



WEEKLY UPDATE

For the 2020 Legislative Session

From February 21, 2020

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HB 1139 – Relating to Regional Rural Development Grants

On Thursday, February 20, [HB 1139](#) by Representative Chuck Clemons (R-Jonesville) was heard by the House Commerce Committee and was reported favorable with 23 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The Regional Rural Development Grants Program is a state matching grant program established to provide funding to build the professional capacity of regional economic development organizations. The Rural Infrastructure Fund assists units of local government with the planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects that encourage job creation and capital investment. Both programs are administered by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).

The bill amends the Regional Rural Development Grants Program to clarify how regional economic development organizations may build their professional capacity and expand grant use for technical assistance. The bill also increases the total annual grant award available to the three regional economic development organizations recognized by the DEO as serving an entire Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), decreases the annual grant award available to other organizations located in or contracted to serve an RAO, and eliminates grant eligibility for organizations representing rural counties or communities that are not located in a RAO.

Additionally, the bill reduces the percentage of grant funds that must be matched with non-state funds from 100 percent to 25 percent of the state's contribution and amends the Rural Infrastructure Fund by increasing the percentage of total infrastructure costs that may be funded by a grant award, expanding eligible projects and uses to include broadband internet service. HB 1139 will now move to the House floor.

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

ENERGY

HB 1095 – Relating to Underground Facility Damage Prevention and Safety

On Thursday, February 20, [HB 1095](#) by Representative Heather Fitzenhagen (R-Fort Myers) was heard by the House Commerce Committee and was reported favorable with 23 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

Chapter 556, F.S., is the "Underground Facility Damage Prevention and Safety Act" (Act). The stated purpose of the Act is to identify and locate underground facilities prior to an excavation or

demolition to prevent injury to persons or property or interruption of services resulting from damage to those facilities. To accomplish this, the Act creates a not-for-profit corporation (Sunshine 811) to administer a free-access notification system.

The bill amends the Florida statute to:

- Expand the list of entities that may issue citations for violations to include the State Fire Marshal and local fire chiefs.
- Increase the maximum civil penalty (up to \$2,500 plus 5 percent, in addition to any other court costs) for certain violations that involve an underground pipe or facility transporting hazardous materials;
- Require each clerk of court to submit an annual report to the State Fire Marshal listing each violation notice;
- Require excavator to transmit reports of incidents to State Fire Marshal for investigation.

HB 1095 will now move to the House floor.

AIF supports legislation that enhances the 811 program and penalties to curb detrimental practices which lead to damaged infrastructure that causes unnecessary service interruptions, safety issues and increasing repair costs.

ENVIRONMENT

SB 1656 – Relating to Reclaimed Water

On Monday, February 17, [SB 1656](#) by Senator Ben Albritton (R-Bartow) was heard by the Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and was reported favorable with 4 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill, which is based off the recommendations of the Potable Reuse Commission, recognizes reclaimed water as a potential source of drinking water, recognizes potable reuse water as an alternative active water supply, establishes specific water quality criteria for potable reuse, and prohibits certain utilities from discharging reuse, effluent, or reclaimed water via surface water discharges.

SB 1656 will now move to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AIF supports legislation which increases Florida’s water supply by encouraging greater utilization of reclaimed water, direct and indirect potable technology, and other alternative water supplies that are both technologically and economically feasible. States with an adequate water supply will have a head start on future economic development and job creation.

SB 1350 – Relating to Brownfields

On Monday, February 17, [SB 1350](#) by Senator Dennis Baxley (R-Lady Lake) was heard by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and was reported favorable with 4 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of Amendment 181564 and then the overall legislation.**

A brownfield is a property of which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Unsafe levels of environmental contamination on a brownfield may result from past or current industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural, or recreational uses and practices. Contaminants may be found in soil, water or air.

