



# DAILY BRIEF

From April 8, 2014

## Workers Compensation

### SB 1580 – relating to Workers' Compensation Cost Task Force

On Tuesday, April 8th, SB 1580, relating to Workers' Compensation Cost Task Force, by Senator Alan Hays (R-Umatilla) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Health Policy. **Tammy Perdue, AIF's General Counsel**, stood in opposition of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to its last stop before the Senate floor in the Senate Committee on Appropriations.



During the committee, **Tammy Perdue**, weighed in on the status of Florida's workers' compensation system during debate over a potential task force developing through SB 1580. AIF and our Workers' Compensation Coalition strongly caution the legislature to make any changes to Florida workers' comp at this time. The driving forces behind this caution are the three cases currently pending before the Florida Supreme Court that challenge the constitutionality of the workers compensation law. Given the Court's recent opinions on other topics, including its recent disregard for the Legislature's fact finding ability and conclusions in the *McCall* case, we are very concerned that the outcome of any one of those cases could disrupt the critical balance of the system on which Florida employers rely.

Because of the looming potential for such sweeping change that lies with the Court, our Coalition unanimously agreed that we would not support changes to Florida's workers' compensation law during this session. We have worked closely with Senator Hays and other members of the committee on sustaining a good workers' compensation system for the state for many years and we are confident they will continue to work with us throughout this session to ensure the system continues to be strong. The bill passed today's committee unanimously with amendments to alter the composition of the task force and to broaden its scope to include costs and ratemaking in other states.

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## Health Care

### SB 1354 – relating to Health Care

Also on Tuesday, April 8th, SB 1354, by Senator Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance. AIF stood in opposition of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate floor.

During the committee, the bill was amended with a strike all amendment that, among other provisions, expanded the scope of the bill. The bill originally affected individuals, small employers and large employers who are not self-insured. As expanded, the bill would apply to out of state group insurance policies, the state employees' health insurance program and the Medicaid program.

AIF stood in opposition to the bill raising the concern that provisions in the bill will likely increase health insurance premiums in the private market. Further, the provisions would increase the cost of the state's Medicaid Program which, in turn, will be subsidized by Florida's employers.

The most troubling provision would significantly restrict the use of a step-therapy protocol, an important utilization management tool used by insurers and would require an override of the protocol to be granted.

**AIF opposes legislation that would make quality health care more expensive for Florida's residents and employers.**

## Environment

### **SB 1182 – relating to Secondary Metals Recyclers**

On Monday, April 7th, SB 1182, relating to Secondary Metals Recyclers, by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to its last stop before the Senate floor in the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

The bill makes major changes to governing secondary metals recyclers which subsequently strengthens the law on the books. The key part of the bill shifts authority of the secondary metal recyclers program from the Department of Revenue to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which has law enforcement capabilities.

AIF supports a well regulated secondary metal recyclers program that will reduce the likelihood of metal theft in the state.

### **SB 1206 – relating to Agricultural Industry Certifications**

On Monday, April 8th, SB 1206, relating to Agricultural Industry Certifications, by Senator Bill Montford (D-Apalachicola) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to its last stop before the Senate floor in the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

The bill would develop a pathway for students to show their expertise in the agricultural industry. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS), in cooperation with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science at the University of Florida and the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University, to annually provide to the state board and the Department of Education information and industry certifications for farm occupations to be considered for placement on the Industry Certification Funding List and the Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List.

AIF supports adding agriculture to industry certifications because it recognizes the critical need for agricultural careers in the state of Florida.

### **HB 1427 – relating to Citrus Greening Disease**

On Tuesday, April 8th, HB 1427, relating to Citrus Greening Disease, by Representative Ben Albritton (R-Bartow) unanimously passed the House Local & Federal Affairs Committee. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to its last stop before the House floor in the House State Affairs Committee.

The bill urges the U.S. Congress to support the Florida citrus industry in its efforts to combat and defeat Huanglongbing, commonly known as citrus greening disease, through policy initiatives, regulatory support, and adequate funding. The disease has no known cure. Over a five year period from 2005-2011, it is estimated that HLB caused an economic loss of \$4.54 billion and caused the loss of 8,257 jobs in Florida.

AIF supports state and federal funding for research into the causes and cure of citrus greening disease.

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## Insurance

### **SB 1672 – relating to Property Insurance**

On Monday, April 7th, SB 1672, relating to Property Insurance, by the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to its last stop before the Senate floor in the Senate Committee on Rules.

The bill addresses several aspects of Citizens eligibility for commercial residential multi-peril policies, allows surplus lines insurers to make offers of coverage in the Citizens Clearinghouse, and increases the mandatory residential property insurance deductible offering for non-hurricane losses to \$1,000 from \$500. Amendments were adopted to restrict the ability of public adjusters to choose the contractors who will repair a property and prohibit mitigation inspectors from paying agents to get referrals.

AIF supports common sense reforms to depopulate Citizens in a continuing effort to reduce assessments on all insurance policyholders. AIF also supports reducing fraud in the property insurance marketplace, which helps control insurance costs for businesses and homeowners alike.