

# 2009 State Legislative Accomplishments

April 4, 2009

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## **1. Access Health Solutions**

Monitored legislation that would have negatively affected minority physician networks and their contracts with the Agency for Health Care Administration.

## **2. Accredited Surety & Casualty Company, Inc.**

Advocated for legislation revising bail bonds statutes.

## **3. American Council of Life Insurers**

Successfully prevented a hearing on legislation that would have negatively affected the American Council on Life Insurance. We worked hard to convince the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the Committee Chair not to hear this legislation. We also worked on several other Bills for the ACLI.

## **4. American Traffic Signals**

Successfully passed the Mark Wandall Act out of the 3 Committees and the full House and 3 Committees and the full Senate. The Act would have allowed local governments to place safety cameras on state roads that would capture photographs of license plates of those who run red lights and ticketed the owners of the cars for running the red light, cutting down on accidents and deaths on state highways. Unfortunately, the Bill, though passed out of both chambers, it did not pass identically the same as the legislature could not agree on the disbursement of the fines.

## **5. Asurion Insurance Services, Inc.**

Monitored legislation that would have required additional insurance for cell phone consumers.

## **6. AT&T**

Successfully passed legislation that creates, "The Consumer Choice and Protection Act".

## **7. Bethune Cookman University**

Successfully lobbied to reduce budget cuts for the institution's recruitment and retention efforts.

Successfully lobbied to reduce funding cuts to Florida Resident Assistance

Grant.

## **8. Charmer Sunbelt Group - Premier Beverage**

We successfully worked with legislators to prevent the passage of legislation or amendments that would have had harmful effects on the liquor and wine wholesaler industry.

## **9. City of Cape Coral**

We successfully passed HB 1021 out of both the House and Senate chambers. HB 1021 includes language creating a process for local governments to provide input to the Department of Transportation relating to projects being considered for deletion or deferral from the 5-Year Work Plan. HB 1021 amends current law relating to the transportation concurrency backlog authorities, authorizes the issuance of bonds and extends the lifespan of the debt the authorities can incur for up to forty years as well as increase the amount of ad valorem tax increment the authorities are authorized to collect. The new statute addresses areas of significant transportation deficiencies and inadequacies such as State Road 78 in Cape Coral.

We successfully worked work with the Secretary of Transportation to help ensure the Del Prado Blvd. (\$5.145M) funding remains in the FDOT work program.

We successfully helped defeat an initiative that would have bared local governments from requiring banks to maintain properties in foreclosure thus preventing cities and counties from tracking such homes. Had this initiative passed, the City of Cape Coral would have been responsible for maintaining 11,000 distressed properties.

To assist in our lobbying efforts, both the Mayor and City Manager spent a week in Tallahassee meeting with various elected officials and Department Secretaries on Cape Coral's behalf. We helped facilitate meetings for the Mayor and City Manager with, Lt. Governor Kottkamp, State Representatives Aubuchon, Kreegel, Hays, and Evers; State Senators Baker and Richter; Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos (Department of Transportation); Secretary Tom Pelham (Department of Community Affairs) and Former Representative Dudley Goodlette (Speaker of the House's Chief of Staff). All of the meetings focused on Cape Coral's 2009 legislative priorities (State Road 78, Del Prado Blvd, Storm water projects).

Becker and Poliakoff hosted a luncheon for Lee County Days. A large group of Lee County business leaders, activists and county officials attended. Senator Richter was the key note speaker and discussed various topics pertaining to the region. Senator Richter is the Chairman of the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee and represents all of Cape Coral.

## **10. City of Hollywood**

We successfully worked with the Florida Office of Economic Recovery and the

Florida Department of Environmental Protection on a \$3,000,000 award of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 for the City of Hollywood's drinking water infrastructure project. We have also identified many other funding opportunities for the City of Hollywood with AARA such as Neighborhood Stabilization Act, Senior Nutrition, etc.

We worked with the House and Senate Budget Committees to continue funding for the Fred Lippman Senior Center. This program was de-funded by several Committees and we ultimately had the funding restored with a 5% cut.

