



**Legislative Update**  
**January 8, 2018**  
**Provided by Alicia Tighe, Regional Director**

**Vowing to Block Rollback of Offshore Drilling Regulations**

On January 3, Senator Nelson spoke on the Senate floor vowing to block the Trump administration's efforts to roll back several safety standards the Obama administration put in place after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. During his speech, Senator Nelson said he plans to subject the revised rule to the Congressional Review Act—a procedural tool that would block implementation of the revised rule. Senator Nelson spoke less than a week after the U.S. Department of the Interior released its draft proposal to revise the regulations put in place to prevent more incidents like Deepwater Horizon.

Senator Nelson is a long-time opponent of having oil rigs near Florida's coast as drilling poses a threat to Florida's environment, tourism-driven economy, and its vital national military training areas. Senator Nelson joined then-Senator Mel Martinez in 2006 to ban drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico through the year 2022. Last year, Senator Nelson filed legislation to extend this moratorium on drilling off Florida's Gulf coast for an additional five years, to 2027. To view Senator Nelson's speech visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EW9r9Hakpz0&feature=youtu.be>.

**Defending Net Neutrality**

On January 3, Senator Nelson delivered a speech on the Senate floor critical of the Federal Communications Commission's recent party-line vote to revoke its net neutrality rules. Senator Nelson criticized the flawed rulemaking process that led to the decision. He noted that the process was reportedly corrupted by thousands of comments originating from stolen identities and Russian email accounts. In his remarks, Senator Nelson expressed concern with the notion that foreign actors are now reportedly interfering with the American rulemaking process and noted that he would continue to raise this issue and the serious concerns it poses for the Nation's democratic processes. To view the speech visit: <https://youtu.be/tWZ0VfzTI9Q>

**Supporting Access to Medicare Outpatient Rehabilitation Therapy Services**

On January 3, Senator Nelson became a co-sponsor of **S. 253, the Medicare Access to Rehabilitation Services Act**. Introduced by Senator Cardin, S. 253 would repeal the caps on Medicare outpatient rehabilitation physical therapy services and speech-language pathology services. Medicare therapy caps originated in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, but since 2006, patients with certain conditions have been able to get a waiver and receive Medicare reimbursement for therapy costs in excess of the cap.

### **Supporting Transit Grants**

On December 21, Senator Nelson joined Senator Murray and other Democrats in sending a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee in support of the Capital Investment Grants program, also known as New Starts transit grants. The Federal Transit Administration's New Starts transit grant program is a discretionary grant program for funding transit capital investments. Roughly \$2.3 billion is appropriated each year to fund light rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, streetcar, and corridor-based bus rapid transit projects. Several Florida projects are under consideration to receive transit funding for Fiscal Year 2018.

### **Urging the Implementation of PTC**

On December 21, Senator Nelson joined Senator Blumenthal and several other Senate colleagues in sending a letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation requesting an update on the status of the railroads' efforts to install positive train control before the December 31, 2018 deadline. The letter also asks the DOT to outline its plans to vigorously enforce the deadline, how it is communicating its enforcement plans with the industry, and its plans to aid the railroads in installing PTC. On December 18, an Amtrak passenger train derailed in Washington State, killing three people. It is likely that PTC would have prevented the accident by stopping the speeding train before it entered the low speed curve.

### **Seeking Information from Equifax Regarding Data Breach**

On January 3, Senator Nelson sent a letter to Equifax CEO Paulino do Rego Barros, Jr. regarding the company's compliance with Florida's breach notification laws in the wake of a recent data breach that exposed personally identifiable information of over 145 million consumers. Specifically, the letter addresses whether or not Equifax notified both state officials and individual consumers within the timeframes prescribed by Florida state law, requests an explanation for any failures to do so, and seeks information regarding the number of Floridians affected by the breach.