

Champions for Business



The *Champion for Business* award symbolizes our gratitude for extraordinary efforts by legislators on behalf of the business community.

For more than three decades, Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) has published *Voting Records*, an analysis of every vote cast by every legislator on every major business issue. The votes provide tangible evidence of whether or not that legislator upholds the ability of Florida companies to operate free of overly burdensome state regulation and taxation. It is a valuable tool used by AIF and the business community to determine which legislators running for re-election deserve our support. Yet, voting records only tell part of the story.

AIF instituted the *Champion for Business* award in 2003 to acknowledge lawmakers who do more than vote for business and provide leadership on key legislation. A *Champion for Business* is a legislator who takes risks for his or her belief in the free-enterprise system, who defies the status quo when it is harmful to our state's competitive climate, and who faces down opponents to the growing prosperity of Florida's citizens.

The *Champion for Business* is evidence that, in our efforts to let our members and their legislators know who has been good for business and who has been bad, we leave no stone unturned.

This year, AIF selected those legislators who we deem are strong and forceful advocates for the business community. In our collective wisdom, these nine legislators are the epitome of what a *Champion for Business* should be. Whether they proposed an important bill, authored a key amendment, or toiled behind the scenes, these legislators are the ones who made a difference this session. In addition, we have highlighted five legislators this year as *Honorable Mentions* for their contributions to furthering the business agenda. Last, but certainly not least, AIF is proud to present *Council Awards* to a group of policymakers who exhibited great leadership on behalf of AIF's Council System.

Throughout the 60 days of lawmaking, these were the senators and representatives we turned to when we needed someone on whom we could depend.



ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA
The Voice of Florida Business Since 1920

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Throughout the 60 days of lawmaking, these were the leaders we turned to when we needed someone on whom we could depend.

Rep. Dean Cannon (R-Winter Park) is



receiving his first AIF *Champion for Business* Award. As the Speaker-Designate for the House of Representatives, Rep.

Cannon continues to be a loyal defender of the free-enterprise system. He has a clear understanding of what it takes to grow Florida's economy and protect our business climate. This year, Rep. Cannon was instrumental in leading the debate regarding Florida's role in the production and exploration of natural gas and oil. Rep. Cannon brought forth a proposal that would create a process by which the Florida Cabinet could review applications for future drilling and exploration in Florida waters. This proposal sparked a statewide debate over Florida's right to reap the benefits of this industry. His proposal, which was amended onto existing legislation by Rep. Charles Van Zant, was eventually passed by the Florida House of Representatives and will undoubtedly

be readdressed during next year's legislative session. AIF has been a long-time supporter of off-shore drilling and we are deeply thankful for Rep. Cannon's leadership on this issue. For this we are proud to recognize Rep. Dean Cannon as a *Champion for Business*.

Rep. Anitere Flores (R-Miami) is now



a two-time AIF *Champion for Business* recipient. This year, Rep. Flores took on one of the most challenging issues any legislator could

ask to undertake — preserving Florida's workers' compensation system and the significant reductions in workers' compensation rates achieved by the 2003 reforms. Not only did Rep. Flores have the responsibility of carrying the Speaker's number one priority, she also had to battle a number of anti-business groups who opposed any attempts to rectify the Florida Supreme Court's ruling that found the existing law "ambiguous." Throughout the debate, Rep. Flores kept the focus on what higher rates would mean to Florida's economy and the loss of jobs that would result from no action by the Legislature. Her steadfastness and cool, calm demeanor was exemplified on the floor of the House as she fielded numerous questions and attacks by opponents of her proposal. For her strong commitment to advancing AIF's number one session priority (HB 903), we are proud to call Rep. Anitere Flores a *Champion for Business*.

Rep. Adam Hasner (R-Delray Beach) is



receiving his second AIF *Champion for Business* Award for his stalwart support of AIF's priorities and for his tackling of tough pro-business legislation. For starters,

Majority Leader Hasner's concern for Florida's employees led him to sponsor legislation (**HJR 1013**) that would place a proposed constitutional amendment before the voters, which would protect the secret ballot process in Florida. This proposal was in response to federal efforts that would eliminate the secret ballot vote in decisions by employees to be represented by a union. Leader Hasner was also instrumental in efforts by the business community to address our state's Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund. Due to record unemployment levels, our state's unemployment compensation system is under intense pressure. Recognizing that something had to be done, AIF worked with Rep. Hasner and other legislative leaders on a plan to ensure solvency of the Trust Fund. For these reasons and for his overall support of our issues, we are proud to call Majority Leader Adam Hasner a *Champion for Business*.