The City of Hollywood sits adjacent to the Seminole Casinos on State Road 7. We were able to work with the Legislature and Governor to adopt language in Senate Bill 788-the Gaming and Seminole Compact Bill, which would provide a fund with 3% of revenue to offset the impacts of the Tribe's facilities on the operations of local governments.

The City of Hollywood was subject to a multi million dollar Claim's Bill for compensation for alleged injuries due to alleged negligence by the City. We worked hard to educate Legislators why the allegations were false and the Bill was never scheduled for a Hearing.

We successfully worked with the House and Senate Appropriations on the Beach Management Plan funding. The Segment III project in South Broward was funded for monitoring and the Sand By Pass project was funded for \$150,000 for engineering studies.

Hollywood's designation of an Urban Enterprise Zone in South Broward passed several key Committees in the Senate but due to budget constraints was not adopted into law.

### **11. City of Lauderdale Lakes**

Worked with the Florida League of Cities to monitor legislation that would have placed significant limitations on local government revenues. HJR 385, sponsored by Rep. David Rivera, Limitation on Aggregate Ad Valorem Taxes on Real Property would have proposed a constitutional amendment that would limit total ad valorem tax on parcel of real property to 1.35 percent of highest taxable value of property. We joined the Florida League of Cities, Labor Unions and other coalitions in defeating this legislation that would have significantly limited local government revenues. HJR 385 did pass in the House on a mostly partisan vote. It was held up in the Senate and eventually died in messages. The senate bill, SB 738, sponsored by Senator Mike Bennett, died in its second committee.

We also worked on defeating another piece of legislation that would create another unfunded mandate to municipalities. HB 1263 and SB 1906 State and Local Government Revenue Limitations would have proposed a constitutional amendment that would replace the existing state revenue limit based on Florida personal income growth with new state revenue limits. Faced with mounting

opposition, both bills died in their second respective committees in the House and Senate.

We worked with Health Care Budget Conference members, Senators Nan Rich and Eleanor Sobel, to reduce the percentage of cuts to Elderly programs. Through their hard work, only 5% in cuts were approved by the Legislature. Also, we sent your staff information on new Federal Stimulus money that would be allocated to Elder Affairs: \$7,227,015 in Elder nutrition and \$1,119,963 for Senior Employment. The Area Agency on Aging will allocate the additional meals money and the DOEA, through providers and lead agencies will allocate the senior employment.

## **12. City of Miami Gardens**

Successfully passed legislation that would require charter counties to distribute transit system surtax proceeds to the municipalities that have entered into interlocal agreements. We worked with the Senate's Budget Chief, Senator J.D. Alexander, and Representative Kelli Stargel in lobbying for the legislation to be heard in their respective committees. We worked with House and Senate leadership to amend the legislation.

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## **13. City of Opa-Locka**

Worked with the Florida League of Cities to monitor legislation that would have placed significant limitations on local government revenues.

We set up meetings for Mayor Kelley, Commissioner Tydus and Manager Finnie with the following key legislators in Tallahassee on March 9, 2009: Chairman David Rivera, Chairman Joseph Gibbons, Vice-Chair Greg Evers, Representatives Bovo, Roberson, and Braynon II.

We also met with appropriations staff directors Leo Lachat and Jamie Deloach, along with the Speaker's Chief of Staff Dudley Goodlette on possible funding opportunities.

Senator Frederica Wilson introduced Opa-Locka officials before the Legislative Budget Commission. The Commission discussed the federal stimulus funds that would become available to Florida. Senator Wilson stressed the importance of making sure small municipalities like the City of Opa-Locka are informed on how to apply for any funds.

We spoke with the Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp who informed us how difficult funding will be in this year's State budget process. We also worked with the City's staff to send geographic information on State buildings that reside within the City's limits to the Lt. Governor's office.

#### **14. City of Pompano Beach**

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#### **15. City of West Park**

Successfully passed legislation that would incorporate McTyre Park into the City. We worked with Representative Porth, Broward Delegation Chair Senator Jeremy Ring, and Sandy Harris to successfully pass HB 777 through all its committees and on the Senate/House floors. We joined Vice-Mayor Dorsett, Commissioners Brunson and Mack as they testified in support of the bill's passage during the House Military and Local Affairs Policy Committee on March 25, 2009.

