.2–5.6 billion), generating \$230 million in investment income in 2024 and \$463 million since 2021.
- Delivered an estimated \$709 in taxpayer savings per parcel through prudent financial management.
- Maintained Palm Beach County's CEFEX fiduciary certification as Clerk and Comptroller, having sustained the office's 15 consecutive years recognition as the first government entity nationally accredited for fiduciary excellence.
- Responsible for ensuring ongoing legal compliance with all bond covenants and financial obligations tied to Palm Beach County's \$913 million in outstanding debt.
- Saved approximately \$2.5 million annually by managing the investment portfolio in-house versus outsourcing.

Operational Oversight & Efficiency

- Oversee 23 county bank accounts and bi-weekly payroll totaling \$19 million for 7,000+ employees.
- Serve in a role of personal legal liability under Florida Statute §129.09, requiring full legal and procedural compliance.
- Maintain the county's AAA bond rating through financial discipline and investment performance.

Technology & Innovation

- Spearheaded the countywide transition from Oracle to SQL systems, saving \$500K annually.
- Introduced AI and robotic process automation, resulting in over 1,700 staff hours saved annually.

Public Access & Transparency

- Launched the Palm Beach County Spending Tracker, the County's first real-time public financial transparency portal, empowering taxpayers to easily track how public funds are allocated and spent across departments and projects.
- Strengthened public trust by making detailed budget, spending, and vendor information accessible through an intuitive online platform.
- Digitized Board of County Commissioners meeting records dating back to 1888.
- Launched the office's first Community Engagement Team with a 268.9% increase in YouTube subscribers, 35.7% on Instagram, and 20.3% on Facebook (2021–2024).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Public Fund Oversight

- Managed over \$5.6 billion in public assets, ensuring transparency, accuracy, and compliance.

- Reconciled 23 county bank accounts and monitored 225 funds across county operations.
- Processed bi-weekly payrolls of \$19M (including PBC Fire Rescue and Palm Tran).

Financial Reporting & Recognition

- Prepared the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and other state-mandated filings.
- Ensured compliance with IRS arbitrage rules for all county-issued debt instruments.
- Earned top Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) honors:
 - Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (2021–2023)
 - Distinguished Budget Presentation Award (2021–2024)
 - Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award (2021–2023)
 - “Triple Crown” Award for exemplary financial reporting (2022–2023)

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Civic Engagement & Equity

- Strengthened public trust and engagement, resulting in 30+ annual outreach presentations and significant growth across digital platforms.
- Expanded multilingual content delivery, with Spanish and Creole videos reaching 12,000+ viewers.
- Relaunched the Property Fraud Alert program, enrolling 12,858 residents in just five months.

Digital Services & Access Expansion

- Rolled out Florida’s first mobile court payment app and a suite of self-service options.
- Introduced E-Certification of records, deployed customer chatbots, and launched digital marriage licensing.
- Enhanced public access to records and services through expanded digital platforms and mobile tools.

Public-Private Partnerships & Workplace Wellness

- Developed service location partnerships with agencies like PBC Planning & Zoning.
- Launched public-private initiatives supporting individuals experiencing housing instability.
- Recognized for leadership in workplace wellness:
 - Top 100 Healthiest Workplaces in America (#35 in 2024)
 - #1 Healthiest Employer in South Florida (2024)
 - Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health – Platinum (2025)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller | January 2021 - Present

- Serve as Constitutional Officer managing a 650-employee organization with responsibility for judicial administration, financial oversight, records management, and public accountability of 1.5+ million residents.
- Function as County's Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer, Auditor, Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners, and Recorder, overseeing critical governance functions.
- Audits all County expenditures to ensure they are legal, serve a public purpose, and comply with the county's budget.
- Prepare, maintain and distribute the official minutes of all BOCC and other committee meetings in accordance with the Rules of Procedure established by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Serve as Clerk of the Value Adjustment Board, organizing and facilitating the VAB process which settles disputes between taxpayers and the Property Appraiser.
- Drove record-setting investment income growth through strategic fund oversight.
- Implemented comprehensive financial controls that maintained the county's strong fiscal standing and bond ratings.
- Led enterprise system migration from Oracle to SQL, optimizing IT infrastructure.
- Integrated AI-driven tools and RPA to enhance operational efficiency and reduce manual workload.

