



2018 Washington, D.C. Fly-In Recap

From April 10 to 12, twenty-five of your fellow Chamber members participated in our Washington, DC Fly-In. We shared our members' thoughts on several chamber priority issues, including transportation, immigration, higher education, and trade. We thought it would be valuable to provide a recap to you, our chamber members.

Tuesday, April 10

- Florida House – Infrastructure Briefing Luncheon

Our delegation landed Tuesday morning and made its way to [Florida House on Capitol Hill](#), the nation's only state embassy in Washington, DC. We enjoyed a catered lunch and heard a briefing from [Kevan Stone](#), the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Associate Legislative Director for transportation. He provided a [transportation and infrastructure update](#), and shared:

1. NACo's [full analysis](#) of President Trump's Infrastructure Plan.
2. NACo's [policy brief](#) on President Trump's Infrastructure Plan.

He informed us that the omnibus spending bill had positive potential for Miami transportation because of higher levels of grant funding. The day before we arrived, the US Department of Transportation and other agencies signed a memorandum of understanding to agree to perform parallel permitting to expedite the process. Mr. Stone encouraged us to begin advocacy on the FY2019 budget.

- US State Department's Office of Field Operations, Visa Services

We met with the Director, his senior staff and had the Miami Passport Office on the phone. We brought three issues to their attention:

1. Positive DACA resolution.
2. Importance of the Haitian community to South Florida business, and the impact of the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) program.
3. Maintain and improve the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Visa Program for foreign nationals.

The State Department was not hopeful that a DACA solution would occur before the November elections. They also indicated that they're now looking at strict adherence to TPS laws. There have been TPS overstays that are problematic to the overall TPS system.

The Department brought to our attention the following:

1. That they are continuing to modernize their processes including increasing paperless processing for nonimmigrant and immigrant visa processing;
2. US Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana will process nonimmigrant visa applications for Cubans due to limited consular staffing at the US Embassy in Havana;
3. Ongoing concerns about Cuba and Venezuela which will impact visa processing;
4. Concerns about economic situation in Haiti and perceived increases in Haiti overstays in the US.

Sponsors: Gold



SANDLER, TRAVIS
& ROSENBERG, P.A.
*An International Trade
& Business Law Practice*

Silver



Bronze





2018 Washington, D.C. Fly-In Recap

- White House Briefing - Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Later, our Chamber delegation went to the White House for a briefing delivered by the Office of Political Affairs and the Department of Commerce. They indicated their commitment to be available to help our chamber advocate in DC whether it be in the White House, with agencies or on the Hill. They announced that President Trump and the Small Business Administration would be hosting a business roundtable regarding the impacts of the tax reforms on small businesses to be held at Bucky Dent Park in Hialeah on Monday April 16, 2018. Helen Aguirre Ferre, the Office of Communications' Director of Media Affairs, shared more information about the new funding available in the spending bill. She also talked about the Summit of the Americas and the Administration's planning work with regional partners to curb dictatorships and bring democracy to Venezuela.
- Florida International University - Reception
Florida International University, one of our Silver Sponsors, hosted an evening reception at their beautiful building in Washington. Our members networked with several Washington leaders that were invited. During this reception, we honored Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for her service to Miami during her political career.
- US Capitol Building Night Tour – Congressman Ted Yoho
Congressman Ted Yoho (R-Florida), House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Chair, notified us that he wanted to cultivate relationships with the business community outside of his district. Since our Chamber is trying to branch out as well, we asked him to take us on a night tour of the US Capitol Building. He and his wife, Carolyn, gave us behind-the-scenes access to the House floor, Senate floor, Washington's crypt, the first Supreme Court and the original Senate Chambers, and Statuary Hall. We appreciated their hospitality for such a memorable experience.

Wednesday, April 11

- Embassy of Canada – Breakfast Trade Briefing
Consul General Susan Harper welcomed us to the Embassy of Canada for a joint US-Canada trade briefing. Canada's side was presented by the Honorable Colin Bird, the Canadian Minister-Counsellor for Trade and Economic Policy. The US side was presented by Nate Giordano, the US Chamber's Americas Manager. Mr. Giordano shared that trade has never been more popular with members on the hill and that this next month is critical for a NAFTA solution. Both sides agreed that in evaluating NAFTA, it's key to remember how the entire free trade block has increased and performed. They encouraged us that a global trade position increase outweighs individual wins and losses. Finally, Minister Bird notified us that tri-lateral meetings were taking place on Embassy grounds as we met.

