



# DAILY BRIEF

From March 13, 2013

Wednesday, March 13th saw action from both the House and the Senate. Legislation concerning wage theft, education, economic gardening & development, insurance and state contracting issues were among those relevant to Florida's business community and Associated Industries of Florida (AIF).

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## Wage Theft

During the House Civil Justice Subcommittee, **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of HB 1125, *Relating to Employers and Employees* by Representative Tom Goodson (R-Titusville). HB 1125 will establish a statewide system of addressing wage theft complaints through the county courts. HB 1125 addresses wage protection by creating a judicial process giving workers the ability to address their grievances in our court system. It will provide consistency for both employees *and* employers.



The bill passed committee and now heads to House Local & Federal Affairs Committee.

**AIF supports any legislation aimed at protecting the wages of Florida employees and while supporting employers in their quest to maintain a productive work environment.**

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## Education

On Wednesday, March 13th, The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education heard SB 1076, *Relating to Education*, by Committee Chair John Legg (R-Lutz), a career education legislation that is Senate President Gaetz's (R-Destin) number one education priority.

AIF spoke on behalf of the legislation, encouraging members to support and the bill passed unanimously. The bill revises current career education programs and target funding in an effort to better prepare and align Florida students to join the workforce. Specifically, the bill would encourage students' development of technology knowledge in prekindergarten through grade 12, thus effectively increasing opportunities in which students earn industry certifications in high school and beyond. It will effectively expand the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) concept, created first in 2007, which jump started the creation of career and professional academies within school districts.

SB 1076 heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee, scheduled to meet Thursday, March 21st.

**AIF supports any legislation geared toward preparing Florida's students for a successful transition into the workforce.**

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## **Economic Gardening**

Today, AIF was present in the House Economic Development and Tourism Subcommittee to support HB 663 by Representative Matt Hudson (R-Naples). The bill amends the Economic Gardening Technical Assistance Pilot Program to remove the word “Pilot,” thus making the Technical Assistance Program permanent, rather than its previous temporary status.

The bill directs the Department of Economic Opportunity to form a contract with the University of Central Florida’s Institute of Economic Gardening to implement the Technical Assistance Program; and revise the business eligibility requirements to accommodate slightly larger companies than previously eligible for the program. The bill also defines the terms “NAICS” and “NAICS Qualifying Code” as well as places the cross-references under the Technical Assistance Program and the Economic Gardening Business Loan Pilot Program. HB 663 also appropriates \$2 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund. These funds will go to the University of Central Florida to fund the Economic Gardening Technical Assistance Program and implement the Act during FY 2013-2014.

The bill will be reported to the House Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee.

**Economic Gardening has been an initiative AIF has supported since originally enacted in 2009. While recruiting companies to the state is a vital part of the state’s economic growth, so too is helping existing small businesses expand and become economic engines in their community.**

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## **Economic Development**

In today’s meeting of the Senate Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee, SB 406, *Relating to Economic Development*, by Senator Andy Gardiner (R–Winter Park) was amended and favorably reported from committee by a vote of 10 to 1.

The bill, whose underlying purpose is to require additional analysis and reporting on the manner in which economic incentives are used by the state, was amended to include additional provisions, including some of potential interest to members of AIF. Two amendments regarding brownfields were added and would require local reporting on brownfields and create a limited area of the brownfield space that would be eligible for the tax credits. There are concerns that these changes could reduce interest in brownfield remediation and reduce the number of brownfield projects. These issues will continue to be worked out with Senate staff.

**AIF supports any legislation that aims at streamlining the evaluation and reporting process for Florida’s economic development plans.**

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## Insurance

On Wednesday March 13, the House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee met and heard in workshop session HB 1107, *Relating to the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund*, by Representative Bill Hager (R-Boca Raton). The bill revises numerous aspects of Florida's Hurricane Catastrophe Fund (FHCF) including coverage levels under reimbursement contract. AIF stood and encouraged the committee to support the bill which would begin to address Florida's over reliance of post event debt and assessments (hurricane taxes).

**AIF supports legislation to restore the FHCF to a safety buffer for Andrew-sized storms thereby ensuring the Cat Fund can meet its obligations in the event of a storm.**

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## State Contracts

Representative Ben Albritton, (R-Wauchula), presented HB 1309, Procurement of commodities and contractual services at the request of Chairman Jason Brodeur, (R-Sanford) of the House Government Operations Subcommittee.

Representative Albritton explained the strike all amendment that made a few changes to the bill. He said that State procurement of personal property and services is governed by chapter 287, F.S. The Department of Management Services (DMS) is responsible for maintaining uniform rules for and overseeing agency procurement, as well as negotiating statewide contracts to leverage the state's buying power.

**In public testimony, AIF shared several concerns from the business community concerning several areas of the bill which remain unclear and may have unintended consequences. We look forward to continuing to work with Representative Albritton on improving the bill as it move through the process.**

The bill passed 11-0 and will now go to the full Appropriations Committee.