



**From April 3, 2017**

## **EDUCATION**

### **HB 955-High School Graduation Requirements**

On Monday, April 3rd, HB 955, by Representative Larry Ahern (R-Seminole), was heard by the House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee, and unanimously passed by a vote of 14 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

Currently, based on 56 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in financial literacy, high school students receive financial literacy instruction as part of the one-half Economics course credit required for graduation. The bill requires students entering grade 9 in the 2017-2018 school year and thereafter to complete a one-half course credit in personal financial literacy and revises the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards to include additional specified financial literacy topics.

HB 955 will go on to be heard on the House floor.

**AIF SUPPORTS legislation that gives students tools to learn about relevant, and real life subjects that will prepare them for the workforce in the future.**

### **SB 868-Educational Options and Services**

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 868, by Senator Dennis Baxley (R-Lady Lake), was heard before the Senate Committee on Education and passed by a vote of 9 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

This bill expands educational options and services to accommodate for learning differences among students and to prepare students for higher education and entry into the workforce.

SB 868 will move on to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on PreK-12 Education.

**AIF SUPPORTS legislation that addresses the differences in learning among students and provides for a solution to meet their individual needs.**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **SB 600-Relating to Rural Economic Development Initiative**

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 600, by Senator Denise Grimsley (R-Lake Placid) was heard by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and passed unanimously by a vote of 4 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

Currently, Florida's rural communities are experiencing additional challenges compared to their urban counterparts in many quality of life indicators. The state has an opportunity to improve the economic competitiveness of Florida's rural communities by reforming the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI). This legislation accomplishes this by:

- Focusing the mission of REDI on challenges rural communities face in the areas of workforce development and education, infrastructure, and access to healthcare;
- Streamlining REDI membership to ensure decision makers are at the table; and
- Making REDI a real tool for rural communities as they navigate through the red tape of state government.

SB 600 will now go to the Senate Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability for its third hearing.

**AIF SUPPORTS efforts to increase economic development in Florida's rural areas by increasing job growth.**

### **SB 1040-Relating to Beer or Malt Beverages**

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 1040, by Senator Frank Artiles (R-Miami), was heard by the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism and passed by a vote of 6 yeas to 1 nay. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

This bill allows for beer distributors to provide beer or malt beverage branded glassware to vendors for their use, cutting down on the vendors over all costs. Currently, vendors must purchase glassware from distributors for use in their establishments.

SB 1040 will now go on to the Senate Committee on Rules to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS legislation that will reduce costs on Florida's businesses by allowing distributors to provide vendors, at no cost, glassware to use in their establishments.**

## LEGAL & JUDICIAL

### SB 388-Relating to Beverage Law

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 388, by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast), was heard before the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism and passed unanimously by a vote of 7 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

The bill exempts financial transactions between a vendor and a manufacturer from all tied evil house prohibitions if the following conditions are met:

- The financial transaction must be negotiated at arm's length for fair market value between a manufacturer of beer or malt beverages, and
- The financial transaction cannot involve, either all or in part, the direct sale or distribution of beer or malt beverages between the manufacturer and the licensed vendor.

SB 388 will now go to the Senate Committee on Rules to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS this legislation because it would remove unnecessary and outdated regulations on Florida's businesses.**

## INSURANCE

### SB 1008-Relating to Public Records/Injured or Deceased Employee/Department of Financial Services

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 1008, by Senator Keith Perry (R-Gainesville) was heard before the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance and passed unanimously by a vote of 8 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This bill would exempt private and personal identifying information of an injured worker or deceased employee from public record. Currently, this information is open to the public and often times injured workers are inundated with outreach from attorneys wanting to take on their cases immediately after filing their claim.

SB 1008 will now go to the Senate Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS protecting the private information of injured or deceased employees.**

## **SB 1218-Relating to Property Repair**

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 1218, by Senator Gary Farmer (D-Fort Lauderdale), was heard by the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance and passed by a vote of 6 yeas to 2 nays. **AIF stood in opposition of this bill.**

During committee SB 1218 was amended and now provides for the regulation of water restoration providers, prohibits one-way attorney fees from being used in rate making calculations, and prohibits managed repair and preferred provider arrangements. While this bill aims to provide for a solution to assignment of benefits (AOB), it actually compounds the problem by further entrenching special interests, such as restoration companies who, take AOBs from policyholders, effectively stripping them of their benefits. In addition, it legitimizes the use of the one-way attorney fee statute for third party vendors, something that even the Florida Supreme Court has said was never the intent. Rather, the statute was meant to protect policyholders.

SB 1218 will move on to the Senate Committee on Regulated Industries for its next hearing.