The bill makes the following changes pertaining to Florida's brownfield program:

- Provides sales tax exemptions for building materials for construction projects abutting designated brownfield areas that set aside certain portions of the project for affordable housing.
- Revises a corporate income tax credits for the total rehabilitation costs and waste removal costs for a brownfield site.
- Adds to the liability protection in the brownfield program relief from statutory causes of action arising under s. 376.313(3), F.S., which impose strict liability for damages from pollution for certain sites.
- Provides the liability protection in the brownfield program to any subsequent property owner of a brownfield site.

SB 1350 will now move to the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

AIF supports the efforts contained in this bill to promote thorough and incentivized remediation of brownfields to allow further job creation and economic development opportunities on land otherwise useless while protecting Florida businesses from vicarious liability.

HB 609 – Relating to Petroleum Restoration

On Thursday, February 20, [HB 609](#) by Representative Daniel Perez (R-Miami) was heard by the House State Affairs Committee and was reported favorable with 19 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

Petroleum is stored in thousands of underground and aboveground storage tank systems throughout Florida. Releases of petroleum into the environment may occur as a result of accidental spills, storage tank system leaks, or poor maintenance practices. These discharges pose a significant threat to groundwater quality, the source of 90 percent of Florida's drinking water.

The owner of contaminated land or the person who caused the discharge is responsible for rehabilitating the land, unless the site owner can show that the contamination resulted from the activities of a previous owner or other responsible party. Over the years, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has implemented different programs to provide state financial assistance to certain eligible site owners and responsible parties for site rehabilitation. To fund the cleanup of contaminated petroleum sites, the Legislature created the Inland Protection Trust Fund (IPTF).

The Petroleum Restoration Program within the DEP establishes the requirements and procedures for cleaning up petroleum-contaminated land, as well as the circumstances under which the state will pay and cost-share for the cleanup.

HB 609 will now move to the House floor.

AIF supports the efforts contained in this bill to promote thorough remediation of contaminated sites to allow further job creation and economic development opportunities while protecting Florida's natural resources.

SB 712 – Relating to Water Quality Improvements

On Thursday, February 20, [SB 712](#) by Senator Debbie Mayfield (R-Melbourne) was heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee and was reported favorable with 20 yeas and 1 nay. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

Phosphorus and nitrogen are naturally present in water and are essential nutrients for the healthy growth of plant and animal life. The correct balance of both nutrients is necessary for a healthy ecosystem; however, excessive nitrogen and phosphorus can cause significant water quality problems. Phosphorus and nitrogen are derived from natural and human-made sources. Natural inputs include the atmosphere, soils, and the decay of plants and animals. Human-made sources include sewage disposal systems (wastewater treatment facilities and septic systems), overflows of storm and sanitary sewers (untreated sewage), agricultural production and irrigation practices, and stormwater runoff.

The bill includes recommendations from the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. The major topics in this bill include onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (OSTDSs, commonly known as septic systems), wastewater, stormwater, agriculture, and biosolids. The bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to make rules relating to most of these topics.

In addition to DEP's role in monitoring and inspecting OSTDSs and other runoff areas, the bill authorizes the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to perform onsite inspections of agricultural producers enrolled in best management practices (BMP) to verify that each practice is being properly implemented. The verification review will include a review of the BMP documentation including, but not limited to, nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer application records.

Regarding rights of nature:

The bill amends the Florida Environmental Protection Act to prohibit a local government regulation, ordinance, code, rule, comprehensive plan, charter, or any other provision of law:

- From recognizing or granting any legal right to a plant, animal, body of water, or any other part of the natural environment that is not a person or political subdivision; or
- Granting a person or political subdivision any specific rights relating to the natural environment.

The bill also provides that the prohibition on granting rights to nonpersons may not limit the:

- Ability of an aggrieved or adversely affected party to appeal and challenge the consistency of a development order with a comprehensive plan, or to file an action for injunctive relief to enforce the terms of a development agreement or to challenge compliance of the agreement with the Florida Local Government Development Agreement Act; or
- Standing to maintain an action for injunctive relief as otherwise provided by the EPA for:
 - Department of Legal Affairs;
 - Any political subdivision of the state; or
 - A resident of the state.

