

# Federal Lobbying and Advocacy Services

## City of Gainesville

June 7, 2017



# Van Scoyoc Associates

- Established in 1990 – Washington’s foremost independent government relations firm
- Quality of personnel and experience; over 65 experts
- Extensive experience with Federal issues impacting local government
  - More than 50 government entity clients, many similar in size to Gainesville
  - Represent more than 30 million Americans in nearly every state in the country
  - More than a dozen Florida clients: local governments, transit agencies, airports, health care interests, space and defense companies
- Bi-partisan, broad-based experience at all levels of Federal government, including:
  - Florida Congressional Delegation, House and Senate Leadership, Committees
  - Nearly all Federal agencies
- Client service focus; client service = client retention



# An Experienced Team

- H. Stewart “Stu” Van Scoyoc, President
  - Provides overall management and strategic advice to firm’s clients
- Harry Glenn, Vice President
  - Former Chief of Staff for Rep. Bill Young; served on Capitol Hill for three decades
  - Represents a broad array of interests, including local government, transit agencies, universities, health care interests, research facilities
  - Lives part-time in Florida; available often in person for Gainesville
- Greg Burns, Vice President
  - 15 years providing broad-based representation to local governments, expertise in transportation and infrastructure, economic development issues
  - Ten current Florida clients, several of whom have represented for entire career
  - Former staff for a member of Congress

# An Experienced Team

- Steve Palmer, Vice President
  - More than 15 years at VSA representing a variety of transportation interests
  - Former Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
  - Senior Staff on Senate Commerce Committee for 10 years
- Mary Scott Hardwick, Manager, Government Relations
  - Former Intergovernmental Affairs staff for Pinellas County
  - Experienced liaison between varied Florida interests
- Plus, support of 65 other legislative experts and staff



# City of Gainesville Objectives

## • Primary Goals

- Secure Federal grants and create new opportunities
- Proactively engage on a myriad of important issues impacting Gainesville

## • Challenges

- Ongoing and arcane legislative, agency, and grant activity
- Frequently changing political landscape
- Long-term goals and solutions

## • Opportunities

- VSA can deliver opportunities to affect change and secure funding

## BRIEFING

SEPTEMBER 2016



### Florida is Still a Donor State Ranks Dead Last in Federal Grant Funding

**T**he federal government plays an important role in helping Florida pay for the government services it provides, as federal funds make up 34 percent of the current state budget.<sup>1</sup> But Florida gets much less from Uncle Sam than most states. Even with Florida's relatively low level of state taxing and spending, there are 28 states that receive a larger proportion of total state revenue in federal funds.<sup>2</sup>

Over the years, Florida TaxWatch has produced several reports examining how Florida fares, relative to other states, in receiving grants and aid from the federal government. Consistent with our past research, this new analysis shows Florida continues to receive far less than its fair share of federal grant dollars.

In 1998, Florida ranked 49th<sup>3</sup> among the 50 states in terms of federal grants received per capita.<sup>4</sup> A 2011 report showed Florida had increased its relative share of federal aid slightly, rising to 48th.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Florida Legislature, *Fiscal Analysis in Brief*—2016 Legislative Session, August 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Florida TaxWatch calculations using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, FY2015 (most available data).

<sup>3</sup> Second lowest amount of federal grants per capita.

<sup>4</sup> Florida TaxWatch, *Federal Grants Still Shortchanging Florida*, September 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Florida TaxWatch, *Florida Remains a Donor State Run Through The Great Recession*, January 2011.

Since Florida TaxWatch began tracking Florida's federal grants in 1996, the state has never ranked higher than 43rd (2003 and 2005).

This new Florida TaxWatch analysis reveals that Florida now ranks last in the nation in per capita federal grants received (FY2014-15).<sup>6</sup>

Florida also fares poorly when grant receipts are viewed relative to federal taxes paid. Relative to its portion of total federal taxes paid, Florida pays \$1.58 in taxes for each dollar returned in aid—the second highest premium in the nation.