Rep. Carlos Lopez-Cantera (R-Miami) is



receiving his first AIF *Champion for Business* Award. Since his arrival in the House of Representatives, Rep. Lopez-Cantera

has sponsored legislation to reform Florida's property tax laws. This year, Rep. Lopez-Cantera passed one of the most pro-business pieces of legislation, **HB 521** Relating to Ad Valorem Assessments, which provides small and larger business owners with a level playing field when challenging the value at which the property appraiser assesses their property. Under current law, few individuals or employers attempt to challenge the Value Adjustment Boards because they have been advised that they have little chance of prevailing. This legislation will help to reverse that trend and create equality for taxpayers when challenging their assessments.

For this reason we are proud to call Rep. Carlos Lopez-Cantera a *Champion for Business*.

Rep. Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City) is receiving his first AIF *Champion for Business* Award for sponsoring and passing one of AIF's priority bills for the 2009 session — **HB**



285 Relating to Medicaid Low-Income Pool and Disproportionate Share Program. This legislation will improve the process by which Low Income Pool (LIP) funds are distributed to hospitals and health care facilities throughout the state. The LIP is a mixture of federal Medicaid funds and state matching funds provided by local governmental entities through inter-governmental transfers. The bill also makes noteworthy changes to the Low Income Pool Council such as prohibiting lobbyists from sitting on the Council. These changes provide Floridians with greater transparency and higher confidence that "conflicts of interest" are not tainting the process. Throughout the session, Rep. Patronis helped negotiate between all the interested parties and ultimately was able to pass a consensus work product that is good public policy for the state. For this reason, AIF is proud to call Rep. Jimmy Patronis a *Champion for Business*.

Sen. Garrett Richter (R-Naples) is receiving his first *Champion for Business* Award for sponsoring a number of AIF priority bills, most importantly **SB 2072** Relating to



Workers' Compensation. As a freshman Senator, Richter took on some major pieces of legislation, including a proposed constitutional amendment protecting the secret ballot process in Florida. As Chairman of the powerful Banking and Insurance Committee, Senator Richter was also the sponsor of **SB 1950** — the main property insurance

reform package. This legislation begins the process of bringing Citizens Insurance rates closer to actuarial soundness. In addition, it reduces the exposure of Florida's Cat Fund, thereby decreasing the potential for future assessments or "hurricane taxes" for businesses in Florida. These reforms represent a solid first step towards bringing back a healthy private property insurance market to Florida. For these reasons and many more, AIF is proud to call Sen. Garrett Richter a *Champion for Business*.

Sen. Mike Fasano (R-New Port Richey) is now a two-time *Champion for Business* Award winner. This year, Sen. Fasano once again embraced AIF and the business community's



recommendations on how to kick-start Florida's economy. Sen. Fasano was the main Senate sponsor of two of the proposals included within this year's Economic Stimulus Package 2.0. For starters, he sponsored **SB 852** Relating to Economic Development Projects/Expedited Permitting, which allows for local governments to designate companies looking to expand or locate in their areas as "targeted industries" and require local and state permitting agencies to approve or deny permit applications within a 45-day timeframe. Additionally, Sen. Fasano was a driving force behind one of the most exciting economic development programs to be enacted in Florida. Known as the New Markets Development Program, this proposal will provide immediate access to capital for existing and start-up small businesses in Florida's low income communities by providing \$250 million in private sector investment within 12 months. For these reasons, AIF is proud to once again call Sen. Mike Fasano a *Champion for Business*.

Sen. Chris Smith (D-Ft. Lauderdale) is



receiving his first AIF *Champion for Business* Award this year. After a brief hiatus and a respected track record in the Florida House, Sen.

Smith returned to the political arena last year with his election to the Senate. As a freshman Senator, Smith made a splash this year by sponsoring and voting in favor of a number of pro-business bills. Sen. Smith was a key player in this year's workers compensation battle as an early supporter of efforts by AIF to protect the rate savings achieved by the 2003 workers' comp reforms. In addition, Sen. Smith was the prime sponsor of **SB 872** Relating to Fictitious Names — an AIF priority bill that will protect the public by providing information on the parties who are doing business in their area in a local newspaper as well as on the Secretary of State's website. For these reasons, AIF is proud to call Sen. Chris Smith a *Champion for Business*.

Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Ft. Walton Beach) is



receiving his first AIF *Champion for Business* Award for his sponsorship of AIF priority legislation dealing with the Low Income

Pool Council. As the Senate sponsor for this proposal, Sen. Gaetz was instrumental in helping pass this transparency and accountability legislation, which will protect the integrity of how federal health care dollars are distributed among Florida's hospitals. Throughout the sixty-day process, Sen. Gaetz showed real leadership as he helped negotiate the terms of this important bill by bringing together a number of interested parties and finding consensus among differing opinions. For these reasons, AIF is proud to call Sen. Don Gaetz a *Champion for Business*.