The bill is a huge step forward in addressing Florida's current water quality crisis and the data collected will prove invaluable in preventing further degradation of our waterways.

SB 712 will now move to the Senate floor.

AIF supports legislation that addresses water quality and protects Florida businesses from lawsuits by defining that people cannot sue on behalf of inanimate objects, i.e. rivers, lakes, streams etc.

HEALTH CARE

SB 714 – Relating to Testing for and Treatment of Influenza and Streptococcus

On Tuesday, February 18, [SB 714](#) by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast) was heard by the Senate Health Policy Committee and was reported favorable with 6 yeas and 3 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

Pharmacy is the third largest health profession behind nursing and medicine and the Board of Pharmacy, in conjunction with the Department of Health, regulates the practice of pharmacists and pharmacies.

The bill amends the definition of the “practice of the profession of pharmacy” to include the testing for and treatment of influenza (flu) and streptococcus (the bacteria that causes strep throat) by a pharmacist.

SB 714 will now move to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services.

AIF supports increased access to care which keeps healthcare and insurance costs low for businesses while providing a healthy workforce.

SB 1676 – Relating to Direct Care Workers

On Tuesday, February 18, [SB 1676](#) by Senator Ben Albritton (R-Bartow) was heard by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services and was reported favorable with 7 yeas and 3 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in support of Amendment 899862.**

The amendment expands the scope of practice for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN), allowing APRNs to operate their own facilities without direct supervision of a physician.

SB 1676 will now move to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AIF supports legislative efforts that expand access to healthcare for employers and keep healthcare costs low for Florida businesses.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SB 1870 – Relating to Technological Development

On Wednesday, February 19, [SB 1870](#) by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast) was heard by the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee and was reported favorable with 4 yeas and 3 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The Department of Management Services (DMS) oversees information technology governance and security for the executive branch of state government. The Division of State Technology (DST), a subdivision of DMS subject to its control and supervision, implements DMS's duties and policies in this area.

The bill:

- Renames DST to Division of Telecommunications and establishes the Florida Digital Service (FDS) under DMS.
- Places new duties and responsibilities under FDS and expands the duties and responsibilities currently assigned to DMS and DST.
- Tasks FDS with procuring a credential service provider for the purpose of creating digital driver licenses or identification cards.
- Creates the Division of Telecommunications within DMS, removes DST as the head of the E911 system in Florida, and places the Division of Telecommunications as its new head.

The Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) regulates money services businesses, which include money transmitters and payment instrument sellers. The bill creates the Financial Technology Sandbox within the OFR to allow a person to make an innovative financial product or service available to consumers as a money transmitter or payment instrument seller during a sandbox period that is not longer than 24 months. The sandbox provides regulatory flexibility by permitting the OFR to waive specified statutes and corresponding rule requirements.

SB 1870 will now move to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AIF supports stronger investments in IT and the modernization of Florida's outdated systems and processes that will greatly benefit the government and business relationship in the state.

INSURANCE

HB 359 – Relating to Insurance

On Thursday, February 20, [HB 359](#) by Representative David Santiago (R-Deltona) was heard by the House Commerce Committee and was reported favorable with 20 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill provides needed reforms to the insurance industry by:

- Providing revised requirements for certain audits;
- Revising timeframe during which statute of limitations for certain civil remedy actions;
- Authorizing releases of trade secret information obtained by Department of Financial Services & OIR;
- Addressing various other insurance industry issues.

HB 359 will now move to the House floor.

