



From April 26, 2017

TAXATION

HB 21 & SB 76-Relating to Limitations on Property Tax Assessments

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 21, by Representative Colleen Burton (R-Lakeland) was substituted for its Senate companion bill, SB 76, by Senator Tom Lee (R-Brandon), read for a third time on the Senate floor and passed by a unanimous vote of 35 yeas to 0 nays.

In 2008, Florida voters approved Amendment 1 which, among other things, created a 10% cap on the annual increase of property taxes for all non-homestead properties. However, this amendment included a sunset provision that goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2019. HB 21 proposes a constitutional amendment be added to the ballot during the 2018 General Election to let the voters decide in making this cap 10% tax cap permanent.

HB 21 will now go to the desk of the Governor.

AIF SUPPORTS a permanent 10% property tax cap on second homes and commercial property.

EDUCATION

SB 392-High School Graduation Requirements

On Wednesday, April 26th, SB 392, by Senator Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange), was read for a third time on the Senate floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 36 yeas to 0 nays.

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.

SB 392 will go on to the House floor for consideration.

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.

HB 859-Relating to Postsecondary Distance Education

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 859, by Representative Amber Mariano (R-Port Richey), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 116 yeas to 0 nays.

This legislation seeks to authorize Florida's participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement known as "SARA" created by the Southern Regional Education Board and the National Council on State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. This would allow for Florida's postsecondary institutions to voluntarily participate in what is a multi-state reciprocity agreement allowing them to offer online education without excessive fees and regulatory compliance processes. This reciprocity offers student's greater access to more distance education, enhances oversight of distance education offerings to Florida students by another state, and expands experiential learning opportunities across state lines. Not only is this good for students but it also helps lessen the burden on Florida businesses and taxpayers to fund construction and facility costs.

HB 859 will move on to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS our State Universities and our Independent Colleges and Universities' continued efforts to address the growing challenges that comes with increased enrollment, which in turn increases the workforce throughout Florida.

INSURANCE

HB 1421-Relating to Property Insurance Assignment Agreements

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 1421 by Representative James Grant (R-Tampa) was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 91 yeas to 26 nays.

The legislation seeks to address the fraud and abuse within the process of assignment of benefits (AOB) by removing the one-way attorney fee, which will reduce AOB lawsuits that drive up property insurance costs on Florida's businesses and homeowners. AOB is a practice whereby lawyers and contractors convince homeowners to sign over their right to sue insurers for certain kinds of home damage. Insurers typically settle these claims to avoid protracted and expensive court battles, and by current Florida law they're on the hook for attorney fees too.

HB 1421 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS reforms to the assignment of benefits process to protect consumers against these abuses.

Please see the below press release from our President and CEO, Tom Feeney, regarding HB 1421:

AIF: Floridians Need Lawmakers to Resolve Insurance Marketplace Crisis this Session

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney regarding House Bill 1421, by Representative James Grant, relating to Property Insurance Assignment Agreements. HB 1421 today passed the full House and is now available for consideration by the Senate.

“Bad actors in Florida's insurance marketplace are driving up costs and creating a crisis for Florida homeowners by way of unnecessary litigation over auto glass repair and property water damage.

AIF has supported getting rid of this abuse in the system that is needlessly inflating insurance premiums for Florida families.

“AIF commends Representative Grant and members of the House for their work on this bill that includes measures to improve the current state of the insurance marketplace. As this bill heads to the Senate, we hope lawmakers will continue to incorporate opportunities for even more cost savings for Florida consumers.”

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

HB 1175-Relating to Motor Vehicle Manufacturers and Dealers

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 1175, by Representative Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 104 yeas to 12 nays.

The bill provides additional grounds to deny, suspend, or revoke a license held by a motor vehicle manufacturer, factory branch, distributor, or importer (“manufacturer”) within their contractual agreement. The bill prohibits manufacturers from taking certain actions against motor vehicle dealers and requires certain procedures be followed by the manufacturer when dealing with motor vehicle dealers.

HB 1175 will go on to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF OPPOSES legislation that would intervene in any contractual agreement between a dealer franchise and an auto manufacturer, voluntarily entered by each party, and dictate new terms and conditions of such mutual agreement that favor one party over the other.

AGRICULTURE

HB 1231-Relating to Agricultural Practices

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 1231, by Representative Jake Raburn (R-Valrico), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 116 yeas to 0 nays.

This bill clarifies that livestock, poultry, and aquaculture medical supplies are exempt from sales tax. The bill repeals a supplemental pesticide registration fee which was added to bi-annual pesticide registrations. The bill also expands the travel radius limitations on the state restricted agricultural tag from "150" miles to statewide.

HB 1231 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS the various provisions of this bill which help our agricultural industry remain competitive and continue to be a driving force in Florida's economy.