



Associated Industries of Florida

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# *Champions for Business*

The Champion for Business Award is presented to legislators who display exemplary efforts on behalf of the business community — providing leadership in support of free-market principles.



# 2 0 0 4 *Champions for*

**W**hat is a "Champion For Business" award? Simply put, it is a way to recognize non-voting efforts by legislators on behalf of the business community. For over 20 years, Associated Industries of Florida has been analyzing every vote cast by every legislator and publishing the results in our annual "Voting Records" publication. How a legislator actually casts their vote on a issue important to the business community is indeed incredibly important and an extremely valuable tool in determining if AIF and the business community should support that legislator if they seek re-election. Yet, vote records are only one tool we use.

We also pay attention to bills and amendments that are filed, behind-the-scene efforts and debates on behalf of the business community. These type of non-voting actions are also important and should be recognized. So this very first "Champions For Business" award publication serves to broaden our efforts to let our members and the legislators know that when deciding who has been good or bad for the business community, we leave no stone unturned.

This year, the AIF Legislative Team, at the mid-term of the legislative session, selected those legislators who we deem are strong and forceful advocates for the business community. Eight were initially selected for this prestigious honor. Upon the conclusion of the session, our team once again reviewed the list and decided to add three more legislators. In our collective wisdom, these eleven men and women are the epitome of what a "Champion For Business" should be. Whether it was proposing an important bill, authoring a key amendment or working behind-the-scenes, these legislators are the ones who made a difference this session. Throughout the 60-day session, these were the Senators and Representatives that we could count on when we needed to. They represent a combination of seasoned veterans with a smattering of freshmen, but each of them is to be singled out for their dedication to a free-market economy. They are the exception, rather than the rule. And that's why we want to recognize them, because we need more of them in the Florida legislature.

# Business

## SENATE



**Senator J.D. Alexander**  
(R-Lake Wales) once again demonstrated his true commitment to making Florida a better

place for doing business. He shouldered a significant leadership role by filing legislation to correct the current state of the Florida Workers' Compensation Joint Underwriting Association. Without that legislation, Florida's good employers would have been stuck paying the tab for workers' compensation coverage to some of the most dangerous and risky businesses in the state. This is the third session that Senator Alexander has worked on workers' compensation issues and we are so thankful for his leadership and insight. AIF applauds Senator Alexander's efforts and is proud to recognize him as a "Champion for Business."



**Senator Mike Haridopolos**  
(R-Melbourne) filed the repeal of the substitute communications tax bill (SB 2302). Without

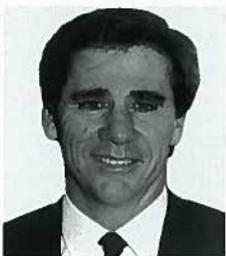
this effort, the Florida business community could have faced thousands of dollars of "new taxes" by allowing the Department of Revenue to adopt rules to tax items never considered under its original intent. Senator Haridopolos is courageously pushing this repeal even though the state still has financial problems. He sees the importance of repealing this

tax especially since it is the only one of its kind in the country. Not only would this tax hinder the growth of companies currently in Florida, but new companies would not want to come to Florida with this type of tax on its books. AIF salutes Senator Haridopolos for his exemplary leadership on this issue.



**Senator Mike Bennett**  
(R-Bradenton) is a bright, shining star in the Florida Senate and is worthy of AIF's "Cham-

pion for Business" award. He took on the task of filing legislation (SB 1174) to change the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) statutes to make the process more streamlined and less costly to the business community. This was a difficult task to undertake since he had to balance the wants and needs of both the business and the environmental communities and attempt to produce a law based on good public policy. Senator Bennett has moved this issue into the forefront allowing the public to see how duplicative and costly the DRI process is and how it needs to be reformed. AIF thanks Senator Bennett for all of the time and effort he has put into this legislation.



**Senator Rod Smith**  
(D-Alachua) is recognized because of his diligent efforts in two important arenas for the

business community: Article V funding and Constitutional amendments.

As Chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Article V Implementation & Judiciary, Senator Smith played a key role in helping to insure that the Florida Court system is adequately funded. The need for modernization of the Court's technology system will allow for greater efficiency through increased user fees. In his other role as Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Constitutional Amendment Reform, he held hearings and was able to secure almost unanimous support from his fellow Senators for a litany of Constitutional amendment reforms including: early filing of the amendment, judicial review, and the 60% vote threshold. Senator Smith brought the proposed amendments to the Senate floor and garnered 37 out of 40 votes in favor of his committee's work. For his leadership on these two issues among others, Senator Smith is recognized as a "Champion for Business."