**AIF OPPOSES reforms to the assignment of benefits (AOB) process that will NOT protect consumers against these abuses.**

## **SB 1582-Relating to Workers' Compensation Insurance**

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 1582, by Senator Rob Bradley (R-Orange Park), was heard before the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance and passed by a vote of 7 yeas to 1 nay. **AIF stood in opposition to this bill.**

This legislation seeks to address the issues within Florida's Workers' Compensation law that have deemed the law unconstitutional, specifically the issue of rate increases, attorney fees, claimant benefits, etc. While AIF applauds Senator Bradley for his hard work on this delicate issue, we are confident that there is a solution that will address all aspects of the workers' compensation system in Florida so that Floridians can avoid unnecessary, costly and time consuming litigation and receive the benefits they need if injured at work as quickly as possible.

SB 1582 will move on to the Senate Committee on Appropriations for its next hearing.

**AIF OPPOSES this piece of legislation as it does not adequately address the rising cost of workers' compensation rates on Florida's employers due to increased costs of attorney fees.**

**Please see below statement from our President & CEO, Tom Feeney, regarding the bills above in today's Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance meeting:**

### **AIF on Assignment of Benefits, Workers' Compensation & Insurance Rates Legislation**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney regarding Senate Bill 1218, by Senator Gary Farmer, relating to Property Repair; Senate Bill 1582, by Senator

Rob Bradley, relating to Workers' Compensation Insurance; Senate Bill 1008, by Senator Keith Perry, relating to Public Records/Injured or Deceased Employee/Department of Financial Services; as well as Senate Bill 1684, by Senator Farmer, relating to Insurance Rates. These bills were today heard in the Senate Banking & Insurance Committee, their first committee of reference.

"AIF supports legislation that addresses cost drivers in our state's property insurance market, as well as legislation that helps restore a stable, self-executing and affordable system for injured workers.

"While we appreciate the Senate Banking & Insurance Committee for hearing legislation today that addresses Assignment of Benefits (AOB) and workers' compensation, AIF believes SB 1218 actually takes the property insurance marketplace backwards, while SB 1582 don't go far enough. Further, AIF does not support SB 1684, which attempts to change the rate-making process for litigation, resulting in Florida businesses having to settle everything, even the most frivolous of lawsuits, or jeopardize capital needed to pay claims in the result of a hurricane. In fact, the Senate's own staff analysis recognizes that SB 1684 will likely lead to an increase in insurance rates.

"Bad actors across Florida are creating unnecessary litigation over property water damage and auto glass repair that's taking benefits from Florida policyholders while at the same time making their insurance premiums skyrocket. AOB abuse must be stamped out for the sake of Florida's property insurance market, which in turn will help relieve Florida homeowners and business owners from the rising cost of litigation by unscrupulous lawyers and vendors.

"The same goes for our state's workers' compensation system. While AIF supports SB 1008, which addresses one component of abuses faced by Florida's employers by exempting public records relating to injured or deceased workers, AIF believes there is still more to be done to make Florida's workers' compensation system whole again. Floridians deserve a workers' compensation system that works to their benefit, not to the benefit of trial lawyers. Under AIF's 'Florida Workers' Compensation Strategic Task Force,' the business community came together on comprehensive solutions that would protect the rights of employers and employees. We need a complete set of measures that address all aspects of the workers' compensation system in Florida so that Floridians can avoid unnecessary, costly and time consuming litigation and receive the benefits they need if injured at work as quickly as possible.

"AOB and workers' compensation are must-fix issues this session, and AIF looks forward to continuing the thoughtful discussions with our state's leaders on how we can relieve these pressures that are negatively impacting Florida's families and businesses."

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## INSURANCE

### SB 1354-Relating to Maintenance of Certification

On Monday, April 3rd, SB 1354, by Senator Dana Young (R-Tampa), was heard by the Senate Committee on Health Policy and passed by a vote of 6 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in opposition of this bill.**

This bill eliminates the requirement of physicians to maintain board certification in a subspecialty as conditions of licensure, reimbursement, employment, or admitting privileges. Currently, hospitals or private employers have the ability to require their physicians who may practice in a specialty field to hold and/or maintain such specialty certifications.

As medical practices change daily, allowing employers this ability will ensure that these physicians have the utmost knowledge and skill pertaining to their specialty. Hosting top medical facilities, as well as world renowned specialty physicians, is one of the many things that brings people to Florida. We want our physicians to be on the cutting edge of their field and the only way to accomplish that is to continue to implement the requirement of maintaining certification.

SB 1354 will move on to the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance for its next hearing.

**AIF OPPOSES government mandates that regulate how private employers hire their employees.**