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Champions for Business



Votes provide tangible evidence of whether or not a 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.

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, the Governor and these 20 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.

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

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



Gov. Rick Scott is only the second governor to receive an *AIF Champions for Business Award* in its ten year history.

As a longtime friend to the business community, Governor Scott proved again this year to be an ally by signing various pieces of important legislation promoting the state's free enterprise system. Perhaps most notably, Governor Scott signed **HB 7007**, which includes numerous provisions including one to eliminate the sales tax on manufacturing equipment. This landmark bill will usher in countless jobs to Florida as well as a booming manufacturing industry. Under the Governor's leadership, Florida has become one of the most attractive states in which to manufacture goods and AIF is committed to working alongside the Governor to perpetuate this progress.



Sen. Garrett Richter (R-Naples) is receiving his fourth *AIF Champions for Business Award*. A strong business advocate, Senator

Richter played a tremendous role in the passage of **HB 7015** by sponsoring it in the Senate. By aligning with the federal court system with the adoption of the *Daubert* standard for expert witness testimony, Florida will essentially bar "junk science" from our court system. In doing so, Florida's businesses will not be regularly joined into costly and unnecessary lawsuits by trial lawyers.



Sen. Joe Negron (R-Palm City) is receiving his third *AIF Champions for Business Award*. This year, Senator Negron proved to be

the voice of reason in the hotly con-

tested health care debate. His bill, **SB 1816**, would have established a state premium assistance program called Healthy Florida, to assist low-income Floridians in purchasing private health insurance coverage. The bill would have also encouraged healthy behavior through a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA). AIF supported **SB 1816** as it was the only health care proposal addressing the inordinate hidden tax that Florida employers pay to cover the cost of care provided to uninsured Floridians.



Sen. John Legg (R-Lutz) is receiving his first *AIF Champions for Business Award*. As an outspoken education reformer,

Senator Legg sponsored a landmark bill to revise current career education programs and target funding in an effort to better prepare and align Florida's students to join the workforce. Thanks to Senator Legg, **SB 1076**, also known as the "Career and Professional Education Act of 2013," builds upon a 2007 initiative and will give high school freshmen five options toward earning a diploma, designates three areas for university performance funding, and encourages student development in technology in pre-kindergarten through grade 12.



Sen. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla) is receiving his third *AIF Champions for Business Award*. A strong defender of the business com-

munity, Senator Hays was involved in a number of issues of vital importance to employers across the state. This year, Senator Hays is being recognized for his relentless commitment to workers' compensation legislation and the passage of **SB 662**. The bill addresses a

drug repackaging loophole in Florida's workers' compensation system and will maintain the necessary balance to the system, which is important to all businesses in the state.



Sen. Chris Smith (D-Oakland Park) is receiving his third *AIF Champions for Business Award*. This Session, as Senate Minority Leader,

Senator Smith oversaw a Democrat caucus that voted with business 85 percent of the time. This was nearly a 20 percent increase since 2011. In addition, Leader Smith was a strong ally during a Senate floor debate on an AIF-opposed amendment to remove much needed fertilizer language from **HB 999**. While the amendment ultimately passed, Leader Smith's commitment to the business community & AIF on this important issue was evident.



Sen. Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) is receiving his first *AIF Champions for Business Award*. Along with Representative Jim Boyd,

Senator Galvano tirelessly advocated on behalf of Florida's manufacturers by supporting **HB 357** and by carrying the companion measure, **SB 582**. Also referred to as the "Manufacturing Competitiveness Act," this legislation will authorize local governments to voluntarily adopt, by ordinance, a Local Manufacturing Development Program that will allow manufacturers to obtain master plan approval for manufacturing sites. Once the master plan is approved, the manufacturer would not need further local approval for future expansions or modifications (except for building code, life, or safety issues), thus improving the development approval process for Florida's manufacturers.

2 0 1 3 *Champions for Business* (continued)



Rep. Jim Boyd (R-Bradenton) is receiving his second *AIF Champions for Business Award*. Throughout the 2013 Session, Representa-

tive Boyd displayed steadfast leadership in economic policy and insurance policy alike. With his sponsorship, **HB 357**, also known as the "Manufacturing Competitiveness Act," this legislation will authorize local governments to voluntarily adopt, by ordinance, a Local Manufacturing Development Program that would allow manufacturers to obtain master plan approval for manufacturing sites. Once the master plan is approved, the manufacturer would not need further local approval for future expansions or modifications (except for building code, life, or safety issues), thus improving the development approval process for Florida's manufacturers.



Rep. Steve Crisafulli (R-Merritt Island) is receiving his third *AIF Champions for Business Award*. As the incoming Speaker of the

House, Representative Crisafulli demonstrated critical leadership by introducing an amendment to **SB 1832**, a bill originally written to eliminate an insurance premium tax credit, effectively crippling Florida's prosperous insurance industry. Representative Crisafulli's amendment rid the bill of its harmful language thereby ensuring no harm will come to Florida's insurance businesses or its employees.



Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Shalimar) is recognized as a *Champion for Business* because of his leadership and support of various

legal reform measures designed to reduce frivolous litigation. AIF salutes him for his sponsorship and commitment of Florida's new laws which increase access to health care, lower insurance costs and create a better regulatory and economic environment for Florida employers.



Rep. Matt Hudson (R-Naples) is receiving his first *AIF Champions for Business Award*. Along with Senator

Hays, Representative Hudson was instrumental in the passage of **SB 662**, by carrying its companion measure, **HB 605**. Championed in the House by Rep. Hudson, this vital piece of workers' compensation reform will guarantee Florida's workers will have access to prescription medications and medical treatment without delay, while also ensuring no unnecessary financial burden to Florida's employers.



Rep. Larry Metz (R-Groveland) is receiving his first *AIF Champions for Business Award*. By successfully sponsoring **HB 7015**,

Representative Metz has made the steps necessary to align Florida's evidentiary standard for expert witness testimony with that of the federal courts. The bill will align Florida with other leading

states that utilize the *Daubert* standard, therefore barring "junk science" from our courts. In doing so, Florida's businesses will not be regularly joined into costly and unnecessary lawsuits by trial lawyers.



Rep. Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City) is receiving his fourth *AIF Champions for Business Award*. This year, Representative Patronis is being

recognized for successfully sponsoring and passing an omnibus environmental regulation bill, **HB 999**. The bill provides a major step forward in streamlining the permitting process for Florida's businesses by amending and revising numerous provisions relating to the development of permit applications for marinas, boat yards, general permits for special events, well permits, regional water supply planning and agriculture water supply demand projections.



Rep. Steve Precourt (R-Orlando) is receiving his second *AIF Champions for Business Award*. With his sponsorship, **HB 655** was passed and

signed into law. The bill amends Florida law to further restrict political subdivisions from requiring an employer to provide employment benefits not required by federal law. The bill also blocks local governments from enacting their own sick-time rules. Representative Precourt led the charge to avoid this unnecessary patchwork of wage and benefit rules, which could have driven businesses away from Florida.



Rep. Jake Raburn (R-Valrico) is a proven leader in the agriculture industry, Rep. Raburn is receiving his first AIF Champions for

Business Award for this unwavering leadership he displayed by championing language dealing with fertilizer application in our state, an AIF priority. With his continued support, AIF hopes to pass legislation that would enact commonsense fertilizer use policies that will ensure that our environment is protected and our businesses are able to operate without having to navigate through a patchwork of confusing local government ordinances.

AIF Manufacturing, Aerospace & Defense Council Award



Sen. Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange) is receiving her second AIF Champions for Business Award. As a staunch supporter of the state's aerospace

and manufacturing industries, Senator Hukill spearheaded the Senate push to pass legislation that would eliminate the sales tax on manufacturing equipment. With her leadership, language was included in **HB 7007** that would eliminate this tax, thus making Florida a much more desirable place for manufacturers to do business. In addition, Senator Hukill sponsored and passed **SB 236 (HB 4013)** deleting caps on tax refunds for qualified defense contractors and space flight businesses.



Rep. MaryLynn Magar (R-Hobe Sound) is receiving her first AIF Champions for Business Award. Representative Magar led the House

effort on legislative language that would eliminate the sales tax on manufacturing equipment. The language was

included in **HB 7007** that would eliminate this tax, thus making Florida a much more desirable place for manufacturers to do business.

AIF Environmental & Agricultural Sustainability Council Award



Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey) is receiving his first AIF Champions for Business Award.

This year, Senator Simpson was a leader on a number of issues of paramount importance to employers across our state. Senator Simpson is being recognized for his steadfast support of the Everglades Restoration Plan. With his leadership in the Senate, **HB 7065** was passed and signed into law. This vital piece of legislation will ensure Florida can properly protect and manage our state's most delicate treasure.



Rep. Matt Caldwell (R-Lehigh Acres) is receiving his second AIF Champions for Business Award. Representative

Caldwell sponsored **HB 7065**, a bill that revises legislative findings for achieving water quality goals and the Everglades "Long-Term Plan." This legislation was critical to ensure the Everglades restoration plan would be

completed and reflects the cooperation between farmers, environmental advocates and legislators.

AIF Financial Services Council Award



Rep. Kevin Rader (D-Boca Raton) is receiving his first AIF Champions for Business Award. During the 2013 Session, Representa-

tive Rader often took politically courageous positions supporting significant insurance reforms including the CAT Fund bill, omnibus insurance bill, and workers' compensation drug repackaging bill. We applaud Representative Rader's courage to fight for sound public policy for Florida's consumers and businesses.



Rep. Bill Hager (R-Boca Raton) is receiving his first AIF Champions for Business Award. This year, Representative Hager sponsored legislation

aimed at "right-sizing" Florida's Hurricane Catastrophe Fund (Cat Fund). Currently the fund is overexposed and incapable of meeting its obligations if a devastating, Andrew-sized storm were to hit Florida. While politically difficult, Representative Hager's commitment to resolve this crisis of fiscal irresponsibility shows his dedication to the future of this great state.

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.