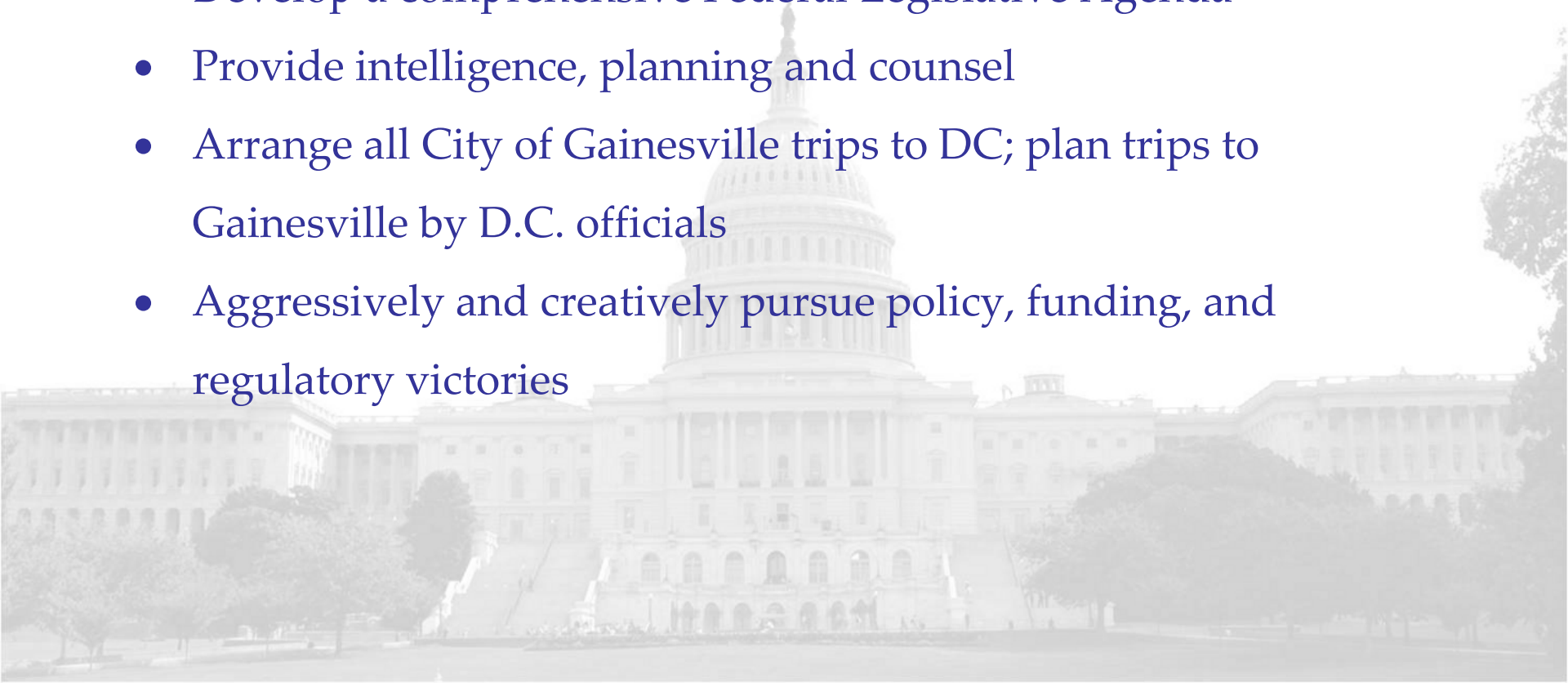
The federal government distributed \$617.0 billion<sup>7</sup> in grants during FY2014-15, and Florida received \$22.8 billion of those grants. The vast majority go to Florida's state government, local governments, and universities. A relatively small amount goes to private organizations (both non-profit and for-profit) to carry out a public project or service authorized by federal law. Nearly half (\$10.7 billion) of Florida's grants go to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, mostly to help fund Florida's Medicaid program.

<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all data in this report is from the U.S. Department of Treasury (USASpending.gov), with calculations by Florida TaxWatch.

<sup>7</sup> \$501.7 billion sent to the 50 states, the rest went to Washington D.C. and the U.S. territories.