AIF supports smart, targeted reforms that help keep the insurance markets up to date while protecting Florida policyholders.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

SB 1582 – Relating to Asbestos Trust Claims

On Tuesday, February 18, [SB 1582](#) by Senator David Simmons (R-Longwood) was heard by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was reported favorable with 4 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

Asbestos is the name given to six naturally occurring fibrous minerals resistant to chemical, thermal, and electricity damage historically used in construction, manufacturing, and fireproofing. When handled, asbestos separates into microscopic particles, exposure to which causes cancer and other diseases, including lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis, which can take 20 to 40 years to develop following initial exposure.

Workers exposed to asbestos began falling ill and in turn sued the corporations responsible for their exposure. As the suits against these corporations piled up, many filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code, which in turn stayed all current suits against the respective corporation.

The bankruptcy court faced a unique scenario, where corporations were able to reorganize while shielded from future suits. These suits would instead be filed against a trust fund formed by the company seeking bankruptcy reorganization.

Presently, where liability for an asbestos injury comes from both a trust and a solvent corporation, an injured person may sue the solvent corporation to recover its share of the harm, and a court may offset the judgment by the amount of trust payments the plaintiff received for the same injury. However, where a plaintiff files a trust claim after obtaining a judgment in a civil action alleging the

same injury, a court loses its ability to offset the judgment against the solvent defendant. Plaintiffs use this loophole to increase their compensation for a single injury, essentially double-dipping.

The bill requires a claimant filing an asbestos injury lawsuit to notify all parties to the action of any claims made against and funds received from an asbestos trust. The bill states that a defendant in an asbestos claim may obtain through discovery certain materials the claimant has filed with an asbestos trust. The bill bars asbestos claimants from claiming that the materials filed with the trust are privileged.

Additionally, the bill allows a trial court to adjust an asbestos claim judgment to reflect payment received by the plaintiff from an asbestos trust, if the plaintiff filed the trust claim after he or she obtained a judgment but before that judgment was satisfied.

SB 1582 will now move to the Senate Rules Committee.

AIF supports legislation that curbs “double dipping” of the asbestos trust fund which ensures that all Floridians affected may be adequately compensated.

SB 1328 – Relating to Fines and Fees

On Tuesday, February 18, [SB 1328](#) by Senator Tom Wright (R-Port Orange) was heard by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice and was reported favorable with 8 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

Each of the 67 Florida counties has a clerk of court, an elected constitutional officer who oversees judiciary functions as the clerk of the county and circuit courts. The clerks are authorized to charge fees for performing various functions and collect court costs and fines related to a court disposition.

An indigent person may ask the clerk of court to allow them to enter into a payment plan for outstanding financial obligations owed to the clerk. If a fee, service charge, fine, or court cost remains unpaid for 90 days, and the clerk has attempted to collect the unpaid amount through an internal process, the clerk may forward the unpaid accounts to an attorney or collection agent.

Under current law, a person's driver license can be suspended for various reasons, including:

- Failure to pay a court fee or fine.
- Failure to comply with or appear at a traffic summons.
- Having unpaid citations in another state.

The bill requires clerks of court to actively attempt to collect fines, service charges, fees, or costs owed before revoking the driver license of the person who owes the funds. Specifically, a clerk of court must notify a person owing funds of the potential to enroll in a payment plan to defer the payment of the amounts owed before revoking the person's driver license. Once a payment plan is established, the clerk must provide a person who does not make a required payment with a delinquency notice and a grace period before revoking the person's license. Additionally, the bill gives courts authority to waive, modify, or convert the outstanding amounts to community service, if the individual is indigent or due to compelling circumstances is unable to comply with a payment plan.

SB 1328 will now move to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AIF supports legislation that clarifies regulations and keeps Florida businesses operating on our roadways.

HB 7037 – Relating to Constitutional Amendments Proposed by Initiative

On Tuesday, February 18, [HB 7037](#), sponsored and heard by the House Judiciary Committee, was reported favorable with 11 yeas and 6 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The Florida Constitution is the charter of the liberties of Floridians. It may be amended only if the voters approve an amendment originating from the Legislature, the Constitution Revision Commission, the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission, a constitutional convention, or a citizen initiative.

