

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA
**LEGISLATIVE
WEEKLY UPDATE**



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FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 24th-28th, 2000

HEALTH CARE BILLS POISED FOR BIG VOTES NEXT WEEK

Both the House and Senate went through the preliminary debates on their major health care bills this week. In the House, [HB 2339 -Patient Protection Act of 2000](#), by [Rep. Tom Feeney \(R-Oviedo\)](#), was debated on the Floor on Wednesday, April 26. The House will vote on it either Monday or Tuesday of next week. The House Council which ranks and approves all health care legislation for the floor, recommended the bill be closed on the floor. This means that no amendments could be offered at that time. It will be just an up or down vote. The bill, which AIF supports, is expected to pass.

Meanwhile, the main health care bill for the Senate, [SB 2154 - HMO's/Civil Actions](#), by [Sen. Jack Latvala \(R-Palm Harbor\)](#) was also debated. The full Senate debated their version of the Patient Protection Act on Friday, April 28 and will vote on Monday. Their package is similar to the House bill, but it still contains the civil remedy language. The House however, is adamant about not being willing to accept this language, so a showdown on major health care reform should be a major issue in the closing days of session. AIF will not support any bill that contains civil remedy language.

PROMPT PAY & HOSPITALIST BILLS ALSO HEARD

In the Senate, [SB 1508 - Managed Care Organizations/Prompt Pay](#), by [Sen. Ginny Brown-Waite \(R-Brooksville\)](#) was debated on Friday, April 28. It is expected that the Senate will also vote on final passage on this bill on Monday. The identical House bill, HB 2427 - Prompt Pay, by Rep. Durell Peaden (R-Crestview) was debated on Friday on the House Floor. The House will probably wait until the Senate passes their bill early next week and then just take it up and pass it.

The House also took up legislation relating to "Hospitalist" last week in the form of [HB 149 - HMOs/Inpatient Hospital Services](#), by [Rep. Alex Villalobos \(R-Miami\)](#). There should be a vote on final passage early next week. The bill was amended to make sure HMOs are not required to pay for the same service twice when a Hospitalist is available but inpatient services are provided by another physician. The Senate will take up their identical measure (SB 866) on Monday.

OTHER HEALTH CARE ISSUES

The Senate passed [SB 164 - Autism Mandate](#), by [Sen. Jim Scott \(R-Ft. Lauderdale\)](#) on Friday but it is not moving at all in the House. The House bill was never heard in a Committee. AIF does not support this "mandate" bill, as mandate bills tend to increase the cost of an employer's health insurance.

The Senate also passed both [SB 1300 - Employee Health Care Access Act](#) by [Sen. Betty Holzendorf \(D-Jacksonville\)](#) and [SB 2086 - Small Employer Health Alliances](#), by [Sen. Jim King \(R-Jacksonville\)](#) on Friday. Both of these bills will help employers be able to access affordable health care for their employees

FAIR COMPETITION BILL CONTINUES TO MOVE

An important "fair competition" bill that AIF has been supporting this session was also positioned for a final vote in the House. [CS/HB 1425 - Solid Waste Collection Services](#), by [Rep. Rudy Garcia \(R-Hialeah\)](#) will keep local governments from unfairly competing against private companies who provide solid waste collection services. It also addresses displacement, annexation and incorporation situations as well. Also, local governments, at their discretion, would be allowed to grant a solid waste fee waiver to non-profit organizations that are engaged in the collection of donated goods for charitable purposes and that have a recycling or reuse rate of 50% or better. After debate and adopted amendments, the bill is ready for a final vote in the House.

OTHER BUSINESS ISSUES.....

The [House Committee on Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations](#) voted unanimously in favor of [CS/HB 43 - Driving with Unsecured Load](#), by [Rep. Alex Villalobos \(R-Hialeah\)](#). This bill increases penalties for those who drive vehicles with unsecured loads. If items fall from the vehicle and it causes bodily injury or death, criminal penalties as well as civil penalties will be imposed. However, if the vehicle has their load secured by appropriate covering or load-securing device as required by federal law, this law would not apply. Rep. Villalobos did not want a person who complies with all safety equipment available yet something falls off the vehicle to be in violation of this law. Therefore, he added language to his bill that a person has to "knowingly and with reckless disregard" violate the law before the penalties apply. The bill is now available for the House Calendar.

The companion bill to CS/HB 43, [SB 56](#), received a favorable vote by the [Senate Committee on Transportation](#) this week.

AIF wants to make certain that the elimination of the emissions testing of automobiles in certain areas will not cause the assessment of additional pollution control requirements or standards on industry. Therefore, AIF supports, [HB 819 - Motor Vehicle Emissions Inspections](#), by [Rep. Jim Fuller \(R-Jacksonville\)](#). The bill was passed by the [House Transportation & Economic Development](#)

[Appropriations](#) committee on Wednesday (April 26) and then debated on the House floor on Friday (April 27). It will get a final vote in the House next week.

[SB 1032 - Child Support/Workers' Compensation](#), by [Sen. Daryl Jones \(D-Miami\)](#) authorizes the judges of compensation claims to consider the interest of the worker, the worker's family, and the recovery of any child support arrearage in reviewing and approving any settlement of workers' compensation lump-sum payment. AIF supports this bill as it was passed by the Senate Judiciary committee on April 25th. It is now on the Senate floor calendar.

NEXT WEEK'S FORECAST

Next week (May 1st - May 5th) is the last week of the 2000 regular session. Everything comes down to these five days. As you can see from this report, a lot of major issues are poised for major votes on the House and Senate floor. This is also the most dangerous time of the session, as amendments can come very quickly and totally change a bill's intent.

Our focus will continue to be on the Health Care issues. We will also continue to support the current House Republican backed Patient Protection Act of 200 (HB 2339) and fight against the civil remedy language that is currently contained in the Senate Health Care bill (SB 2154).

Stay tuned to fbnnet.com for all the latest information during this last week of session

Stay tuned to our daily brief and to our web site at www.fbnnet.com as the legislature makes some very important decisions on the state's economy. These decisions will have a major impact on the business community and AIF will be reporting to you everything that happens.

This report was prepared by Curt Leonard, Manager – Governmental Affairs at Associated Industries of Florida (AIF). Please send your comments or suggestions to us at aif@aif.com or call the Governmental Affairs department at (850)224-7173.

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