



June 12, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

FOR ACYPL: Mike Garretson, (202) 857-0999 x27 or mgarretson@acypl.org
FOR COMMISSIONER SOFIELD: (864) 239-0116 or deb@sofield.com

**Commissioner Deb Sofield to lead Delegation to Israel and the Palestinian Territories
Political Study Program to Focus on Citizen Diplomacy**

WASHINGTON – Greenville Commissioner of Public Works, **The Honorable Deb Sofield** has been selected by **The American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL)** to escort a delegation of seven young political and policy leaders from across the United States on a 13 day political study tour of Israel and the West Bank beginning on June 13, 2008.

Commissioner Sofield, a 2003 ACYPL delegate to Vietnam and a participant in the organization's 2006 East Asia & Pacific Alumni Summit in Tokyo, Japan, was asked to lead this delegation based on her continued involvement in and strong support of ACYPL's activities in the years since her first exchange.

"ACYPL has the unique mission of proving select young leaders with an opportunity to travel internationally and engage firsthand in public diplomacy," said ACYPL Chief Executive Officer **Linda Rotunno**. "Our delegates have access to key leaders in the nations they visit. They engage in dialogue on sensitive issues, gain a unique perspective on the country's politics and its relations with the US, and, most importantly, forge professional relationships and friendships that can last a lifetime."

Commissioner Sofield will join the other delegates, each between the age of 25 and 40, in Washington, D.C. for briefings by the U.S. Department of State and other Israeli and Palestinian experts before flying to Tel Aviv. The program will provide her and her fellow delegates with opportunities to study the political systems of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, engage in dialogue on international issues, travel within the region, and to interact with key national and local leaders, business representatives, and civic and community groups.

"I am honored to have been selected to lead this delegation to Israel and the Palestinian Territories," said Commissioner Sofield. "The exchange will be an excellent opportunity for me to learn about the current political and social dynamics there and help the Israeli and Palestinian people better understand the United States."

Recognized by the U.S. Congress as a pre-eminent catalyst for introducing rising political leaders and policy makers to international affairs and to each other, ACYPL is a bi-partisan, not-for-profit international exchange organization based in Washington, DC. Since its founding in 1966, ACYPL has, with generous support from the U.S. Department of State, corporations, foundations and individuals, conducted programs and exchanges with more than 90 nations, producing a global network of over 7,000 alumni. Former ACYPL participants include 38 sitting members of the U.S. Congress, 6 sitting U.S. governors and ambassadors, cabinet ministers and parliamentarians around the globe. For more information on ACYPL, please visit <http://www.acypl.org>.