The bill modifies several aspects of the citizen initiative process to increase transparency, strengthen the integrity of the ballot, and reduce costs for the supervisors of elections. Specifically, the bill changes the deadline for gathering signatures, the Fiscal Impact Estimating Conference (FIEC) analysis process, the ballot language requirements, and the requirements for supervisors of elections.

HB 7037 will now move to the House floor for consideration.

AIF supports the measures contained in this bill to prevent interest groups’ circumvention of the legislature in revising Florida’s constitution.

HB 7093 – Relating to Petition Threshold Requirements for Citizen Initiatives

On Tuesday, February 18, PCB JDC 20-07 (now [HB 7093](#)), sponsored and heard by the House Judiciary Committee, was reported favorable with 11 yeas and 6 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The Florida Constitution may be amended only if the voters approve an amendment originating from the Legislature, the Constitution Revision Commission, the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission, a constitutional convention, or a citizen initiative.

For a citizen initiative to be placed in the constitution:

- To place the initiative language on the ballot, a sponsor must register as a Florida political committee and gather a sufficient number of signatures from Florida voters equal to:
 - At least 8 percent of the total number of persons voting statewide in the last presidential election; and
 - In at least half of Florida’s 27 congressional districts, at least 8 percent of the number of persons voting in the district in the last presidential election.
- The Florida Supreme Court must review the proposed amendment to ensure legal compliance.

- The Financial Impact Estimating Conference (FIEC) must analyze the proposal's financial impacts.
- At least 60 percent of the voters voting on the proposed amendment must vote yes.

The bill is a joint resolution, which, if approved by the voters at the next general election, would require the sponsor of a citizen initiative, to place the initiative on the ballot, to gather sufficient petition signatures to meet the 8-percent threshold in all 27 of Florida's congressional districts, rather than only half of the districts.

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Florida Constitution must be passed by three-fifths of the membership of each house of the Legislature to appear on the next general election ballot. If placed on the ballot, the Constitution requires at least 60 percent voter approval for passage.

AIF supports the measures contained in this bill to prevent interest groups' circumvention of the legislature in revising Florida's constitution.

SB 7062 – Relating to Citizen Initiative

On Wednesday, February 19, [SB 7062](#), sponsored and heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee, was reported favorable with 4 yeas and 2 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The Florida Constitution authorizes five methods by which proposed amendments may be submitted to the electors for approval. These methods of amendment allow proposals to be submitted to the electors by the Legislature, the constitution revision commission, the taxation and budget reform commission, a constitutional convention, and a citizen initiative.

The bill is a joint resolution to amend the Florida Constitution to change the geographic distribution requirement for signatures on citizen initiative petitions. Initiative proponents will be required to show that an initiative has some public support in all, instead of half, of the state's 27 congressional districts. Proponents must demonstrate sufficient public support by collecting signatures on initiative petitions from each congressional district of the state in a number equal to 8% of the votes cast in each district in the last presidential election.

Under the current geographic distribution requirement in the Constitution, signatures must satisfy the 8 percent threshold in at least half of the state's 27 congressional districts. The joint resolution does not change the total number of signatures on petitions that must be obtained to place a citizen initiative amendment on the ballot.

AIF supports the measures contained in this bill to prevent interest groups' circumvention of the legislature in revising Florida's constitution.

SB 1484 – Relating to Motor Vehicle Manufacturers and Dealers

On Wednesday, February 19, [SB 1484](#) by Senator Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens) was heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee and was reported favorable with 3 yeas and 2 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in opposition to this legislation.**

Florida has substantially regulated motor vehicle manufacturers and motor vehicle dealers since before 1950. The bill addresses a number of issues related to contractual agreements between motor vehicle manufacturers (or distributors/importers) and franchised motor vehicle dealers. Current law prohibits a manufacturer, importer, or distributor of a given brand of vehicle from competing with its dealers of that brand in any activity covered in their franchise agreement.

