



# INTERIM BRIEF

For the 2019 Legislative Session

## From the Week of February 18-22, 2019

### LEGAL & JUDICIAL

#### **SB 76 – Relating to Use of Wireless Communication Devices While Driving**

On Tuesday, February 19, SB 76 by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-Spring Hill) was heard before the Senate Infrastructure and Security Committee and was voted favorably with 8 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

Currently, Florida law prohibits a person from texting, emailing, and instant messaging while driving, however, enforcement of this is a secondary offense, which means a law enforcement officer must detain a driver for another traffic offense in order to cite the driver for texting while driving. This bill would change the current enforcement from a secondary offense to a primary offense for all distracted driving, not just texting and emailing, allowing law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle solely for driving while distracted. The main goal of this legislation is to eliminate a component that contributes to distracted driving on Florida’s roadways.

SB 76 will now head to the Senate Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee.

**AIF supports legislation that addresses the issue of distracted driving and will ensure public safety for all on Florida’s roadways.**

#### **SB 180 – Relating to Lost or Abandoned Property**

On Wednesday, February 20, SB 180 by Senator Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland) was heard in the Senate Rules Committee and was voted favorably with 16 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill allows an owner or operator of a theme park, entertainment complex, zoo, museum, aquarium, public food service establishment, or public lodging establishment to elect to dispose of or donate lost or abandoned property found on its premises. Under the bill, an owner or

operator who elects to dispose of or donate lost or abandoned property must first take charge of the property, maintain a record of the property, and hold the property for at least 30 days. The bill prohibits the owner or operator from selling the property. If the property remains unclaimed after 30 days, the owner or operator must dispose of or donate the property to a charitable institution. If a charitable institution accepts certain electronic devices, the bill requires the charitable institution to make a reasonable effort to delete all personal data from the device before its sale or disposal. The bill also provides that the rightful owner of the property may reclaim the property at any time before its disposal or donation.

SB 180 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

**AIF supports the right of property owners to hold and donate lost or abandoned property thereby eliminating the burden of contacting law enforcement for lost personal belongings.**

### **HB 3 – Relating to Preemption of Local Regulations**

On Thursday, February 21, HB 3 by Representative Michael Grant (R-Port Charlotte) was heard before the House Business and Professions Subcommittee and was reported favorably with 9 yeas and 5 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill aims to preempt authority to the state and away from local governments when it comes to business regulations. Both big and small businesses must abide by the rules and regulations set in place by their local governments, regardless of if that rule or regulation differs from city to city, or county to county. This circumstance causes those who conduct business in multiple cities or counties throughout the state to abide by a myriad of rules that are inconsistent and must be complied with in order to continue their business. AIF believes that preempting business regulation to the state will allow for a streamline system that businesses, (old and new, small and large) can easily follow when conducting business across the State of Florida.

HB 3 will now move to the House Local, Federal and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee.

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

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### SB 526 – Relating to the Entertainment Industry

On Tuesday, February 19, SB 526 by Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) was heard before the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was voted favorably with 4 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill creates the Film, Television, and Digital Media Targeted Grant Program to encourage economic development related to the production of film, television, and digital media in Florida. The Program offers grants to certified film, television, and digital media projects that, among other requirements, employ Florida residents and spend at least 70 percent of their production days in Florida. A certified project may only receive a grant after it has completed production and the Office of Film and Entertainment have verified its expenditures.

SB 526 will now head to the Senate Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee.

**AIF supports the Entertainment Tax Credit Program due to the jobs a more robust film industry would produce here in the state of Florida.**

### SB 596 – Relating to Regional Rural Development Grants

On Tuesday, February 19, SB 596 by Senator Ben Albritton (R-Bartow) was heard before the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was voted favorably with 4 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill makes changes to how the Regional Rural Development Grant program and the Rural Infrastructure Fund operate. Specifically, the bill amends the Regional Rural Development Grant Program to:

- Increase the maximum annual grant amount to \$250,000 from \$150,000 that three regional economic development organizations that serve the entire region of a rural area of opportunity may receive;
- Increase the amount of funds the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) may expend for the program to up to \$1 million annually (from up to \$750,000 annually);
- Reduce the required match the regional economic development organizations must contribute in non-state resources from 100 percent to 25 percent of the state’s contribution; and
- Allow the use of grant funds to build the professional capacity of regional economic development organizations. The bill amends the Rural Infrastructure Fund program to:

- Increase the grant awards to 50 percent of infrastructure project costs (up from 30 percent);
- Clarify that eligible infrastructure projects include access to broadband Internet service, and projects that improve service and access must be through a partnership that was publicly noticed and competitively bid; and
- Require the DEO to review the grant program application and award procedures by September 1, 2020.

SB 596 will now head to the Senate Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee.

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

### **SB 178 – Relating to Florida Tourism Marketing**

On Wednesday, February 20, SB 178 by Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) was heard in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development and was voted favorably with 7 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill removes the scheduled repeal date for the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation, doing business as VISIT FLORIDA, and the scheduled repeal date for Division of Tourism Marketing within Enterprise Florida, Inc. Without the bill, the statutory authorizations for these entities would be repealed on October 1, 2019.

SB 178 will now head to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**AIF supports investment in building a world-class marketing engine with top talent, analytics, and funding that develops and executes data-driven branding strategies.**