

# Associated Industries of Florida



"THE VOICE OF FLORIDA BUSINESS SINCE 1920"

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**BARNEY T. BISHOP III**  
PRESIDENT &  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

March 15, 2007

The Honorable Mel Martinez  
United States State Senate  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC, DC 20510

Dear Senator Martinez:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Associated Industries of Florida (AIF), I am enclosing for your review a copy of our policy position that was adopted on March 5th at our annual Board Meeting with respect to Immigration Reform.

AIF, which represents over 10,000 employers in the state of Florida, has taken a position on this critical issue because it is so very important to our employers who do business here. As you may very well know, AIF is a consortium of both individual businesses and associations, and accordingly, these businesses and industries could be adversely impacted.

The next logical step is to revise a system whereby undocumented immigrants can apply for work-permits and continue to provide a much needed labor force in America and our state.

The jobs are critical to Florida's present and future economy and include many industries such as hospitality, health care, road building, construction and agriculture.

With America at essentially full employment and Florida's job growth leading the nation, in the sectors indicated above, it is immigrants who provide most of the available manpower. Given this reality, Florida employers need an immigrant jobs policy that makes sense and is fair to all. If we don't find a common ground, Florida will face a labor force crisis of many proportions and our state's economy will suffer great harm.

Therefore, we have adopted a policy position that we believe is in the best interests of our state. It is fair and compassionate, while at the same time it demands respect for the law. Most authorities indicate that they believe that there are about 12 million illegal immigrants in this country, and how and whom would "repatriate them" to their native country has never been answered.



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We support a system which identifies each undocumented immigrant with tamper proof ID; mandates registration, reasonable access to work permits for law abiding workers, and a quick turnaround verification process of 24 – 48 hours to allow employers to abide by the law and be able to compete and reasonably function in the marketplace.

Information technology is the cornerstone of the 21st Century. We have embraced it and we are living it. However, regardless of our social strides in technology, we are still very dependent on industries that almost exclusively require manual labor.

AIF and our members are willing to be a part of the solution, and we look forward to working with the members of the Florida Congressional Delegation to find a way to keep our fragile economy moving in the right direction. Respect for the law is vital. But to advocate for the removal of millions of illegal immigrants currently performing daily tasks necessary to maintain a healthy economy is both unrealistic and unworkable.

The Board has asked Al Cardenas, our AIF federal lobbyist, to work with the Florida Congressional Delegation on this important issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please call or e-mail Al ([ac@tewlaw.com](mailto:ac@tewlaw.com)) or myself ([bbishop@aif.com](mailto:bbishop@aif.com)). I am,

Respectfully yours

Barney T. Bishop III  
President & Chief Executive Officer

BTB:gds  
Enclosure