The bill prohibits manufacturers from competing with their dealers but by listing the activities at which they may not compete, such as the sale and service of motor vehicles. The bill also expressly prohibits a manufacturer that has sold a brand of vehicle through a franchised dealer from selling that brand of vehicle in any other way, regardless of whether the manufacturer “rebadges” the vehicle. Additionally, the bill will make it unlawful for most manufacturers to sell parts to a retail consumer or a wholesaler.

SB 1484 will now move to the Senate Rules Committee.

AIF opposes legislative efforts that choose winners and losers by interfering with contracts between private companies as dictating contracts is not the role of government.

HB 9 – Relating to Damages

On Thursday, February 20, [HB 9](#) by Representative Tom Leek (R-Daytona Beach) was heard by the House Commerce Committee and was reported favorable with 15 yeas and 9 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

A tort is a civil wrong for which the law provides a remedy. The purpose of tort law is to fairly compensate a person harmed by another person's wrongful acts, whether intentional or negligent. In a negligence action in Florida, the compensation a plaintiff recovers is reduced to the extent the plaintiff or a third party contributed to the injury.

A healthy tort liability system benefits society as a whole by compensating injured parties fairly, resolving disputes, and discouraging undesirable behavior. A flawed tort system generates exorbitant damages and unpredictability, causing:

- Increased economic costs and increased risks of doing business;
- Higher insurance premiums;
- Increased healthcare costs and declining availability of medical services; and
- Deterrence of economic development and job creation activities.

The bill modifies the damages recoverable in certain tort actions by requiring a jury to consider an estimated value of medical services based on an independent database reporting medical costs charged and paid. This ensures the jury does not rely solely on the amount billed by the provider of medical or health care services to determine damages.

HB 9 will now move to the House Judiciary Committee.

AIF supports legislation that creates transparency and ensures accuracy in damages, thereby reducing the cost of insurance premiums for Florida businesses.

HB 1193 – Relating to Deregulation of Professions and Occupations

On Thursday, February 20, [HB 1193](#) by Representative Blaise Ingoglia (R-Spring Hill) was heard by the House Commerce Committee and was reported favorable with 23 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

Rep. Blaise Ingoglia on HB 1193 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulQWIYAqD20>

An occupational or professional license is a form of regulation that requires individuals who want to perform certain types of work, such as contractors and cosmetologists, to obtain permission from the government to perform the work. In the 1950s, less than five percent of U.S. workers were required to have an occupational license to do their jobs. Since then, the number of workers required to have a license has risen to more than one-quarter of U.S. workers, and an estimated 28.7 percent of the Florida workforce requires a license from the state.

In 2015, The White House published a report on the current state of occupational licensing in the nation. The report found that when designed and implemented carefully, requiring occupational licenses offers important health and safety protections to consumers, as well as benefits to workers. However, the report also found that too often licensing requirements are inconsistent, inefficient, arbitrary, and there is evidence that the current licensing regimes in the U.S. raise the price of goods and services, restrict employment opportunities, and make it more difficult for workers to take their skills across state lines.

Specifically, the bill, cited as the "Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act," does the following:

- Deregulates: Interior designers and interior design businesses, hair braiders, hair wrappers, and body wrappers, nail polishers and makeup applicators, and boxing announcers and timekeepers.
- Partially deregulates: Talent agents, and labor organizations.
- Eliminates the additional business license for: Architects and landscape architects.
- Reduces the hours of training required to obtain a license for: Barbers, cosmetologists, and specialty salons.
- Adds new ways for out of state professionals to obtain a license in the state for: Veterinarians, construction and electrical contractors, landscape architects, geologists, engineers, certified public accountants, home inspectors, building code professionals, and cosmetologists barbers.