# VSA's Government Relations Strategy

- Critically examine the City's past efforts
  - Visit City for an intensive, in-person investigative analysis
  - Brief City on status of priority issues to prepare City Commission
- Develop a comprehensive Federal Legislative Agenda
- Provide intelligence, planning and counsel
- Arrange all City of Gainesville trips to DC; plan trips to Gainesville by D.C. officials
- Aggressively and creatively pursue policy, funding, and regulatory victories



# VSA's Government Relations Strategy

- Liaison with Congressional offices & Federal agencies
- Develop partnerships; work with coalitions
  - Including Alachua County, University of Florida, Gainesville Chamber, other regional partners
  - Engage with Florida League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, etc.
- Maintain in-person visibility with Commissioners and staff
- Complete and open communication; commitment to client service



# VSA Monitoring Services



- Development and introduction of relevant legislation
- House and Senate floor schedules
- Committee hearings and mark-ups
- Federal Register for agency activities
- Federal grant opportunity notifications
- Engagement with national and regional advocacy associations
- Major news publications, both in Washington as well as nationwide
- Local news to gain insight and for use in advocacy

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**FEDERAL ISSUE:** Alternative Fuel Tax Incentives

**BACKGROUND: HOW IT MAY AFFECT THE CITY:** An older transportation authorization bill, known as SAFETEA-LU, provided a tax incentive for natural gas when used as a motor vehicle fuel. The \$0.50 per gallon equivalent incentive, which is provided to businesses, individuals, and tax-exempt entities that sell the fuel, essentially serves as a rebate.

In 2015, the rebate provided \$150,263 to the City, nearly double the previous year. In addition, the City recently dropped its station full price to \$1.17 per gasoline gallon equivalent (GGE) and \$0.98 per GGE for government vehicles, which is the lowest price in Florida and possibly the southeastern United States.

The \$0.50 incentive originally expired at the end of Fiscal Year 2009, and has been extended five times, most recently as part of a broad "tax extenders" package passed in December 2015. This extension is for two years, including a retroactive extension for 2015. The incentive expired on December 31, 2016. Various industry organizations will continue to pursue the extension in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**RECOMMENDED POSITION:** *Support* the retroactive extension of a \$0.50 per gallon equivalent tax incentive for natural gas when used as a motor fuel.



# City of Gainesville: New American City

- Cooperating strategic plans between the City and University to address disparity issues and growth throughout Gainesville
  - “Not merely implementing change around the margins...actually changing our approach to the work itself”
    - Create a stronger economy
    - Foster greater equity
    - Plan for a better future
    - Become a community model
- How can VSA support?
  - Create community partnerships to support transportation and economic development projects
  - New autonomous vehicle and public transit opportunities via USDOT/infrastructure package
  - Criminal and juvenile justice grant opportunities
  - Recreation enhancement grants
  - Access to healthy food options grants
  - Environmental improvements – water quality for instance



# Other Federal Issues Affecting City of Gainesville

- **Transportation**

- Transit opportunities
- TIGER & FASTLANE grants
  - More than \$50 million secured for VSA clients
- Implementation of the FAST Act for the benefit of Gainesville
- SW 62<sup>nd</sup> Boulevard



- **Public Safety**

- FEMA Fire grants
- Police grants
  - More than \$60 million secured for VSA clients from programs

- **Public Utility Issues**

- Natural gas tax credit
- Finance & taxation issues; municipal bonds

# Other Federal Issues Affecting City of Gainesville

- **Water Resources**

- Reclaimed water and septic to sewer projects
- WIFIA loans, other funding opportunities
- Waters of the United States regulation



- **Economic & Community Development**

- Economic Development Administration grants
  - More than \$25 million for VSA clients
- National Endowment for the Arts grants
- Federal workforce development grants; other opportunities

- **Recreation Funding**

- **Infrastructure Package**

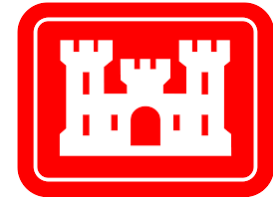
- **Annual Appropriations Bills**

- Significant impacts to important programs like CDBG, various opportunities for grant funding

