Impact of Post 9/11 Security Measures on South Florida’s International Business Community

In response to concerns voiced by the business community, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce - Global Business Center Business Advocacy Committee, together with Florida International University, College of Business Administration (FIU/CBA) decided to undertake a study to analyze the impact of the USA Patriot Act and other Homeland Security initiatives on our local business community. The Chamber supports efforts to secure our nation while preserving its position in the global economy, and believes that the business community’s voice will enhance the ability of the government to implement more efficient and effective programs. The Study was done to inform and educate the public and policy makers, to be proactive and strive for favorable results.

The GMCC and FIU/CBA created a survey and began the task of reaching out to the South Florida Business community for their support and participation in the Study. Through the compilation of information from questionnaires, testimonies and research, the business community testified as to how post 9-11 new security measures and regulations have impacted them in seven key industry sectors. The Study was approved by the GMCC Executive Committee on October 21, 2003.

While the Study confirms significant costs to South Florida’s economy, it also reveals significant opportunities for government and business leaders to work together to both improve security initiatives and diminish the impact on South Florida’s international business community. The study sets forth this important information in three categories:

1) Findings in seven (7) key economic sectors: International Trade (Ocean and Air Cargo), Banking (International and Domestic), Travel and Hospitality, Retail and Wholesale, Healthcare, Education and Real Estate. The overarching finding embraces all sectors: it is imperative that government officials work closely with the private sector to craft homeland security policies that are economically feasible and, to the extent possible, business friendly.

2) Recommendations on ten (10) specific security and business needs. Businesses interviewed have made recommendations regarding banking, immigration, Food & Drug, Homeland Security and State Department laws and procedures.

3) Testimonials describing fourteen (14) different situations in which particular security measures have adversely affected South Florida businesses. Individual businesses have shared their stories, illustrating business lost, and the new costs and burdens borne, by South Florida footwear and apparel importers, customs brokers and freight forwarders, ocean and air carriers, attorneys, real estate brokers, hotels, hospitals, international banks and domestic banks.

The GMCC and FIU/CBA releases this Study in the hope that it will initiate a dialogue with the appropriate federal officials in the White House, the Department of Homeland Security and others to explore alternative programs and procedures to achieve our mutual goals. We welcome the opportunity to meet with State and Federal officials involved in these issues, so that we may further discuss possible solutions and express our concerns.

For more information or a copy of the study, please contact Alice Ancona at the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce: phone 305.577.5471, email: aancona@greatermiami.com.