

# WEEKLY UPDATE



## From June 5, 2015 Special Session A

### HEALTH CARE

#### **SB 2A- Relating to Health Insurance Affordability Exchange**

On Monday, June 1st, **SB 2A**, relating to the Health Insurance Affordability Exchange, by **Senator Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville)**, passed through the **Senate Health Policy Committee** with 7 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

Also, on Monday, June 1st, the **House Health & Human Services Committee** held a work shop for SB 2A, and **Chair Brodeur** noted that a vote would not be taken since the House did not have possession of the bill. Instead, members received a detailed overview of the bill and asked extensive questions to gain a full understanding of the proposal and its possible effects. Members raised concerns about the possible negative effect the bill may have on the commercial market and if the program would actually promote higher use of emergency rooms.

This bill would establish the Florida Health Insurance Exchange (FHIX) program. SB 2A is the same version approved by this committee during the regular session. The FHIX program would use federal dollars to provide premium assistance to approximately 800,000 of the low income and uninsured Floridians. Participants would be required to pay premiums ranging from \$3 to \$25 a month and show proof that they are employed or are receiving employment assistance services.

On Tuesday, June 2nd, SB 2A was heard in the **Senate Appropriations Committee** and passed unanimously with 17 yeas and 0 nays. SB 2A moves to the Senate floor for a vote on Wednesday. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

On Wednesday, June 3rd, SB 2A was heard on the Senate floor. While the vote was not unanimous, the Senates FHIX bill passed through the Senate floor with 33 yeas and 3 nays. This action now moves SB 2A to the calendar of the House chamber. The House will vet and debate the bill and then a vote will be taken by Friday June 5th.

AIF's General Counsel, Tammy Perdue, released this statement on Wednesday regarding the Senate's passage of SB 2-A:

#### **AIF Commends Florida Senate for Passing FHIX**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The **Associated Industries of Florida (AIF)** today released the following statement attributable to Tamela Perdue, general counsel for AIF, applauding the Florida Senate for passing Senate Bill 2-A, the Florida Health Insurance Affordability Exchange Program (FHIX).

“We commend the Florida Senate for coming back during this Special Session and continuing to work on FHIX - a private-sector, free-market solution that will address Florida’s health care marketplace by insuring hundreds of thousands of Floridians and helping to alleviate the issue of uncompensated care, which burdens businesses and taxpayers across our great state.

“The Florida Senate and Senate President Andy Gardiner have been thoughtful leaders on this issue, and we thank them for their continued dedication to finding a Florida solution to health care reform.”

###

On Thursday, June 4th, members of the House were allowed to ask questions of the bill which lasted for about 3 hours during their session. **Representative Mia Jones (D-Jacksonville)**, though she has had no part in the writing of the bill, took it upon herself to be the mediator and speak on behalf of the Senate, to answer any and all questions House members had of the FIHX bill. After the members had their questions answered to the best of **Representative Jones'** ability, SB 2A will now roll to third reading and is on the calendar for a vote to be taken on Friday.

On Friday, June 5th, SB 2A was debated for several hours before a vote was taken. Ultimately the Senate measure, FHIX, failed to pass the House with 41 yeas and 72 nays. This bill will not move on in the process for Special Session A.

**AIF SUPPORTED SB 2-A because it is consistent with our longstanding health care policy objectives that seek to ensure a thriving Florida workforce, by increasing the accessibility and affordability of quality health care for Florida residents. AIF will continue to encourage the Legislature to leverage available federal funding for delivering health care to more Floridians in a manner that best safeguards Florida's citizens and protects the State's financial health.**

## TAXATION

### **HB 33A- Relating to Taxation**

On Tuesday, June 2nd, **HB 33A**, relating to Taxation, by the **House Finance & Tax Committee**, was heard in the **House Finance & Tax Committee** and passed with 12 yeas and 5 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

HB 33A will include the following tax rate reductions: state communications services tax (CST) rate by 0.9 percentage points, with an additional temporary 0.9 percentage point reduction in the following year; state sales tax rate on rental of commercial real estate by 0.4 percentage points, with an additional temporary 0.1 percent reduction in the following year. The bill includes new or expanded sales tax exemptions for the following: agricultural items, including feed for aquatic organisms, irrigation equipment, costs of maintenance and repairs of irrigation and power farm equipment, stakes, and certain trailers; K-12 school food and beverage concessions in support of extracurricular activities; machinery and equipment used for metal recycling; gun club memberships or admissions; and motor vehicles brought to Florida by military service members deployed outside of the U.S.

This bill will also provide sales tax holidays: a three-day "back-to-school" holiday for clothing, footwear, school supplies, and computers; a one day tax free period on November 28, 2015, for sales of items priced at \$1,000 or less by certain small businesses; and a single-day tax free period for college textbooks and instructional materials near the beginning of the fall, spring, and summer semesters during the 2015-2016 academic year. This bill is estimated to have a total impact for the 2015-2016 fiscal years of -\$273.2 million.

On Friday, June 5th, HB 33A was read for a third time on the House floor passed 97 yeas tp 10 nays.

**AIF supports tax cuts for Florida's consumers and businesses.**