Sponsors: Gold



SANDLER, TRAVIS
& ROSENBERG, P.A.
*An International Trade
& Business Law Practice*

Silver



Bronze





2018 Washington, D.C. Fly-In Recap

- Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos
After visiting the Embassy of Canada, we organized a meeting with Secretary DeVos on behalf of our higher education members, Florida International University and the University of Miami. They shared concerns with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, including student loans and Title II funds. We also thanked her for authorizing a \$1 million Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) grant. We hope that this united front held by FIU and UM improves their position and is a sign of future collaboration.
- US Senator Bill Nelson
During our meeting with Senator Nelson, we shared our federal concerns with him on transportation, immigration, and trade. He enjoyed seeing us again and said he is “completely in sync with our issues.”
- Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart
Congressman Diaz-Balart shared how he fought for opportunities that could benefit Miami in the recent omnibus spending bill by:
 1. Adding \$1 billion in new funding for airport infrastructure,
 2. Including \$834 million to help communities modernize their bus and transit systems,
 3. Increasing TIGER grants by \$1 billion,
 4. Including \$2.64 billion for the Capital Investment Grants program,
 5. Increased housing vouchers to \$22 billion,
 6. Increased Homeless Assistance grants by \$130 millionHe was very clear that transportation grant funding was secured in the omnibus spending bill, it was time for Miami-Dade County officials to submit a qualifying plan to pull down these funds while his tenure as Chair of the Transportation Appropriations Committee lasted and for the FY2019 budget because beyond FY2019 is a great unknown (possible sequester, possible new appropriations members and chair, etc.). County staff joined us on this trip and indicated that they would relay his requests for action. Also, he indicated that if Fort Lauderdale sends its WAVE Streetcar appropriation back to DC, that could close the doors on all South Florida appropriation requests for the foreseeable future.
- Congressman Carlos Curbelo
Congressman Curbelo was very supportive of our immigration and sea level rise concerns. He asked for feedback on the recently implemented tax policy.
- Congressman Ted Deutch
We met with Josh Lipman (Legislative Director) as Congressman Deutch was called to chair a House Middle East Subcommittee meeting at the time. We thanked Congressman Deutch for his strong advocacy for school and community safety measures in the wake of the Parkland school shooting. The Congressman’s support for NAFTA, TPS and DACA was confirmed.

Sponsors: Gold



Silver



Bronze





2018 Washington, D.C. Fly-In Recap

- US Senator Marco Rubio
Senator Rubio reported that he's waiting on the White House and the House of Representatives for a new DACA proposal. He indicated that the Senate is ready to support, depending on the proposal. Senator Rubio has pushed for a study under the omnibus bill regarding cost of living in order to help steer omnibus funding to areas like Miami that have been impacted by significant cost of living increases.
- Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Congresswoman Wasserman Schultz shared several school safety and gun bills she has filed in response to the Parkland tragedy. She was very supportive of Florida International University and University of Miami's issues and concerns. She is supportive of a DACA solution but didn't know if one would appear prior to the November elections. She was interested in securing our Chamber's support of the WAVE street car in Broward County. She said that she and Congressman Diaz-Balart have worked hard on this project and its importance of Fort Lauderdale accepting the funding they applied for. Our group reiterated the WAVE street car's importance to our region's transportation problems.
- Sandler, Travis and Rosenberg, P.A. – Dinner Debrief
Thanks to our Sandler, Travis and Rosenberg, P.A., one of our Gold Sponsors, we continued discussion over dinner at Mastro's Steakhouse. We were able to debrief about our advocacy.

Thursday, April 12

- Florida International University – Resiliency Breakfast Briefing
Our members began our final day at FIU's Washington office for a resiliency briefing over breakfast. We then prepared for our meetings with department and agency officials during the day ahead.
- US Department of Commerce
We met with Department of Commerce staff and discussed global markets, international investment, and export diplomacy. They also notified us about the upcoming Select USA Investment Summit in June. The DOC officials invited us to attend an upcoming [ACE summit](#) in Israel and asked us about hosting one in Miami in the future. These summits bring together the top international business leaders and create opportunities for deals and collaboration.
- US Department of Transportation
US Department of Transportation officials indicated that the NEPA environmental study streamlining was taking place through considering older study submissions and memorandums of understanding. They also told us that high level conversations were occurring between their department and the Department of Labor on article 13c, a Labor regulation that could be a barrier to entry for private sector transportation.

Sponsors: Gold



SANDLER, TRAVIS
& ROSENBERG, P.A.
*An International Trade
& Business Law Practice*

Silver



Bronze





2018 Washington, D.C. Fly-In Recap

- US Department of Homeland Security – Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS)
CIS indicated that there were not many changes to EB-5. They did suggest that EB-5 is a good way to invite developers to fund affordable housing. They shared their new [E-Verify](#) website, which includes many new online tools to help employers and employees. They relayed that DACA renewals are still being accepted, but they are no longer accepting new applications. Finally, they shared the expiration dates for TPS for those fleeing Haiti, Sudan, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. They couldn't comment on any potential new outcomes or go into detail regarding DACA and TPS due to pending litigation.

Click [here](#) for photos from our Fly-in.

Prepared by: Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs

Sponsors: Gold



Silver



Bronze