- Reduces the number of members on the Florida Building Commission.
- Authorizes unlicensed individual to provide compensated dietary and nutritional information if such individuals do not represent that they are licensed dieticians or nutritionists.
- Prohibits DBPR from disciplining or revoking a licensee based solely on defaulting on a student loan.

HB 1193 will now move to the House floor.

AIF supports legislative action to lesson burdensome and unnecessary regulations on Florida businesses.

SB 810 – Relating to Tobacco and Nicotine Products

On Thursday, February 20, [SB 810](#) by Senator David Simmons (R-Longwood) was heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee and was reported favorable with 17 yeas and 3 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill:

- Increases the minimum age to lawfully purchase and possess tobacco products from 18 years of age to 21 years of age.
- Repeals exceptions allowing persons in the military and emancipated minors to possess or purchase tobacco products under current law.
- Prohibits smoking and vaping by any person under 21 years of age on or near school property, regardless of hours of the day.
- Limits the sale of tobacco products through a vending machine to a location that prohibits persons under 21 years of age on the premises.
- Requires age verification before a sale or delivery to a person under 30 years of age. (This complies with recently enacted federal law.)

SB 810 will now move to the Senate floor.

AIF supports moving the legal age of purchasing these products to 21 to align with Federal law.

TAXATION

SB 7058 & HB 7095 – Relating to Internal Revenue Code

On Tuesday, February 18, [SB 7058](#), sponsored and heard by the Senate Finance and Tax Committee, was reported favorable with 8 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

On Wednesday, February 19, PCB WMC 20-02 (now [HB 7095](#)), sponsored and heard by the House Ways & Means Committee, was reported favorable with 15 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

Florida imposes a 5.5% tax on the taxable income of corporations and financial institutions doing business in Florida. The determination of taxable income for Florida tax purposes begins with the taxable income used for federal income tax purposes. Additional adjustments are then made to determine Florida's taxable income. By starting with federal taxable income, Florida eases the administrative burden on Florida taxpayers because they receive the same treatment in Florida as is allowed in determining their federal taxable income. Florida maintains this relationship with the federal Internal Revenue Code (IRC) each year by adopting the IRC as it exists on January 1 of the year. By doing this, Florida adopts any changes that were made in the previous year to the determination of federal taxable income.

The bill updates Florida's corporate Income Tax Code by adopting the federal Internal Revenue Code in effect on January 1, 2020.

SB 7058 will now move to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

HB 7095 will now move to the House floor.

AIF supports a reduced corporate income tax on businesses to encourage corporate growth and the expansion of employment opportunities in Florida.

HB 7097 – Relating to Taxation

On Wednesday, February 19, PCB WMC 20-01 (now [HB 7097](#)), sponsored and heard by the House Ways & Means Committee, was reported favorable with 12 yeas and 4 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation and stood in opposition to Amendment 60000.**

The bill provides for several tax reductions and other tax-related modifications designed to directly impact both families and businesses. Specifically, the bill provides for a 0.5 percentage point reduction in the state communications services tax. Several provisions related to sales tax are included:

- A reduction in the tax rate for commercial property rentals from 5.5% to 5.4%;
- A three-day "back-to-school" tax holiday for certain clothing, school supplies, and personal computers; and a seven-day "disaster preparedness" tax holiday in May and June of 2020 for specified disaster preparedness items;
- A requirement that School Capital Outlay sales surtaxes approved in the future be proportionately shared with charter schools;
- A change in distributions made under the Tax Collection Enforcement Diversion Program; and
- Future sunset of the Charter County and Regional Transportation System Sales Surtax currently levied in Miami-Dade County, and a requirement that any future levy of the tax in any eligible county be limited to 20 years in duration.

The bill also provides for a one-time increase of \$8.2 million available for the brownfields tax credit program and includes a provision that amends the calculation of a taxpayer's "final tax liability" for purposes of calculating certain corporate income tax refunds.

AIF supports legislative actions that reduce taxes on businesses which allows further growth and employment opportunities.