

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA
**LEGISLATIVE
DAILY BRIEF**



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MARCH 21, 2005

LEGAL REFORM

The Senate Transportation Committee temporarily postponed SB 460 Relating to Transportation by Senator Jim Sebesta (R-St. Petersburg). The bill was supposed to include language from the Florida Transportation Builders Association which would expand the protection of road builders from damaging and onerous lawsuits as long as it was found that these businesses had met all the state and national requirements for safety in their work zones.

The language is expected to be included in the bill now that all interested parties have had a chance to meet and discuss the bill's provisions. The bill will be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee which will be held on Tuesday, March 29th.

AIF supports the concept of protecting our state's road builders from onerous lawsuits and this issue is part of the overall debate on legal reform. As such, AIF is supporting changes to the current tort system that will bring about reasonableness, fairness, and predictability.

MEDICAID REFORM

The Medicaid Reform Select Committee met late this afternoon to discuss the drafting of recommendations that need to be made regarding Medicaid reform based on the testimony heard by the committee from citizens across the state.

Most committee members commented on the common themes that were reiterated throughout the state that would need to be included in the list of recommendations. Committee staff will prepare the list of recommendations this week so that they will be available for debate next week. The Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA) also updated the committee on the continued dialogue with representatives from the Federal government. Most this dialogue has centered on the need to uncover any "red light" concerns the Federal government may have with the direction Florida is going with its Medicaid reform.

AIF will be presenting the list of recommendations as soon as they are made public.

AIF supports market based reforms to the Medicaid program so long as they continue to ensure that the truly needy have access to quality care.

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST

The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee unanimously passed SB 2646 Relating to Legislative Lobbying by Senator Jim Sebesta (R-St. Petersburg). This bill seeks to modify many of the current registration and reporting requirements for legislative lobbyists. If passed by the legislature SB 2646 would take effect on January 1st of 2006 and it would include the following provisions:

- Requiring lobbyists to report *compensation* from principals.
- Expanding the reporting of lobbying expenditures to require detailed information of *individual* expenditures, in addition to the current *aggregate* reporting by category.
- Requiring each designated lobbyist to select the *industry group classification* that most accurately describes the principal's main business from prescribed categories.
- Mandating the reporting of the principal's *general and specific areas of lobbying interest*.
- Modifying the periodic reporting schedule for activity reports (compensation, expenditures, and areas of lobbying interest) from *semi-annually to quarterly*.
- Authorizing the creation of an online, *electronic filing system* for quarterly activity reports and requiring lobbyists to file quarterly activity reports electronically with the Division of Legislative Information Services; directing the division to provide activity report information on a web site accessible to the public.
- Authoring the Auditor General to audit compensation-reporting information and provide a final audit report to a designated committee in each chamber.

The Florida Association of Professional Lobbyists (FAPL) provided extensive testimony in opposition to the bill citing several reasons why the bill still needed some extra work. Some of the problems with the bill deal with issues of constitutionality such as the right to privacy (income disclosure). In addition, the bill would create extensive filing requirements which would increase the amount of paperwork need to be filed by legislative lobbyists as well as increased costs for the state as well as lobbyists.

The bill's sponsor assured the FAPL that he was willing to sit down with them to work out the many kinks still found in the bill. SB 2646's next stop is the Senate General Government Appropriations Committee.

Please send your comments or suggestions to us at aif@aif.com or call the Governmental Affairs department at (850)224-7173.

- For more information on all of the important legislative information concerning the business community, go to our "members only" Florida Business Network web site at <http://fbnnet.com>
- Send us your E-mail address and we will begin to send this report to you automatically via E-mail.