



**From April 7, 2017**

## **EDUCATION**

### **HB 955 & SB 392-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.**

On Wednesday, April 5th, SB 392, by Senator Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange), was heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee and passed by a vote of 17 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.

SB 392 will go on to be heard on the floor of the Senate.

**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.**

## **HB 859-Relating to Postsecondary Distance Education**

On Thursday, April 6th, HB 859, by Representative Amber Mariano (R-Port Richey), was heard by the House Education Committee and passed unanimously by a vote of 18 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

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 House floor to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS our independent colleges and universities continued efforts to address the growing challenges that comes with increased enrollment.**

## **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.**

Currently, vendors must purchase glassware from distributors for use in their establishments. 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.

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.**

Florida's "Tied House Evil Law," s. 561.42, F.S., prohibits a manufacturer or distributor of alcoholic beverages from having a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in the establishment or business of a licensed vendor, and prohibits a manufacturer or distributor from giving gifts, loans, property, or rebates to retail vendors.

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.**

## **HB 727 & SB 1398-Relating to Accessibility of Places of Public Accommodation**

On Tuesday, April 4th, HB 727, by Representative Tom Leek (R-Daytona Beach), was heard by the House Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee and passed unanimously 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.**

On Thursday, April 6th, SB 1398, by Senator Linda Stewart (R-Orlando), was heard before the Senate Committee on Regulated Industries and passed unanimously by a vote of 10 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. One of the goals of the ADA is to guarantee that individuals with disabilities are offered full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations offered by a place of public accommodation.

However, individuals with disabilities may sue places of public accommodation including private businesses for alleged violations of the ADA, a problem that is currently rampant throughout the state.

These bills would:

- Create a license type for ADA experts;
- Require the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to establish licensing requirements and regulation for ADA experts;
- Allow ADA experts to determine if the businesses are compliant with the ADA;
- Allow businesses to hire ADA experts and file ADA expert reports with DBPR;
- Allow businesses to file remediation plans with DBPR if they are not in compliance with the ADA;
- Require DBPR to establish a public website with a registry of remediation plans and certifications of conformity; and
- Require courts to consider remediation plans to determine if a plaintiff filed a claim in good faith and whether the plaintiff is entitled to attorney's fees in lawsuits involving alleged violations of the ADA.

HB 727 will go on to the House Commerce Committee for its next hearing.

SB 1398 will go on to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government for its next hearing.

**AIF SUPPORTS legislation that makes filing frivolous lawsuits against Florida's businesses more difficult to accomplish.**

## **SB 832 & HB 1027-Relating to Drones or Unmanned Aircraft**

On Tuesday, April 4th, SB 832, by Senator Dana Young (R-Tampa) was heard in Senate Committee on Transportation and passed by a vote of 4 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

On Thursday, April 6th, HB 1027, by Representative Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville,) was heard by the House Government Accountability Committee and unanimously passed by a vote of 23 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

These bills will ensure a consistent framework for the use of drones. As the use of drones becomes increasingly more common in many different sectors of the business community throughout the state, implementing statewide regulations will establish safeguards while operating drones.

SB 832 will go to the Senate Committee on Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities for its third hearing.

HB 1027 will go to the House floor to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS legislation that will streamline business regulation throughout the state.**

### **SB 1678-Relating to Motor Vehicle Manufacturers and Dealers**

On Tuesday, April 4th, SB 1678, by Senator Rene Garcia (Hialeah), was heard before the Senate Committee on Transportation and passed by a vote of 3 yeas to 1 nay. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in opposition to this bill.**

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.

SB 1678 will move on to the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism for its next hearing.

**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.**

**Please see below press release on behalf of our Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, regarding SB 1678:**

### **AIF Opposes Motor Vehicle Dealers Legislation**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The **Associated Industries of Florida** (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs Brewster Bevis regarding its opposition to Senate Bill 1678, by Senator Rene Garcia, relating to Motor Vehicle Dealers. SB 1678 was today heard in the Senate Transportation Committee, its first committee of reference.

"The best way to allow Florida businesses to flourish is to have the least bit of government involved in how businesses operate. SB 1678 goes against this very premise.

"SB 1678 allows government to directly interfere in contracts between two private companies. AIF and our members believe this legislation does not foster a business-friendly environment and sets a bad precedent here in the Sunshine State.

“As the state affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers, AIF encourages state lawmakers to oppose SB 1678. Florida cannot afford to weaken the standards regarding the way we do business in Florida.”

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## **INSURANCE**

### **SB 1008 & HB 1107-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.**

On Thursday, April 6th, HB 1107, by Representative Ben Albritton (R-Bartow) was heard by the House Commerce Committee and passed unanimously by a vote of 25 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

These bills 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.

HB 1107 will now go to the House floor 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 SB 1218, SB 1582, SB 1008 and SB 1684 heard in the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance meeting on Monday, April 3rd:**

#### **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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## **HB 7085-Relating to Workers' Compensation**

On Thursday, April 6th, the House version of Workers' Compensation, HB 7085, by Representative Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) and the House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee, was heard by the House Commerce Committee, amended, and passed by a vote of 20 yeas to 9 nays. **AIF stood in support of the bill as amended.**

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.