Worked with the Florida League of Cities to monitor legislation that would have placed significant limitations on local government revenues.

#### **16. Edward Waters College**

Successfully lobbied to reduce budget cuts for the institution's recruitment and retention efforts.

Successfully lobbied to reduce funding cuts to Florida Resident Assistance Grant.

#### **17. FCCI Insurance Group**

Successfully passed Workers Compensation legislation  
Florida Association of Jewish Federations

We identified \$7.2M in new senior nutrition and \$1.8M in new senior community service employment funds for the social service agencies of the Jewish Federations around the state. This was funded by the American Recovery and Re-investment Act through the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. Federation agencies are working with their Area Agency on Aging Directors and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs to access the new funds.

We worked with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to protect over \$2,748,302 in the recurring state budget for Jewish Federation senior

centers, alzheimer day care centers, nutrition programs, senior wellness programs, community based medicaid diversionary programs, senior transportation, holocaust education, and other programs. The final cut was approximately 5%.

Successfully enacted a terror free option for State Employees participating in the state's defined contribution plan. This is an outgrowth of the 2007 Protecting Florida's Investment Act, which has caused over \$1B to be divested from Florida's pension fund from companies doing business with Iran and Sudan. We also enacted a Bill that eliminates the term Shylock and Shylocking from Florida Statutes.

We also worked on a myriad of civil constitutional rights issues, charitable solicitation and tax exemption issues, insurance for non-profits, and the voluntary pre-k program.

### **18. Family Law Section of the Florida Bar**

Successfully passed Senate Bill 904 that will make it easier for parents to agree on a parenting plan when discussing time sharing and child custody arrangements. This bill was assigned numerous committees in both chambers and successfully overcame opposition that arose at the last minute. Passed House Bill 467 out of numerous committees in the House and then out of the Full House and several committees in the Senate. This bill would have reduced undue hardships on families that have child support and alimony issues. Unfortunately, this bill was not considered by the full Senate. Also fought a bill that would have allowed for graduated filing fees in family law cases.

### **19. Florida Association of Jewish Federations**

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We worked with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to protect over \$2,748,302 in the recurring state budget for Jewish Federation senior centers, alzheimer day care centers, nutrition programs, senior wellness programs, community based medicaid diversionary programs, senior transportation, holocaust education, and other programs. The final cut was approximately 5%.

Successfully enacted a terror free option for State Employees participating in the state's defined contribution plan. This is an outgrowth of the 2007 Protecting Florida's Investment Act, which has caused over \$1B to be divested from Florida's pension fund from companies doing business with Iran and Sudan. We also enacted a Bill that eliminates the term Shylock and Shylocking from Florida Statutes.

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## **20. Florida Healthcare Union**

Successfully maintained 2.9% funding in the State Budget. The funding would protect quality patient care in nursing homes.

## **21. Florida Memorial University**

Successfully lobbied to reduced budget cuts for the institution's recruitment and retention efforts

Successfully lobbied to reduce funding cuts to Florida Resident Assistance Grant.

## **22. Florida Retail Federation**

Successfully passed House Bill 903 which sets a cap on lawyers fees when collecting workers compensation awards, thereby bringing down the cost of workers compensation insurance for Florida's small and large businesses alike. Passed legislation creating a sales tax holiday for Floridians who purchase "Energy Star" products during a one week period in October. Energy Star products such as dishwashers, refrigerators and washing machines, use less energy and are environmentally friendly. Passed legislation pre-empting the regulation of security cameras in parking lots in retail establishments to the state legislature. Recently, Broward County attempted to require all retailers to install video cameras to record every square inch of their parking lots which Becker and Poliakoff successfully fought at the local level.

## **23. Florida Rights Restoration Coalition**

Worked with legislators to receive a floor hearing and vote on legislation that would address unfair licensing and employment issues for former felons

## **24. Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission**

Worked with legislators to successfully pass various versions of high speed rail legislation through Senate and House Committees. The final bill was not agreed to.

## **25. Miami-Dade County**

Successfully amended legislation to revise the definition of a continuing contract, thereby increasing the threshold of construction and professional studies. We worked with Senators Lawson to amend SB 2666 that included the County's language. We also worked with the bill's sponsors, Senator Haridopolos and Representative Crisafulli to make sure they approved of the amendments. We made sure lobbyists representing engineers and architects were aware of our language to prevent their opposition.