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



**Representative Allan Bense**  
(R-Panama City) truly deserves the designation of "Champion for Business." The incoming

Speaker-designate has been a consistent stalwart for the business community throughout his years of service as a public servant. As the House Procedures Chair this session, he helped to direct the flow of legislation to the floor for final consideration. Whether it was good legislation that needed to keep moving or bad legislation that needed to be stalled, he was the business community's go-to-person in the House. Because of his leadership, both out front and behind-the-scenes, and for his steadfast commitment to a competitive but vibrant business environment in Florida, we are most pleased to recognize him as a "Champion for Business."



**Representative Kim Berfield** (R-Clearwater), House Insurance Committee Chair, led the way during the 2004 legislative

session for Florida's employers to realize the cost savings accomplished through last year's workers' compensation reforms. She worked closely with AIF and other business and industry representatives to craft legislation that would eliminate the troublesome deficits in Subplan D of the Florida Workers' Compensation Joint Underwriting Association (JUA). She also voiced a strong commitment, despite pressure from other legislators and special interest groups, to oppose any measure to create a state workers' compensation fund that could exponentially increase costs to all Florida businesses and completely cripple the state's workers' compensation market. She also sponsored legislation expanding the capacity of the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund which will increase the availability of coastal residential insurance, which is vital to the development of many of Florida's communities. AIF salutes Representative Berfield for her strong leadership on these important issues and proudly recognizes her as a "Champion for Business."



**Representative Mike Davis** (R-Naples), as a freshman, decided to file legislation to change how businesses work

with local governments, state agencies and environmental groups in the land use permitting process, also known as DRI (Development of Regional Impact). He saw how much duplication there was in the process, which was one of the reasons why the process was becoming so expensive. So Representative Davis filed HB 1205, which is the first step in changing this overly burdensome process.

He has brought this issue into the spotlight and will continue to work on the issue during the interim. AIF salutes Representative Davis as a "Champion for Business."



**Representative Jeff Kottkamp** (R-Cape Coral) is well known in the Capitol for his leadership, and it is evident with his support

of the premise liability legislation. Representative Kottkamp filed HB 575 which would have helped businesses with legal actions against them for what happens to individuals on their property. A true negotiator, he then got the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers and the business community together to work out the issue. HB 573 received unanimous approval from the House Committee on Judiciary and, though the bill died, it was not because of a lack of effort. Representative Kottkamp deserves thanks from the business community for this valiant effort.



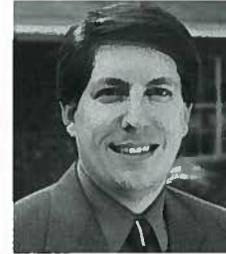
**Representatives Bruce Kyle** (R-Ft. Myers) and **Joe Negron** (R-Stuart) are recognized as "Champions for Business" for their work on



Article V funding as the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and the House

Subcommittee on Judicial, respectively. As the two chambers began their budget conference negotiations, the House under the leadership of these two individuals provided much of the necessary funding for the Court system in Florida. With civil litigation being a critical part of our state's justice system, and with business-to-business lawsuits comprising the bulk of the civil side of the system,

the necessity for appropriate funding for Article V was absolutely critical if the Courts are to operate efficiently and effectively in the future. Thankfully, these two legislators understood the need for information technology so that judges could increase their workloads even as the number of lawsuits continue to increase. Both Representatives Kyle and Negron deserve our thanks for their efforts on this important issue.



**Representative John Stargel** (R-Lakeland) demonstrated true leadership as a freshman legislator by filing HB 735,

the repeal of the substitute communications tax. As an attorney he knew that the Department of Revenue could propose rules to the current law that would cost individuals and businesses thousands of dollars in "new taxes." Representative Stargel knew that repeal was the only way to get this bad law off the books, and so he worked hard to pass the repeal. Congratulations to Representative Stargel for his tireless efforts on this issue; he is a true "Champion for Business."



**Associated Industries of Florida**  
*Service Corporation*

516 North Adams Street  
Post Office Box 784  
Tallahassee, Florida 32302-0784  
PHONE: (850) 224-7173  
FAX: (850) 224-6532  
E-MAIL: aif@aif.com  
INTERNET: http://aif.com