Honorable Mention

The following legislators have also made significant contributions that further the business agenda in Florida. Their efforts and dedication to issues important to employers should be highlighted. We applaud these five legislators for their continued support of AIF and its member companies.

Rep. Trudi Williams (R-Ft. Myers), as Chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, was the lead proponent of proposals to streamline the permitting



process in Florida. Rep. Williams was also the sponsor of **HB 7143** Relating to Regulatory Reform, a legislative package that contained a number of AIF sponsored recommendations, including permit extensions for certain projects; self-certification for permits, and elimination of duplicative permitting for agriculture. Although this package of much needed legislation did not pass in its entirety, a number of the ideas found their way onto other legislation that did pass this year. AIF would like to recognize Rep. Trudi Williams for her tireless efforts this year to pass meaningful regulatory reform in Florida.

Rep. Mike Horner (R-Kissimmee) took on a difficult task when he decided to sponsor legislation designed to address a Florida Supreme Court ruling which disallowed the long-



standing practice of parents signing legal waivers allowing their children to participate in sports and other commercial activities. **HB 363** Relating to Parental Authority authorized natural guardians, on behalf of any of their minor children, to waive and release, in advance, any claim or cause of action that would apply to any of their minor children to the same extent that any adult may do so on his or her own behalf. Opponents of this bill battled against passage at every step of the way and Rep. Horner did a masterful job of

deflating their arguments. AIF would like to recognize Rep. Horner for his courage in filing this important bill for the business community; and although the bill did not pass, we fully expect Rep. Horner to once again take on this issue next session.

Rep. Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange) is a strong defender of the business community. This Space Coast legislator has demonstrated great interest in sponsoring legislation



aimed at stimulating economic activity and advancing the state's business climate. This year, Rep. Hukill was the House sponsor of major growth management reforms, including **HB 7127** which relaxed a number of the school and transportation concurrency requirements currently in law, in order to encourage business growth throughout Florida. In addition, Rep. Hukill sponsored **HB 69** Relating to Space Industry. This AIF priority legislation would have implemented a multi-university Space Technology and Research Development Institute (STRDI) within the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development (OTTED) and supported by Space Florida. Rep. Hukill was able to steer **HB 69** through a unanimous vote on the House floor, but the bill ran into trouble in the Senate.

Rep. Eric Eisnaugle (R-Orlando) has made quite a name for himself among AIF members and the business community in his very first year in the Legislature. As one of the few pro-business attorneys in



the House, Rep. Eisnaugle took on a variety of anti-business groups on issues important to employers in Florida. He also sponsored a number of AIF priority bills, including **HB 215** Relating to Contingency Fees in the Attorney General's Office. Thanks to his leadership, **HB 215** passed the House of Representatives, but was stalled in the Senate. Rep. Eisnaugle is definitely one of the rising stars in the House of Representatives and we fully expect him to be in a leadership position in the near future.

Sen. Mike Haridopolos (R-Melbourne) is a multiple Champion for Business Award winner and a great defender of the business community. This year, we are recognizing



him for his strong opposition of proposals originating in the Senate that would have dramatically altered Florida's tax structure and increased tax liabilities for employers in Florida. These proposals would have enacted Mandatory Combined Reporting in Florida and would have drastically changed the way income is apportioned by multi-state companies. Employers in Florida could have faced one of the largest tax increases in decades, and the success of a number of businesses was seriously in jeopardy. Sen. Haridopolos quickly understood the dangerous consequences of these proposals, and he made his displeasure known to others in Senate leadership. As a respected leader in the Senate, his opinion and influence made the difference at the most critical juncture.

Council Awards

Associated Industries of Florida is made up of a diverse group of businesses and associations that represent a wide array of economic sectors. AIF has organized a number of Councils in order to best represent groups of employers that share a common subject area or interest. AIF's Council system has already produced excellent results, both legislatively and politically.

Financial Services Council

Sen. Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton) sponsored and helped pass one of AIF and the Council's top priorities for the 2009 legislative session – **SB 1894** dealing with surplus lines insurance. This legislation will ensure that Florida employers have access to this important market, which provides coverage for hard to place or unique commercial risks. In addition, Sen. Bennett sponsored and helped pass a number of other AIF-supported legislation, including **SB 2282**, more commonly known as the "crash tax" bill. This bill prohibits local governments from imposing a fee or seeking reimbursement for costs relating to certain first-responder services. For these reasons, AIF's Financial Services Council is proud to recognize Sen. Mike Bennett as its Senate *Legislator of the Year*.