Worked with legislators to amend Crane legislation that would have pre-empted the County's very strict public safety crane ordinance. We worked with

Representative Evers to discuss the County's concerns with his legislation. We provided Rep. Evers and his staff with the County's alternative solutions to amending his bill. We also met with the Senate sponsor, Senator Jones (SB 1654) and his Committee Staff director on the legislation. We set up a meeting with Toby Cline, along with the Regulated Industries staff and explained the County's concerns and proposed amendments to SB 1654. Crane Bills did not pass pre-emption.

Worked to pass legislation that would revise seaport security requirements. We worked with Port of Miami Director Bill Johnson and his staff to coordinate meetings with Chairman Rivera, Representatives Lopez-Cantera, Garcia, Adams, Evers, Senator Diaz de la Portilla and other members of the Miami-Dade delegation.

Worked with the Florida League of Cities to monitor legislation that would have placed significant limitations on local government revenues.

## **26. Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

Successfully worked with appropriation leaders to change the school district's millage rate.

## **27. Miami-Dade Expressway Authority**

Worked with legislators to amend legislation to allow all expressway authorities to be in full financial disclosure.

## **28. Ocean Harbor Casualty Insurance Company**

This year, the Legislature increased existing fees on just about everything. One fee, the "MVR" fee was slated to go up from \$3 to \$14. The MVR fee is the fee the state charges to run searches on license histories which private insurance agents use to offer prospective clients a quote on auto insurance. By keeping the fee low, we were able to ensure that small insurance companies can continue to request motor vehicle records without passing on the cost to the consumer. We also carefully monitored all motor vehicle insurance Bills to make sure that none of them would negatively impact the No Fault Insurance system and existing statutes in Florida that were recently enacted during a Special Session.

## **29. Oracle USA**

Monitored legislation regarding technology software and human resources applications.

Worked with the office of the Chief Financial Officer on the implementation and governance issues for the ERP system.

## **30. Isle Casino at Pompano Park**

Several years ago, the Legislature passed severe regulations and an onerous tax for licensed casinos (50%) while allowing Indian casinos to operate at a considerable advantage with virtually no regulations. This year, we passed



legislation making the tax rate significantly lower to 35% and lowered the license fees by millions. No other state has ever lowered the tax rate on gaming once it was imposed. The Bill also gives the Governor strict guidelines for an Indian Gaming Compact and leaves the door open for additional product for the licensed facilities. The Bill also allows for high stakes poker and provides other regulatory relief to the licensed facilities so that they can compete on a more level playing field with more parity. The Bill takes effect upon the enactment of a formal Indian Gaming Compact.

### **31. RJ Reynolds American, Inc.**

Worked on Tobacco related issues.

### **32. Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida, Inc.**

We sought the support for legislation establishing red light cameras. Proceeds from these fines would benefit Trauma Hospital Center. We worked with legislators to successfully pass the Mark Wandall Act out of the 3 committees and the full House and 3 committees and the full Senate. The Act would have allowed local governments to place safety cameras on state roads that would capture photographs of license plates of those who run red lights and ticketed the owners of the cars for running the red light, cutting down on accidents and deaths on state highways. Unfortunately, the bill, though passed out of both chambers, did not pass the final hurdle as the legislature could not agree on the disbursement of the fines.

We worked with legislators to prevent drastic cuts to recurring funding for medically needy citizens and health care programs.

### **33. Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County**

Successfully fought a proposed fee on garbage that would have made garbage collection considerably more expensive for Floridians. Successfully fought proposed legislation that would have made credits for renewable sources of energy virtually extinct.

### **34. Town of Southwest Ranches**

Successfully passed House Bill 801 which allows the Town to annex a portion of the City of Davie with the City's consent.

### **35. United States Sugar Corporation**

Monitored the sale of land purchased by the corporation and the State of Florida.

### **36. Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars**

In a very difficult economic year, we successfully fended off attempts to eliminate funding for this project which offers Florida students a chance to go to Washington and work in our government for school credit. Also successfully added an appropriation for minority participation in the project through a state university.

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