


AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO

To: Miami-Dade County
Board of County Commissioners

Date: March 1, 2012

From: Michael P. Murawski 
Advocate for the Commission
On Ethics and Public Trust

Re: Conflict Waiver Request
Ronald L. Book, P.A.

Pursuant to the provisions of Resolution R-1017-10, the attached Conflict Waiver Request received from the firm of Ronald L. Book, P.A., is being presented for the Board's consideration.

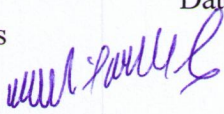
The report and recommendation of the staff of the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust is being submitted as a supplement to this item.

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**Commission on Ethics &
Public Trust**
Miami-Dade County

Memorandum

To: Miami Dade County
Board of County Commissioners
Date: March 1, 2012

From: Michael P. Murawski, Advocate 
Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

Re: Conflict Waiver Request/ Ronald L. Book, P.A. / HB 511 and SB 668

COE No.: K12-031

Background:

On February 24, 2012, the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) received a conflict waiver request from Ronald L. Book, P.A. (Book, P.A.). Book P.A. is a lobbying firm with an office in Tallahassee that was awarded a governmental representation contract by Miami-Dade County (the "County"). In its waiver request letter, Book, P.A. advises that it represents Assurance Financial (AF), a long standing client that is working to oppose the passage of HB 511 and SB 668.

The passage of HB 511/SB 668 would significantly reduce the County's workers' compensation drug costs by reducing the markup on some drugs from between \$6 to \$8 per pill to less than \$1. The County supports the passage of HB 511/SB 668.

Investigation:

The COE conducted a fact finding inquiry which included:

- Discussion and e-mail exchange with Assistant County Attorney Jess McCarty.
- Review of HB 511/ SB 668.
- Review of conflict waiver request from Book P.A.
- Interview with Ronald L. Book; Mr. Book is the principle of Book, P.A.

Analysis:

Pursuant to County Ordinance No.00-64, “no person or entity that received compensation from the County for lobbying on behalf of the County or any of its agencies or instrumentalities at either the state, national or municipal level shall represent any entity in any forum to support a position in opposition to a position of the County unless the Board grants a specific waiver for a specific lobbying activity.”

Additionally, County Resolution No. 56-10 requires all County contract lobbyists to obtain a waiver from the Board for any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Book, P.A. fully recognizes and acknowledges the conflict between their representation of AF’s interests and those of Miami-Dade County concerning HB 511/SB 668.

Conclusion:

Given the undisputed conflict between the interests of AFS and those of the County, no conflict waiver should be granted. Book, P.A. has offered no reason and there is no reason for the BCC to grant a waiver to Book, P.A. in this matter.