During committee three amendments offered by Representative Burgess were adopted. **AIF stood in support of all three amendments.**

- The first amendment addresses the unconstitutionality of *Castellanos* case and the issue of attorney fees. It requires the claimants' attorneys to detail hours worked in the form of an attestation to a judge of compensation claims (JCC) at certain intervals before a hearing on a petition for benefits (PFB); allows deviations from the current statutory fee schedule, called a "departure fee," if the fees under the schedule are *less than 40%* or *greater than 125%* of the customary fee when the amount allowed under the fee schedule is converted to an hourly rate; in a "departure fee" scenario, a JCC must determine the number of hours worked by a claimant attorney, deduct hours related to benefits on which the claimant did not prevail, and reduce excessive hours. In determining a "departure fee," a JCC must consider certain factors, and



compute a new hourly rate which may not exceed \$150/hour. Employers and carriers can contest departure fees within 20 days of an award and that will be reviewed by a JCC in another district. **AIF SUPPORTS this amendment because it substantively improves the language in the base bill and caps the biggest cost driver of workers' compensation litigation, attorney fees.**

- The second amendment addresses the unconstitutionality of the *Westphal* case, and makes revisions to the provision of temporary total disability benefits (TTD) and temporary partial disability benefits (TPD). It essentially allows an employee to extend the number of weeks they receive benefits if they are still improving and have not yet reached maximum medical improvement (MMI). **AIF SUPPORTS this amendment as we believe it is a necessary response to the *Westphal* case. The business community is supportive of ensuring appropriate benefits for injured workers, recognizing that the main cost driver in workers' compensation is attorneys' fees.**
- The third amendment addresses the unconstitutionality of the *Miles* case, and puts claimants on notice that they could be responsible for paying their own attorney's fees if their attorney does not prevail on their claim for benefits. It also requires a petition for benefits (PFB) to include specific information, so that employers and carriers can appropriately respond to a claimant's request, and requires a good faith attempt at resolving those issues before a PFB is filed. Judges of compensation claims (JCCs) can dismiss PFBs where a good faith effort at resolving a claim is not made. **AIF SUPPORTS this amendment as it ensures consumer protection so that claimants aren't duped into exorbitant contracts with plaintiffs' attorneys. This fixes *Miles*, which basically would allow claimants to be taken advantage of by unscrupulous plaintiffs' attorneys. Claimants should have full knowledge and disclosure of the impact of fee arrangements in the interest of consumer protection.**

Also during committee, **AIF stood in opposition** to two amendments that were reported unfavorable by the committee.

- The first, offered by Representative Sean Shaw (D-Tampa) provided that, in lieu of the National Council of Compensation Insurance (NCCI) filing combined rates with the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) for review and approval, that insurance companies would be able to file their rates individually. In addition, it said that NCCI would be authorized to collect "loss costs" and that companies could use these costs in deciding their individual rate filings. **AIF OPPOSED this amendment because changing the entity that files rates would have no effect on diminishing the need for rate increases. The only solution to the problem of rate increases is to address the case law that actually caused the increase. Currently, and under this amendment, the OIR has ultimate authority to review and approve rates, so the amendment would change nothing about the ultimate rate decision and impact to businesses.**
- The second amendment, offered by Representative Jared Moskowitz (D-Coral Springs) sought to loosen the process by which claimants access treating physicians. Essentially, it provides for unlimited changes in treating physicians." Currently, an injured employee's treating physician is selected by the employer/carrier. The employer/carrier must give the employee the opportunity for one change of physician during the course of treatment. **AIF OPPOSED this amendment because it would encourage "doctor shopping," and therefore, is likely to increase costs to the system and business.**

**AIF ultimately SUPPORTED the bill as amended. AIF and the business community believes this legislation is now postured to be a fix to Florida's Workers' Compensation system, fair to every person and or entity involved.**

**Please see the below press releases regarding HB 7085 and the action taken on Thursday April 4th during the House Commerce Committee meeting:**

### **AIF Calls on House Commerce Committee to Adopt Workers' Comp Amendments**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The **Associated Industries of Florida** (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney, who also serves as the chair of its "Florida Workers' Compensation Strategic Task Force," that calls on the Florida House Commerce Committee to adopt the amendments to House Bill 7085, by the House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee and Representative Danny Burgess, relating to Workers' Compensation. HB 7085 will be heard today in the House Commerce Committee, its first and only committee of reference.

"AIF today calls on members of the Florida House Commerce Committee to adopt the amendments to HB 7085 that will go a long way in rectifying our state's wounded workers' compensation system. While there is still more work to be done to make Florida's workers' compensation system whole again, these good amendments support some of the fixes Florida's business community proposed under our 'Florida Workers' Compensation Strategic Task Force.'