- **Other City Priorities**

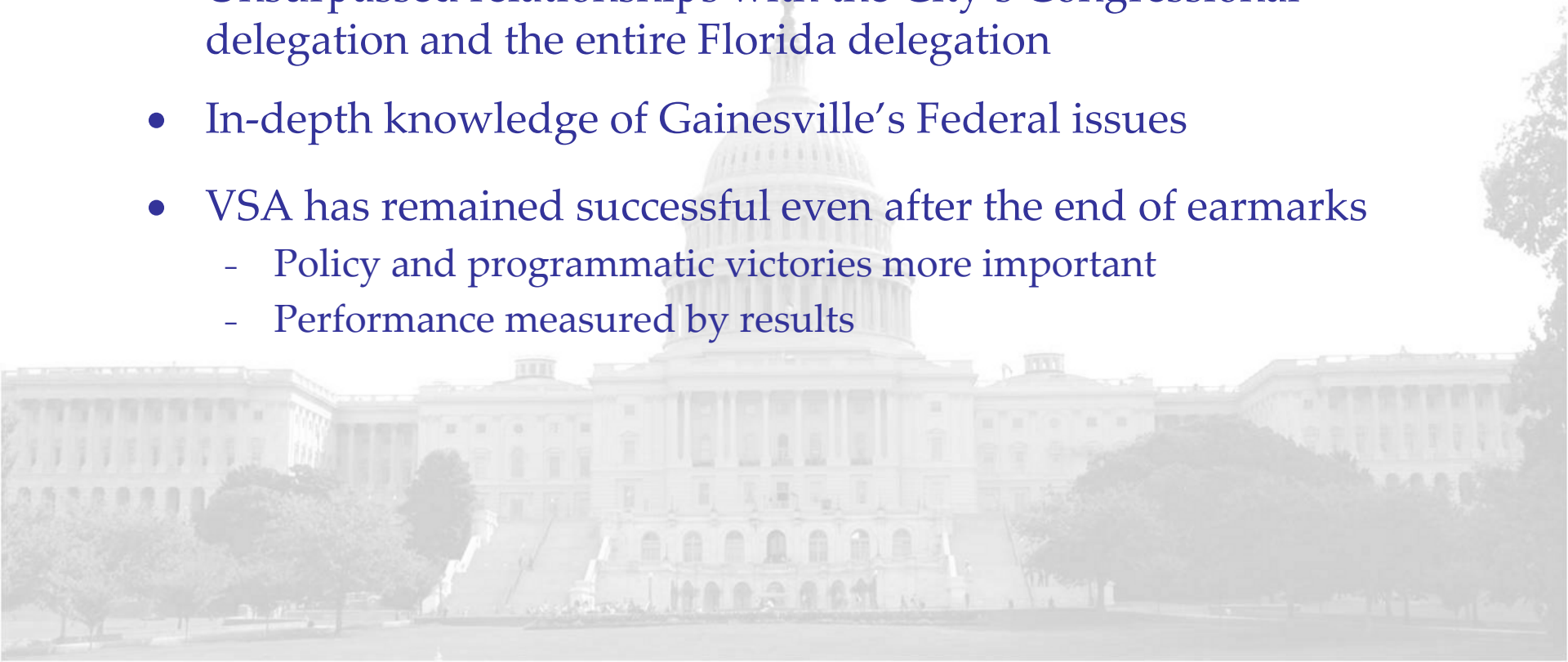
# Strength with Specific Federal Agencies <sup>170033</sup>

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Economic Development Administration
- Department of Transportation, including Federal Highway Administration and Federal Aviation Administration
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Interior
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Justice
- Department of Veterans Affairs



# City of Gainesville/VSA Partnership Summary

- Small firm feel with personnel resources of a large, bi-partisan, experienced firm
  - Individualized service, no cookie-cutter representation
  - Personal engagement
- Unsurpassed relationships with the City's Congressional delegation and the entire Florida delegation
- In-depth knowledge of Gainesville's Federal issues
- VSA has remained successful even after the end of earmarks
  - Policy and programmatic victories more important
  - Performance measured by results



**Thank You!**

**Questions?**

