

2010 State Legislative Accomplishments

April 12, 2010

American Traffic Solutions

Passed HB 325, the Mark Wandall Traffic Safety Act. This legislation authorizes governments to use cameras to enforce red light violations. The penalty for a red light violation is a fine of \$158. When a local government enforces the statute, it receives \$75. We worked with ATS for several years to pass this Legislation. We also worked with various stakeholders, including the Florida League of Cities, the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund advocates, the Florida Department of Transportation and others.

Bethune-Cookman University, Florida Memorial University and Edward Waters College

As Budget talks began in early March, the Senate had proposed a 7% reduction, and the House had proposed a 15% reduction to private HBCU funding and FRAG. We successfully worked with House State Universities and Private College Appropriations members to who eventually reduce the cut to 7%. During HBCU Day at the Capitol, we met with The House Speaker, Senate President, and Appropriations leaders and discussed the negative impact the current budget cuts would place on the institutions. As Budget Conferences commenced, we worked with the members on the Budget Conference Committee on Higher Education and we were able to restore more funds to end with a 4% budget cut.

The private institutions did not receive State funds upfront as they had prior to the 2009-10 fiscal year. The university had to incur expenses and send copies of the documentation supporting the expenditures before they received any State funds. This reimbursement process negatively affected the cash flow of the institution, since it took months for the university to receive their funds back. We successfully worked with Senator Tony Hill and Representative Mia Jones whom took the lead in addressing this issue. We met and worked with the Senate and House Appropriations staffs to modify the institutions' classification in the 2010 State Budget. As a result, the private institutions will now be able to receive their funds up front.

In addition, all three private HBCUs receive an equal amount of funding for library resources, books, and educational material. With the advancement of new technologies, the proviso language and Florida Statutes made it difficult for the universities to use the funds for electronic library resources. We met with House Speaker Larry Cretul, Senate President Atwater, Chairman David Rivera, and Chairman JD Alexander, Higher Education appropriations members and staff to amend Library Resources proviso language in the State Budget and conforming bill. Once again, we successfully worked with Senator Hill and Representative Jones who spoke with their respective Chairs to modify the language for library funds to also purchase electronic academic material. During Budget Conference meetings, we worked with members to amend SB 1344/HB 5201 which revised the

outdated Florida Statute. The 2010 State Budget and conforming bill were both approved by Governor Crist.

City of Cape Coral

We worked with Rep. Aubuchon and Senator Richter and a number of Committee Chairs to engineer a dedicated sales tax rebate funding source of \$125,000 for 240 months for Cape Coral in the event that the City decided to move forward with an International Swim Complex and Hall of Fame tourist destination. We worked with City, State, Legislative staff and the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development in devising a plan. The language was amended onto the Legislature's Economic Development package, but later taken out when Cape Coral decided not to pursue the swim complex. SB 1742 would have stripped Cape Coral of home rule authority in regards to Transportation and other concurrency. We worked with Cape Coral staff on many suggestions to the Bill. The final product was acceptable to Cape Coral staff. We were also active sponsors of Lee County Days in Tallahassee and arranged high level meetings for the City Manager and Council Member's with Agency heads, Committee Chairs, the Lt. Governor and many other officials. Other Cape Coral issues involved pre-platted lands, liens, foreclosure, assessment authority, surface water - clean water and the Nile monitor.

City of Hollywood

One of Hollywood's top priorities was to fix a glitch in the Ocean Outfall State law that has passed the year before. Existing law placed a disproportional reuse burden on regional wastewater systems like Hollywood if flows were diverted away by one or more users. Originally DEP told Hollywood that they could fix this issue by Rule and did not need a statutory change. After much discussion, it was decided that a change in statute was needed. We spent several months working with DEP and Representative Gibbons and Senator Sobel on Legislation that would provide a credit for reuse from diverted flows to the facility discharging through Ocean Outfall. SB 550 passed and was signed into law by the Governor.

In the funding arena, since 2001 the City of Hollywood has received over \$2,640,000 for the Fred Lippman Senior Center. Over 32,000 seniors have participated in Lippman Center programs. This year the Center was fully funded with \$240,000. However, funding was switched to one time non-recurring.

The City of Hollywood will receive over \$400,000 from the Urban Area Security Initiative- UASI. This is mostly federal funds that the State of Florida appropriates through the Legislature. Another important issue for Hollywood was the defeat of the Ronald Miller \$1.148M Claims Bill against the City of Hollywood. For the second year, the Bill was not heard in the Legislature. SB 44 died in the Committee on the Special Master on Claims Bills. HB 519 died in the Committee on Civil Justice and Courts Policy.

The passage of the Seminole Compact Bill was another huge victory for Hollywood. SB 622 includes the Compact and formula to distribute 3% of net win per facility to local governments. The Broward County distribution is divided into the Coconut Creek Casino and the two Hollywood Casinos. In the end, Hollywood will receive 55% of the 3% from both Hollywood Casinos. This is a huge victory for Hollywood as the County and other cities were vying for greater percentages.

