

PBC Legislative Update



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State Issues

Post Session Report

County Lobby Team Updates Board on 2013 Legislative Session

By: County Staff

On Tuesday, June 4th, the Palm Beach Lobby Team presented its final report from the 2013 State Legislative Session to the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners. Discussed were many of the accomplishments obtained in the State budget including funding for beach projects, libraries, water restoration and transportation initiatives. Policy changes successfully passed this session in the areas of election reform, criminal justice, and health care were reviewed. While not everything asked for passed during the session, we brought home many successes that can be built upon during 2014.

Attached to this week's update is an in depth review of issues the County was successful in lobbying this session and includes some of the items that fell short of final approval.

Sober Homes

By: County Staff

The County was successful working with the state to include proviso language in the budget directing the Department of Children and Families to develop a plan to establish a licensure/registration process for sober homes and their operators. At the June 4th meeting, the Board directed staff to work at the federal level with HUD to provide clarity in Housing rules that have complicated local regulation of sober homes. The County's federal team is currently working with HUD and DOJ staff to assess our ability to make federal changes to these rules.

Adults with Disabilities Funding

By: County Staff

Commissioner Paulette Burdick asked for clarity at the June 4th meeting regarding the \$760,481 appropriation for the Adults with Disabilities program. Funds under this allocation are sent to the Palm Beach County School Board and then contracted out at their tech school for training and classes. This allocation has been reduced over the years, according to School Board lobbyist Vern Crawford, and five years ago was over \$1 million for the program.

Tuition for Immigrants

By: County Staff

Commissioner Priscilla Taylor requested information at the Tuesday, June 4th Board meeting regarding tuition rates for immigrants. In a 2012 US District Court of Appeals ruling by Judge Moore out of Miami, the Judge ruled that charging out-of-state tuition rates to children of illegal immigrants denied those students their equal protection rights. Therefore, an injunction was issued that stated Florida's public colleges and universities must stop charging higher tuition to the dependent children of illegal immigrants living in the state. Shortly thereafter, the State Board of Education decided,

by unanimous vote, not to appeal the federal court decision.

The decision in the *Wendy Ruiz, et al. v. Gerard Robinson, et al.* case will reduce tuition for those students beginning with the spring 2013 semester.

Late last fall, State University System Chancellor Frank Brogan sent a letter to his schools' presidents advising on how to comply with the ruling. It required presidents to send written notices of the decision to all dependent students by Nov. 14, 2012.

The case was filed on behalf of the plaintiff by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Based on this, legislation was not required to comply with the court's ruling but rather handled administratively.

Federal Issues

Federal Update – Week of June 10th

By: Becker and Poliakoff

THE SENATE: Will spend most of the week debating the comprehensive immigration bill, S. 744.

The legislation, crafted by a bipartisan group of eight senators, would create a path to citizenship to those in the country illegally, require employers to verify the eligibility of workers, boost border security and revise visa policy. The Judiciary Committee approved it, 13-5, on May 21.

Senators will also meet the newly appointed interim Senator Jeffrey Chiesa (R-NJ), who was sworn in this week.

THE HOUSE: Will take up the fiscal 2014 defense authorization, H.R. 1960, authorizing \$526.6 billion in annual Defense Department spending, \$17.8 billion for Department of Energy defense-related programs, \$7.7 billion in mandatory military benefits and \$85.8 billion in wartime spending. The \$638 billion authorization compares with the \$640.7 billion authorized for FY-2013. The measure includes provisions on sexual assaults that would bar commanding officers from overturning court-martial verdicts and prevent officers from reducing penalties. The House Armed Services Committee approved the bill by a vote of 59-2 on June 6.

THE WHITE HOUSE: The May jobs report showed a total of 178,000 new private sector jobs added in May. The U.S. economy has now generated almost 7 million jobs in a little more than three years.

Federal Appropriations

By: Alcalde & Fay

House appropriators have begun their work on the fiscal year (FY) 2014 appropriations bills, adhering to a \$967 billion cap on discretionary spending that maintains the sequester. With the exception of the Homeland Security, Defense, and Military Construction/Veterans Affairs appropriations bills, all appropriations bills will be flat funded or reduced from FY 2013 funding levels.

While Democrats have characterized the FY 2014 allocations as "devastating," House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers (R-KY) repeatedly said the panel's hands are tied by the sequester and has expressed support for a budget compromise that will undo the damaging sequestration law.

In the Senate, Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) intends to mark up her committee's bills at a higher level that assumes a \$1.058 trillion cap with the sequester scrapped. The large difference in spending plans between the House and the Senate suggests an appropriations season in which few appropriations bills will be enacted by the new fiscal year on October 1, 2013.



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Farm Bill

By: NACo Staff

The Senate passed a five-year farm bill on Monday night that sets federal food and farming policy for the next decade, but makes smaller cuts than a House version of the legislation that is set for consideration next week.

Although most of the more than 200 amendments to the Senate farm bill were not considered on the floor, several have been voted on in the weeks since the bill passed out of committee, including the following:

- Sen. Christopher Coons (D-Del.) filed Amendment 1079, which would increase the funding of local and regional food aid procurement projects under the bill from \$40 million to \$60 million. The amendment was passed by voice vote.
- Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) filed Amendment 931, which would increase funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), offset by placing limits on crop insurance reimbursements to providers. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 26-70.
- Sen. James Inhofe (I-Okla.) filed Amendment 960, which would replace SNAP with a nutrition assistance block grant. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 36-60.

NACo supports the Senate farm bill because it restores funding for NACo's key priorities. The Senate bill includes \$115 million in mandatory funding for the Rural Development Title. This includes \$50 million for clearing water and wastewater program backlogs, \$50 million for the Value Added Producer Grant Program and \$15 million for the Rural Microenterprise Assistance program. The bill also includes \$800 million in mandatory funding for the Energy Title and \$85 million for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.