Rep. Bryan Nelson (R-Apoka) played a critical role this session in the area of property insurance reform – a perennial priority for AIF. Rep. Nelson was the prime sponsor of **HB 1495**, a bill that will begin the process of reducing potential assessments against business insurance premiums to pay for property losses resulting from a hurricane. Successful passage of this legislation ensures that the state of Florida will no longer charge Citizens Insurance rates that are not actuarially sound. In addition, the legislation phases out Cat Fund coverage and continues the My Safe Florida Home program. These provisions will go a long way in encouraging the



restoration of Florida's private property insurance market. AIF's Financial Services Council is proud to designate Rep. Nelson as *Legislator of the Year*.

Rep. Pat Patterson (R-DeLand), as Chairman of the powerful House Insurance, Business, & Financial Affairs Policy Committee, oversaw the progress of a number of proposals of critical importance to members of the Council. In addition, he personally sponsored and helped pass **HB 853** dealing with surplus lines insurance. This AIF priority bill clarifies an ambiguity created by a recent Florida Supreme Court ruling by clearly stating that certain regulatory restrictions do not apply to surplus lines insurers. The bill will allow employers to continue to find property and liability insurance coverage tailored to meet their specific needs through the surplus lines market. For these reasons, AIF's Financial Services Council is proud to recognize Rep. Pat Patterson as *Legislator of the Year*.



Florida Maritime Council

Sen. Dave Aronberg (D-Greenacres), as Chairman of the Senate Military and Domestic Affairs Committee, took on the task of streamlining Florida's duplicitous seaport security regulations. Currently, Florida is the only state in the union that has an extra layer of security above and beyond federal standards. This has led to frustration and increased costs for tenants doing business in our 14 deep-water ports. For the last two years, AIF and its Maritime Council



have made addressing these unnecessary and anti-competitive security regulations a priority. Thanks to Sen. Aronberg and his leadership, the business community was able to pass legislation this year that significantly reduces background screening costs for employers and eliminates the necessity for multiple security credentials at our ports. AIF's Florida Maritime Council is proud to designate Sen. Dave Aronberg as its *Legislator of the Year*.

Florida Energy Council

Rep. Charles Van Zant (R-Palatka), a freshman House member, sponsored one of the most talked about pieces of legislation this session. **HB 1219** started out as a bill requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to develop a plan to implement an offshore oil and natural gas drilling program in Florida. His bill was amended to replace the current ban on drilling in Florida waters with a plan which would allow the governor and Florida Cabinet to charge \$1 million per application to explore state-controlled waters that stretch between 3 and 10 miles offshore. AIF played a major role in this proposal, and we are thankful for all of Rep. Van Zant's efforts on this important bill. Day after day, he took on the onslaught from opponents on the House floor and never once backed down. His leadership and perseverance led to the passage of **HB 1219** in the House, a historic victory for proponents of drilling in Florida waters. For these reasons, AIF's Florida Energy Council is proud to designate Rep. Van Zant as *Legislator of the Year*.



Rep. Seth McKeel (R-Lakeland) has been a long-time supporter of energy issues and future exploration and production of natural gas and oil in Florida waters. This year, Rep.



McKeel sponsored a House Memorial urging the U.S. Congress to support the expiration and removal of the moratorium prohibiting exploration and production of domestic supplies of oil and natural gas in federal waters surrounding Florida, and to include Florida in revenue sharing resulting from the production of oil and natural gas in federal waters surrounding Florida. Rep. McKeel has always understood that allowing environmentally-sensitive access to these resources is not only in our national interest as a means of improving

energy security, diversifying supply, and enhancing economic development; it also can serve as an important and much needed method for generating new revenues for the state of Florida. For these reasons, AIF's Florida Energy Council is proud to designate Rep. Seth McKeel as *Legislator of the Year*.

Florida Education, Economic & Workforce Development Council

Rep. Erik Fresen (R-Miami), a freshman



House member, sponsored AIF's top education priority for this year — **HB 1293** Relating to High School Graduation. This

legislation raises high school graduation standards to new 21st Century Diploma standards, thereby ensuring that

Florida's students are prepared to enter the increasingly competitive global economy. To provide for our state's future economic growth, the 21st Century Diploma Initiative requires a more rigorous curriculum to ensure all Florida's students are prepared to enter the competitive global economic community. Although the legislation did not ultimately pass this year, Rep. Fresen showed true commitment to this AIF priority and was able to pass the legislation out of the House of Representatives. We fully expect that this proposal will be the first bill filed by Rep. Fresen next year. For these reasons, AIF's Education, Economic & Workforce Development Council is proud to designate Rep. Erik Fresen as *Legislator of the Year*.

2009 AIF Voting Records

For almost 30 years, AIF has been publishing "Voting Records" in order to provide business owners with a guide of how individual legislators are voting on the issues that are most important to AIF and its members.



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