

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA
**LEGISLATIVE
WEEKLY UPDATE**



P.O. Box 784 • Tallahassee, FL 32302 • Phone: (850) 224-7173 • Fax: (850) 224-6532 • Internet: <http://aif.com> • fbnnet.com

FROM THE WEEK OF APRIL 30 – MAY 4, 2007

The Legislature adjourned, Sine Die, this afternoon at 4:10 pm bringing the 2007 Legislative Session officially to a close. Legislators will be back, however, in a month's time to tackle the issue of property tax reform in a Special Session called by the Governor, Speaker of the House, and Senate President. This Special Session is slated to begin on Tuesday, June 5th and last through June 10th.

The Legislature passed two major bills this afternoon before coming to a close: HB 985, an omnibus transportation package, by Representative Rich Glorioso (R-Plant City) and SB 2498 by Senator Rudy Garcia (R-Miami) dealing with major changes to Citizens Insurance Company.

Passage of HB 985 is vital to Florida's business community because it contains several provisions that will help reduce the transportation backlog that currently exists. It provides for private-public partnerships that encourage the private sector to get involved in building more roads by allowing them to lease existing toll roads or construct new ones. The bill also contains a critical component, which establishes a taskforce for the purpose of studying Florida's impending crisis on the continued availability of aggregate used in the production of road construction materials

The most intense debate today centered around SB 2498, a bill heavily lobbied by the Governor and his staff, which makes it easier for Floridians to obtain property insurance coverage through Citizens, the government run insurance company. The bill extends a freeze on Citizens rates for an additional year and eliminates "pup" companies. A last minute attempt by Representative Dennis Ross (R-Lakeland) to strip language from the bill that allows all insurance lines (property, auto, etc), not just Citizen policy holders, to be assessed in case of a deficit in Citizens was defeated. Several members debated passionately in support of the amendment including Representative Frank Attkisson (R-Kissimmee), Andy Gardiner (R-Orlando), Allan Hays (R-Umatilla), and Don Brown (R-DeFuniak Springs). One by one they argued against a policy that would force those Floridians not covered by Citizens to be responsible for paying any future deficits incurred by Citizens as a result of hurricane damage.

AIF and the business community had a very successful legislative session this year. Please be sure to check back next week for a complete 2007 Session Wrap-Up Report. In the meantime, we would like to provide you with a list of our 2007 Session Priorities and their status:

1. Property Insurance Reform: Legislation passed which expands mitigation efforts across the state (HB 7057)
 2. Workforce Housing: Legislation passed which encourages local governments to develop affordable housing plans (HB 7203 and HB 1375)
 3. Education & Workforce Development: Multiple bills were passed which address ways to improve Florida's workforce and prepare it for competition in a global economy (HB 343, SB 1232, and others)
 4. Government Accountability: Legislation passed strengthening the existing Government Accountability Act which holds state agencies accountable for service delivery (HB 7177)
 5. State-Issued Cable Franchises: Legislation passed opening up the cable TV market for competition (HB 529)
 6. Economic Development: Legislation passed which creates a new venture capital act (HB 83) and establishes economic incentives for the film industry (HB 1325)
 7. Transportation Infrastructure: Legislation passed which creates the Tampa Regional Transportation Authority (SB 506) and establishes private-public partnerships to address the existing backlog of projects (HB 985)
 8. Information Technology: Successfully lobbied to pass legislation that establishes a new IT Governance structure for the state (SB 1974)
 9. Energy: A comprehensive energy package was passed establishing a number of incentives for the development of alternative and renewable energy (HB 7123)
 10. Guns in the Workplace: Defeated efforts to prohibit employers from establishing or enforcing policies related to bringing guns onto an employer's premises (HB 1417/SB 2356)
 11. Legal Reform: Defeated efforts by the trial bar to undermine the repeal of Joint & Several Liability (HB 733/SB 1558)
 12. Health Care Mandates: Successfully defeated a number of health care mandates that would have increased the cost of health insurance coverage for all employers
- 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.