

Champion for Business



2004 Mid-Session **AWARDS**

The Champions for Business
are Legislators who display
exemplary efforts on behalf
of the business community.

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Associated Industries of Florida is pleased to announce the 2004 Mid-Session "Champion for Business" awards. This service lets the business community, the media, and government leaders know about those lawmakers who have provided leadership in support of free-market principles on behalf of the Florida business community.

AIF will continue to publish its *Annual Vote Record & Ranking* to inform the business community about each legislator's performance on bills that are important to the business community. **However, "Champion for Business"** will recognize the other ways in which a legislator promotes the interests of the business community, such as by sponsoring a bill or amendment, or supporting the business position during debates and engaging in behind-the-scenes activities in a leadership role which benefits the business community.

This e-mail service is made available to over 11,000 business people across the state.

FLORIDA SENATE



**Sen. J.D. Alexander
(R-Lake Wales)**

Senator J.D. Alexander (R-Lake Wales) is once again demonstrating his true commitment to making Florida a better place for doing business. He has shouldered a significant leadership role in filing legislation that would correct the current state of Florida's Workers' Compensation Joint Underwriting Association. Without this legislation, Florida's good employers will be stuck paying the tab for workers' compensation coverage to some of the most dangerous and risky businesses in the state. AIF applauds Senator Alexander's efforts on this issue and is proud to recognize him as a "Champion for Business."



**Sen. Mike Haridopolos
(R-Melbourne)**

Senator Mike Haridopolos (R-Melbourne) filed the repeal of the substitute communications tax bill (SB 2302). Without this effort, the Florida business community could face thousands of dollars of "new taxes" by allowing the Department of Revenue to adopt rules to tax items never considered under its original intent. Senator Haridopolos is courageously pushing this repeal even though the state still has financial problems. He sees the importance of repealing this tax especially since it is the only one of its kind in the country. Not only would the passage of this bill hinder the growth of companies currently in Florida, but new companies would want to come to Florida with this type of tax on its books. AIF salutes Senator Haridopolos for his leadership on this issue.



**Sen. Mike Bennett
(R-Bradenton)**

Senator Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton) is a shining bright star in the Florida Senate and is worthy of AIF's "Champion for Business" Award. He has taken on the task of filing legislation (SB 1174) to change the development of regional impact (DRI) statutes to make the process more streamlined and less costly to the business community. This is a difficult task to undertake since he has to balance the wants and needs of both the business and environmental communities and come out with a law based on good public policy. Senator Bennett has moved this issue into the forefront making the public see how duplicative and costly the DRI process is and how it needs to be changed. AIF thanks Senator Bennett for all of the time and effort he has put into this legislation.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



**Rep. Jeff Kottkamp
(R-Cape Coral)**

Representative Jeff Kottkamp (R-Cape Coral) is well known in the Capitol for his leadership, and it is evident with his support of the premise liability legislation. Rep. Kottkamp filed HB 575 which will help businesses with legal actions against them for what happens to individuals on their property. A true negotiator, he then got the Florida Academy of Trial Lawyers and the business community together to work out the issue. HB 573 received unanimous approval from the House Committee on Judiciary and now the proposed legislation is on its way to the House Calendar. Rep. Kottkamp deserves thanks from the business community for this effort.



**Rep. Bruce Kyle
(R- Ft. Myers)**

Representatives Bruce Kyle (R-Ft. Myers) and Joe Negron (R-Stuart) are recognized as "Champions For Business" for their work on Article V funding as the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Judicial, respectively. As the two chambers begin their budget conference negotiations, the House under the leadership of these two individuals has provided much of the necessary funding for the Court system in Florida . With civil litigation being a critical part of our state's justice system, and with business-to-business lawsuits comprising the bulk of the civil side of the system, the necessity for appropriate funding for Article V is absolutely critical if the Courts are to operate efficiently and effectively in the future. Thankfully, these two lawyers understand the need for a state Court system that is properly funded, from the need for current information technology to the need for law clerks so that judges can increase their workload to the need for more judges concomitant with the rising number of lawsuits. While neither chamber has funded the Courts at the level requested, with additional allocations expected in budget conference, hopefully both chambers will work to put more monies into Article V. The business community stands ready to support the increased funding. Both Rep. Kyle and Negron deserve our thanks for their efforts on this important issue. Remember that "justice delayed is justice denied."



**Rep. Joe Negron
(R-Stuart)**



**Rep. John Stargel
(R-Lakeland)**

Representative John Stargel (R-Lakeland) is showing true leadership as a freshman. As an example, he filed HB 735, the repeal of the substitute communications tax. As an attorney he knows that the Department of Revenue could propose rules to the current law that would cost individuals and businesses thousands of dollars in "new taxes." Rep. Stargel knows that repeal is the only way to get this bad law off the books, and he is working hard to pass the repeal. Congratulations to Rep. Stargel for his efforts on this issue.



**Rep. Mike Davis
(R-Naples)**

As a freshman, **Representative Mike Davis (R-Naples)** decided to file legislation to change how businesses work with local governments, state agencies and environmental groups in the land use permitting process, also known as a DRI (development of regional impact). He saw how much duplication was in the process, which was one of the reasons why the process was getting to be so expensive. So Rep. Davis filed HB 1205, which is the first step in changing this overly burdensome process. He has brought this issue into the spotlight and will continue to work on the issue in the interim. AIF salutes Rep. Davis as a "Champion for Business."