City of Lauderdale Lakes

The City of Lauderdale Lakes was denied an initial reimbursement of \$174,277 from the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to strengthen the City's City

Hall/Public Safety Complex. We worked with the offices of Representative Hazelle Rogers and Senator Chris Smith to arrange conference calls with City staff and DEM officials involved with the mitigation project. We were able to secure DEM funding to cover approximately \$90,000 of the project.

As Budget meetings commenced during the 2010 Session, we successfully worked with Chairman Denise Grimsley to hold cuts to senior programs harmless. The Chairman's proposal for the House Health Care Appropriations Committee recommended no cuts to general revenue funded Elderly programs. Community Care for Elderly, Local Service programs (meals and senior centers, etc), Alzheimers projects, Home Care for Elderly, and all other programs recommended funding at current levels in the recurring base budget. The Senate originally made drastic cuts to the Local Senior provider programs. We worked with Senators Sobel and Rich to restore funding to these important programs. The Conference members finally agreed to fully fund the Local Service Elderly Programs and Alzheimer Projects with one-time non-recurring funds.

City of Miami Gardens

We successfully worked to stop legislation that would have reduced the City's revenues. We successfully worked with a coalition of municipal representatives and the Florida league of Cities to pass legislation that would authorize the installation of red light cameras. We successfully worked with legislators to pass tax relief for the South Florida casinos. The lowered tax rate will allow the Calder Casino in Miami Gardens to reinvest in the facility and hire more employees. We worked with South Florida Water Management officials and legislators to provide funding for the City's storm water projects.

City of Pompano Beach

We successfully worked to stop legislation that would have reduced the City's revenues. We successfully worked to stop legislation that would have required the City to provide vendors the option to submit competitive sealed bid responses through an electronic interactive system. The requirement would have had a significant financial impact on the City. We worked with the bill's sponsors and municipal staff to address the bill's impact. We successfully worked with Legislators to pass tax relief for the South Florida casinos. The lowered tax rate will allow the Isle Casino in Pompano Beach to reinvest in the facility, hire new employees and expand. The Isle Casino also provides funding to the City of Pompano Beach.

Family Law Section of the Florida Bar

Passed House Bill 907, a controversial Bill that makes significant changes to the Child Support and Alimony statutes. HB 907 is a re-write of the Child Support chapter of Florida law. Child support would flow to where ever the child goes and thus reduces litigation in child support. HB 907 allows a court to issue an initial award that takes into consideration the fact that some children will reach the age of 18 before the others and allows the parties to re-calculate support payments without having to go into court in accordance with the court's initial order. HB 907 also creates an alternative type of alimony. Currently, a court has little choice in alimony awards: it either awarded permanent alimony or no alimony. This law would allow the court to award durational alimony for a set period of time, after which the alimony award would expire. We also monitored dozens of Bills related to Family Law and the courts and worked with Legislators to education them on the issues.

Florida Association of Jewish Federations

We worked with House and Senate Appropriations Committees to protect \$2,748,302 in the State funds for Jewish Federation senior centers, Alzheimer day care centers, nutrition program, wellness programs, transportation, holocaust survivor support, holocaust education and other programs. We worked on nursing home Medicaid funding, Medicaid waiver funding and other Medicaid funded programs. We also worked with the Anti-Defamation League and other organizations to maintain separation of Church-State in Florida .

Isle of Capri Casino at Pompano Park Racing

Passed legislation reducing tax rate on Florida pari-mutuels that have slot machines from 50% to 35%. This will result in a savings of tens of millions of dollars to the Isle Casino and allow them to reinvest in the Casino and hire more employees. Attended dozens of meetings and hearings with the Seminole Indians and pari-mutuels to work on the compromise Compact that ultimately passed the Legislature and was signed into law by the Governor. The passage of the Compact triggered the tax reduction and other positive changes for the South Florida non-Indian casinos.

Miami-Dade County

We worked successfully to secure dedicated funding sources for Port of Miami . We helped to facilitate meetings with County and Port officials, legislators, and staff to pass legislation that would provide more support to Florida 's seaports. We worked with the bill's sponsors to shepherd this significant piece of policy/regulatory relief legislation through the legislative process. The legislation unanimously passed in all referred committees in both Chambers. During the Budget Conference, we advocated to secure \$10 million in Seaport funding for the Seaports Access Program. We worked to stop legislation that would have authorized the County to provide by ordinance that certain property conditions are code violations subject to enforcement actions. We worked with the bill sponsor to address the County's major concerns with the bill.

Southwest Ranches

We successfully worked to pass House Bill 1215. HB 1215 was the Southwest Ranches local bill. This bill amends the statute whereby the Town can appoint two members to the South Broward Utility Advisory Board allowing the appointment of any Southwest Ranches nominee that is either a water or sewer user within the service area. Before the passage of this bill, the Town could only appoint someone who was a user of both water and sewer.

Sunshine Gas Distributors

Passed legislation allowing fuel station owners an extension of a year and a half to comply with state mandates requiring installation of double-walled fuel tanks so long as they are working with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to be in compliance in a timely manner.