- Expanded self-service capabilities through innovative digital solutions including Florida's first mobile court payment app and online document processing systems.
- Improved transparency through historical records digitization.
- Expanded service locations throughout the county to improve public access to government services.
- Expanded community engagement channels and multilingual services to reach diverse constituents.

FLORIDA STATE GOVERNMENT

State Representative, Palm Beach County | November 2016 - November 2018

- Served as Democratic Ranking Member on Ways & Means Committee, PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee, and Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee.
- Authored and passed significant legislation including airboat regulation, employment services for persons with disabilities, and infrastructure improvements for Palm Beach County communities.
- Secured crucial appropriations for Palm Beach County projects including Pahokee Marina Improvements, Glades Communities Street Resurfacing, and Jerome Golden Center for Behavioral Health.
- Successfully advocated for funding of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Unmanned Aircraft System expansion.
- Secured appropriations for multiple municipal infrastructure projects throughout Palm Beach County.

State Senator, Palm Beach County | November 2012 - November 2016

- Appointed as Joint Legislative Auditing Committee Chairman, providing oversight of state agency audits, budget compliance, and program evaluations.
- Served as Chairman of the Public Service Commission Nominating Council, vetting candidates for Florida's utility regulatory commission.
- Led key fiscal policy development as Vice Chair of the Committee on Finance and Tax.
- Led multiple policy committees addressing environmental conservation, tourism, and economic development.
- Successfully authored and passed 20+ bills addressing economic development, housing, infrastructure, and governmental accountability.
- Secured critical funding for Palm Beach County infrastructure, environmental projects, and human services programs.
- Collaborated with federal, state and local officials to advance Palm Beach County initiatives through consensus-building and strategic partnerships.

State Representative, Palm Beach County | November 2008 - November 2012

- Served as Democratic Ranking Member of Business and Consumer Affairs Subcommittee.
- Appointed to leadership positions on education innovation and intergovernmental affairs committees.
- Successfully authored and passed 25+ pieces of legislation benefiting Palm Beach County residents.
- Secured vital appropriations for Palm Beach County priorities including transportation, water infrastructure, and community development.
- Led Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation as Chairman (2011-2012), coordinating county-wide legislative priorities.

HEALTHCARE DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

Commissioner | June 2010 - December 2012

- Appointed by Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners to governance board overseeing a \$300+ million county healthcare system serving Palm Beach County residents.
- Provided policy direction and fiscal oversight for comprehensive healthcare programs including the county's Trauma System, school health nursing services, and safety-net insurance programs.
- Participated in the governance of Lakeside Medical Center, a rural teaching hospital serving the Glades region.
- Promoted initiatives to reduce health disparities and expand healthcare access for underserved communities.

- Collaborated with fellow commissioners to ensure transparency, fiscal responsibility, and quality healthcare outcomes.

ADDITIONAL EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE

Principal, Strategic Consultant and Equity Owner, Abruzzo Issues Management, LLC | April 2013 - Present

- Privately held holding company and consulting entity supporting an ownership interest in Renew Smiles, a nationwide network of dental implant and denture centers specializing in full-arch restoration.
- Advised the founder and majority owner on strategic growth initiatives, helped secure over \$23.3 million in growth and operational capital.
- Arranged an additional \$60 million private equity-backed credit line to support national expansion and provided guidance on national expansion, clinical operations, and brand development.
- Serve as a business consultant, personal investor, and equity owner.
- Not involved in day-to-day management and Renew Smiles does not operate any locations in Palm Beach County.

Director of Government Relations, The Berman Law Group | November 2018 - November 2020

- Advised institutional clients on navigating complex regulatory environments and fostering public-private partnerships.
- Supported development of strategic economic development and community enhancement initiatives.
- Served as a liaison between private sector and community organizations.

