

Florida Coalition for the Homeless

Final Report from 2010 Legislative Session

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Below is the final report of legislative activities for the Florida Coalition for the Homeless (FCH) for the 2010 session.

Protect Homeless People from Violence through Florida's Hate Crime Law

Amend Florida's hate crimes statute to include homeless status as a bias-motivated crime to help curb these attacks on our homeless neighbors.

This was the subject of the bill sponsored by Rep. Ari Porth (HB 11) and Senator Jeremy Ring (SB 506). After a long and contentious debate, the House bill passed on a vote of 80 YEAS and 28 NAYS. SB 506 passed all its committees of reference and passed the full Senate on a vote of 25 YEAS and 10 NAYS. The bill was presented to the Governor who must sign, veto, or let the bill become law without his signature by May 15, 2010.

Create a Voluntary Contribution Option for Homelessness Relief on DMV Forms

Establishes a new revenue source to help fund homeless services and creates an easy way for Floridians to help their homeless and near homeless neighbors.

This was the subject of the bill sponsored by Rep. Betty Reed (HB 923) and Senator Victor Crist (SB 2654). HB 923 passed all its committees and the full House unanimously. It was then forwarded to the Senate. SB 2654 passed unanimously its original committee of reference, the Senate Transportation Committee. During the last week of session, the bill was withdrawn from the other committees of reference – Senate Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee, and the Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee. The bill was never taken up by the Senate and the House Bill died in messages.

Remove the Cap on the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund

Remove the current cap of \$243 million on the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund and allocate all funding generated for this trust fund to housing needs in Florida. Housing activity creates jobs and generates revenue for the state.

This issue was the subject of bill sponsored by Rep. Gary Aubuchon (HB 665) and Senator Mike Bennett (SB 262). HB 665 passed all its committees of reference and the full House unanimously. SB 262 also passed all its committees and passed the full Senate on a vote of 31 YEAS and 6 NAYS. Senator Bennett attached an amendment and sent the HB 665 back to the House. The amendment language, which was unrelated to affordable housing, had been rejected by the House twice before on other bills. This amendment for Callery Judge Groves in Palm Beach County was rejected by the House and the bill was sent back to the Senate. The last day of the session, within an hour of the end of the legislative session in the House, Senator Bennett once again brought up the housing bill but he refused to remove the amendment, and sent the bill back to the House, where it died in messages between the two houses.

The Sadowski Coalition members met on May 4, 2010 to map out strategies for the 2011 legislative session. Members will be working during the fall with the incoming House and Senate leadership again on legislation to remove the cap on the Housing Trust Fund.

FCH Budget Items for FY 2010-2011 (Pending Governor's signature of House Bill 5001)

1) Funding for Challenge Grant for 2010-2011 - \$2.03 million, Budget Line Item 360.

Challenge Grants competitively fund projects to meet the most pressing needs identified in local continuum of care plans including job training, substance abuse treatment, physical and mental healthcare, etc.

2) Funding for the Homeless Housing Assistance (HHA) Grant for the 2010-2011 FY: \$4.150 million – Budget Line Items 357, 358 and 361. The Legislature approved the restoration of \$4.150 million in non-recurring funds to go toward funding the Homeless Housing Assistance Grant, and the Emergency Financial Assistance for Housing program. \$900,000 goes to the emergency aid program, bringing this program to the funding level of \$1.8 million [direct assistance, ops positions, and expenses]. The remaining \$3,250,000 is funding the Homeless Housing Assistance Grant.

Homeless Housing Assistance Grants (HHA) funds the creation, renovation and maintenance of permanent and transitional housing for homeless families and individuals who otherwise would remain trapped in emergency shelters or on the street.

3) Funding for Homeless Prevention-American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 - \$8.6 million, Budget Line Item 371.

Coalition Partners Instrumental in Passage of FCH Priority Issues and Budgets:

- Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust
- Florida Association of Counties
- Florida League of Cities
- Karen Woodall, Advocate, Homeless Programs; Coordinator, Coalition for Fair and Comprehensive Tax Reform
- Florida IMPACT and the Council of Churches
- Florida Catholic Conference
- United Way of Florida
- FL Council for Community Mental Health
- Department of Children and Family
- Sadowski Act Coalition Partners include 25 organizations. Among the members:
 - Florida Homebuilders Association
 - Florida Association of Realtors
 - Florida League of Cities
 - Florida Association of Counties
 - Florida Department of Community Affairs
 - Florida Housing Finance Corporation
 - Florida Legal Services
 - 1000 Friends of Florida
 - Florida Housing Coalition
 - Florida Catholic Conference
 - Florida Coalition of Affordable Housing Providers
 - Florida Impact
 - United Way of Florida
 - AARP
 - Florida Supportive Living Association
 - Associated Industries of Florida
 - Florida Association for Homes for the Aging
 - Florida Bankers Association
 - FL Manufactured Housing Association
 - Florida Chamber of Commerce
 - Florida Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
 - FL Council for Community Mental Health