'AIF commends the Representative Burgess and the committee for their hard work on this legislation. It is imperative we relieve burdensome pressures on Florida's employers while ensuring injured workers get healthier in a timely manor. Florida deserves a stable, self-executing and affordable system to care for injured workers. With these amendments adopted today, HB 7085 could provide a solid framework for containing the crises created by hostile Florida Court decisions that would otherwise undercut Florida's workers' compensation system."

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### **AIF Applauds House Commerce Committee for Passing Solid Workers' Comp Legislation**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The **Associated Industries of Florida** (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney, who also serves as the chair of its "Florida Workers' Compensation Strategic Task Force," that applauds the Florida House Commerce Committee for passing House Bill 7085, by the House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee and Representative Danny Burgess, relating to Workers' Compensation. HB 7085 will now head to the House floor.

"AIF applauds the Florida House Commerce Committee for passing HB 7085 out of its committee today. This is solid legislation that will go a long way in rectifying our state's workers' compensation system.

“Florida deserves a stable, self-executing and affordable system to care for injured workers, and this bill includes some of the proposals Florida’s business community proposed under our ‘Florida Workers’ Compensation Strategic Task Force.’

“AIF thanks Representative Burgess for his work on this good bill and looks forward to seeing it advance to the full House.”

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## HEALTH CARE

### 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.**

### HB 7-Certificates of Need

On Thursday, April 6th, HB 7, by Representative Alex Miller (R-Sarasota), was heard before the House Health and Human Services Committee and passed by a vote of 12 yeas to 5 nays.

In committee, a strike all amendment, offered by the bill sponsor was adopted. This amendment still repeals the certificate of need (CON) review program in the state of Florida, however, it takes out nursing homes, hospices, and ICFDD’s from the original proposed CON program repeal. **AIF stood in support of this amendment.**

CONs ensure that there is not an over-saturation of facilities in an area. With too many facilities and too few patients, the quality of care would decrease. Removing CONs for nursing homes would be detrimental to Florida's senior care demands.

HB 7 will move on to the House floor to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS keeping nursing centers within the CON program to ensure a high-quality, need-driven environment for Florida's senior care demands.**

## **SB 182-Relating to Consumer Protection from Nonmedical Changes to Prescription Drug Formularies**

On Thursday, April 6th, SB 182, by Senator Debbie Mayfield (R-Melbourne), was heard by the Senate Committee on Appropriations and passed with a vote of 18 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in opposition to this bill.**

This bill addresses the ability to move or shift prescription drugs within drug formularies by health plans. Currently, health plans have the authority to move prescription drugs to different tiers within the drug formulary, or add/remove certain drugs all together. Health plans use this system if, for instance, a drug has been found to be unsafe for patients or a more cost-efficient alternative has become available. Removing this ability from health plans would not only cause the cost of healthcare to rise but could put patients at risk of taking potentially harmful medications.

SB 182 will now go to the Senate Committee on Rules to be heard.

**AIF OPPOSES taking away the leverage health plans have to add, remove, or shift drugs within the formulary system as it will increase the cost of health care and pharmaceuticals for Florida's employer community.**

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **HB 5401-Pesticide Registration**

On Wednesday, April 5th, HB 5401, by the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, was heard before the House Appropriations Committee and passed unanimously by a vote of 27 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This legislation repeals a supplemental pesticide registration fee on certain products sold in Florida. The supplemental fee was established in 2009 as a mechanism to boost state revenue and help balance the budget.

HB 5401 will go on to the House floor to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS this legislation which removes a duplicative fee on businesses.**

## **HB 1231-Relating to Agricultural Practices**

On Wednesday, April 5th, HB 1231, by Representative Jake Raburn (R-Valrico), was heard before the House Ways & Means Committee and passed by a vote of 18 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

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 House Commerce Committee to be heard.

**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.**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **HB 221 & SB 340-Relating to Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)**

On Wednesday, April 5th, **HB 221**, by Representative Chris Sprowls (R-Clearwater) and Representative James Grant (R-Tampa), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 115 yeas to 0 nays.

On Thursday, April 6th, **SB 340**, by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) was heard by the Senate Committee on Rules and passed by a vote of 10 yeas to 1 nay. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

These bills aim to establish a regulatory framework for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) and how they operate throughout communities in Florida.

The bills define what constitutes a "TNC vehicle", set in place insurance requirements, and preempts authority to the state. This will allow for a streamlined set of rules to be followed throughout the state.

HB 221 will now go to the floor of the Senate for consideration.

SB 340 will now go to the Senate floor to be heard.

**AIF SUPPORTS statewide digital transportation service policies to create price competition, promote consumer choice, enhance customer experience, create jobs and remove anti-competitive local regulations.**

## TAXATION

### **SB 76-Relating to Limitations on Property Tax Assessments**

On Thursday, April 6th, **SB 76**, by Senator Tom Lee (R-Brandon) was heard in the Senate Committee on Appropriations and unanimously passed by a vote of 15 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

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. SB 76 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.

SB 76 will now go to the Senate Committee on Rules to be heard.

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