Government Relations and Public Policy, Weiss, Handler, Angelos & Cornwell, P.A. | July 2011 – May 2013

- Assisted clients in planning major projects, community relations strategy and issue orientated research in security, infrastructure, healthcare, education, energy, and areas that are affected by municipal and federal government legislation or regulations.

Public Information Officer, Office of Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel | June 2009 - July 2011

- Provided high-level communications and administrative support to a major Palm Beach County legal services office.
- Served as liaison to local government agencies, media outlets, and community organizations.
- Developed educational materials to enhance public understanding of the criminal justice system.
- Represented the agency in intergovernmental relations and collaborative initiatives.

MILITARY SERVICE

United States Coast Guard Reserve | February 2005 - March 2013

- Conducted facility and vessel security inspections in compliance with the Maritime Transportation Security Act.
- Participated in cross-agency coordination for emergency preparedness and port security operations.
- Developed expertise in emergency management protocols, interagency coordination, and security planning.
- Awarded multiple commendations for performance excellence including the National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

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| • Strategic Administration & Policy Implementation | • Workforce Development & Leadership |
| • Government Finance Management & Fiscal Oversight | • Community Engagement & Public Outreach |
| • Budget Development & Financial Planning | • Technology Innovation & Digital Transformation |
| • Intergovernmental Relations & Legislative Affairs | • Infrastructure Planning & Capital Development |
| • Emergency Management Planning & Response | • Contract & Procurement Management |
| • Public-Private Partnership Development | • Environmental Planning & Sustainable Development |

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- Master of Legal Studies (M.L.S.) - Pepperdine University Caruso School of Law (in progress, 2026) Coursework includes: Administrative Law, Regulatory Compliance, Public Sector Law, Negotiations & Dispute Resolution
 - Certified Florida Clerk and Comptroller (CFCC) - Florida Court Clerk and Comptroller Academy (2022) Comprehensive certification covering administration, finance, records management, and government operations
 - Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) - Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL (2003) International Communication, Minor in International Business
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COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, Chairman, 2011-2012
 - Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, Vice-Chairman, 2010
 - Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs Hearing Board, 2008
 - City of Boca Raton, Education Advisory Board, 2002-2003
 - National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Heroes' Circle
 - Washington, D.C. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial, Founding Member
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LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND AWARDS

- Over the course of service in the Florida House and Senate, successfully passed over 50 legislative initiatives. Most were stand-alone bills, and some were strategic amendments to larger legislative packages. This record highlights a consistent record of delivering impactful results for Palm Beach County and Florida.

State Representative (2016–2018)

Sponsored Legislation & Appropriations Passed:

- HB 1211 (2018) – Airboat Regulation
- HB 1437 (2018) – Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities
- HB 3167 (2018) – Pahokee Marina Improvements
- HB 3179 (2018) – Glades Communities Street Resurfacing and Reconstruction
- HB 3389 (2018) – Jerome Golden Center Level II Residential Co-Occurring Disorder Unit
- HR 8017 (2018) – 70th Anniversary of Founding of State of Israel
- HB 401 (2017) – Notaries Public
- HB 791 (2017) – Public Records/Personal Identifying Information in Pleadings and Documents Filed with Court for Involuntary Assessment Under Part V, Chapter 397
- HB 1297 (2017) – Palm Beach County
- HB 2635 (2017) – Palm Beach County Lake Region Water Infrastructure Improvement Project
- HB 2841 (2017) – City of Belle Glade SW Avenue J Roadway Project
- HB 2843 (2017) – City of Pahokee Commissioners Park Improvements
- HB 2845 (2017) – City of South Bay Flood Control and Waterway Management
- HB 2931 (2017) – City of South Bay Emergency Shelter and Care Center
- HB 2933 (2017) – Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Expansion of the Unmanned Aircraft System
- HB 2941 (2017) – City of Pahokee Glades Citizens Villa Stormwater Improvements
- HB 2943 (2017) – City of Pahokee East Lake Village Stormwater Improvement
- HB 3111 (2017) – Jerome Golden Center for Behavioral Health Level II Residential Co-occurring Disorder Program
- HB 3479 (2017) – City of Pahokee Marina Improvement
- HB 3579 (2017) – Habilitation Center for the Handicapped - Adults with Disabilities Program

State Senator (2012–2016)

Bills Passed into Law:

- SB 58 (2016) – Relief of Q.B. by the Palm Beach County School Board
- SB 380 (2016) – Violation of an Injunction for Protection
- SB 846 (2016) – Divers-down Warning Devices
- SB 1120 (2016) – Motor Vehicle Service Agreement Companies
- SB 1202 (2016) – Discounts on Public Park Entrance Fees and Transportation Fares
- SB 368 (2015) – Rights of Grandparents
- SB 732 (2015) – Sentencing
- SB 1116 (2015) – Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project
- SM 1422 (2015) – Iran/Economic Sanctions
- SB 262 (2014) – Motorist Safety
- SB 898 (2014) – Communications Services Tax
- SB 1176 (2014) – Divers
- SB 1472 (2014) – Personal Identification Information Theft
- SB 356 (2013) – Mutual Insurance Corporations
- SB 674 (2013) – Animal Shelters and Animal Control Agencies
- SB 788 (2013) – Criminal Gang Prevention
- SB 964 (2013) – Termination of Parental Rights
- SB 1042 (2013) – Public Meetings/Criminal Justice Commissions

State Representative (2008–2012)

Sponsored Legislation Passed:

- HB 1011 (2012) – Warranty Associations
- HB 1255 (2012) – Acme Improvement District and Lake Worth Drainage District, Palm Beach County
- HB 1287 (2012) – Voluntary Contributions on Registration, Driver License, and Identification Card Forms
- HB 1301 (2012) – City of West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County
- HB 1325 (2012) – City of West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County
- HB 1481 (2012) – Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District, Palm Beach County
- HB 75 (2011) – Offense of Sexting
- HB 215 (2011) – Emergency Management
- HB 513 (2011) – Missing Adults
- HB 225 (2010) – Controlled Substances
- HB 395 (2010) – Direct-Support Organization for the Department of Military Affairs
- HB 435 (2010) – Marketable Record Title
- HB 765 (2010) – Animal Protection
- HB 1331 (2010) – Transportation Projects
- HB 7219 (2010) – Corporate Income Tax
- HB 167 (2009) – Energy-efficient Appliance Rebate Program
- HB 169 (2009) – Equine Activities
- HB 717 (2009) – Hospitality Education Program
- HB 1063 (2009) – Lake Worth Drainage District, Palm Beach County
- HB 1541 (2009) – Pine Tree Water Control District, Palm Beach County

Legislative Recognition and Awards

- Florida Building & Trades Council, Appreciation Award (2016)
- Florida League of Cities, Inc., Legislative Appreciation Award (2016)
- Jewish Family Services, Recognition of Efforts (2016)
- Lake Clarke Shores, Key to the Town (2016)
- Palm Beach County Medical Society, President's Award (2010, 2016)
- 100% Voting Record in Session (2015)
- Ally for Equality Florida, Legislator of the Year (2015)
- Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida, Distinguished Alumni Award (2009, 2011, 2014, 2015)
- Palm Beach County League of Cities, Legislator of the Year Award (2015)
- Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., Friend of Enterprise (2014)
- FAU College of Medicine, Legislative Appreciation Award (2014)
- Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Senatorial Leadership Awards (2014)
- Jewish Family Services Appreciation Award (2014)
- Place of Hope Legislative Award (2014)
- Boynton Beach Mental Health Initiative & The Lake Worth Connection, Certificate of Appreciation (2013)
- Alzheimer's Community Care, Award of Appreciation (2012)
- Junior League of the Palm Beaches, Friend of the League Award (2012)
- National Association of Social Workers, Legislator of the Year (2012)
- Progressive Caucus of Florida, Middle Class Champion (2012)
- Fix Florida, Top Dog Award (2012)
- Voices of Hope, Legislator of the Year (2011)
- AIF Florida Maritime Council, Legislator of the Year (2011)
- Delray Citizens for Delray Beach Police, Award of Appreciation (2011)
- Florida Alliance for Retired Americans, Legislator of the Year (2010)
- Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association Legislative Award (2009, 2010)