

2010 W Regular Session rap-up

Sixty-Day Regular Session

Coming Soon!

**AIF's 2010 Vote Records
— and —
Champions for Business
Announcement**



ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

The Voice of Florida Business Since 1920

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 • www.aif.com

Florida Legislature FOCUSES ON JOB CREATION

The 2010 session will be remembered for two things: the shocking departure of Governor Charlie Crist from the Republican Party and the Legislature's true commitment to job creation. Although both had serious ramifications, the later has to be considered the more important of the two for Florida's future. With the state facing over 12 percent unemployment, the Legislature's commitment to job creation began in January with a *Jobs Summit* in Orlando, organized by the two incoming presiding officers — **House Speaker-designate Dean Cannon (R-Winter Park)** and **Senate President-designate Mike Haridopolos (R-Melbourne)**. At this Summit, Associated Industries of Florida was one of the few business groups that presented specific proposals for job creation. Known as "*Florida Needs Jobs Now*," this package of specific job creation recommendations focused on:

- Strengthening Florida's Space Industry
- Providing Access to Capital for Small Business
- Funding for Affordable Housing
- Dedicated Funding Source for Transportation
- Promoting Health Care Tourism in Florida

The Florida Legislature responded to the feedback from business groups and Floridians with their own jobs package (**SB 1752**) — *The Jobs for Florida Package*. This omnibus economic development bill contains a number of incentives that will go a long way in helping place Florida in the best possible position to rebound once the economy turns around. Here are some of the provisions AIF would like to highlight from this package:

Space Florida

- Space Florida will receive over **\$30 million** in order to help fund necessary infrastructure improvements, alleviate workforce reduction issues due to federal cuts to the space shuttle program, and assist with targeted business development.

Film & Digital Media Incentives

- Creates the Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive Program which awards transferrable tax credits for qualified spending on productions in Florida.
- Allocates *tax credits* over the next five years for qualified productions and expenditures:
 - **\$53.5 million** for FY 2010-11
 - **\$74.5 million** for FY 2011-12
 - **\$38 million** per year for FY 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15

Jobs for Unemployed Tax Credit

- Provides a *tax credit* of **\$1,000** per hire to qualified businesses for hiring persons unemployed for at least 30 days; the person will need to work at least 36 hours per week for 12 months for the business to be eligible to claim the tax credit refund. This tax credit program is funded at **\$5 million** per year for a two-year period.

Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program

- Enhances the incentives provided by the QTI program
 - **\$2,000** per job for businesses in high-impact sectors
 - **\$2,000** per job for businesses that increase exports by at least 10% in value or tonnage
 - **\$1,000** per job if local financial support is equal to the state's incentive program
 - Authorizes OTTED to waive wage requirements for manufacturing projects

SB 360 Community Renewal Act of 2009 Safeguards

- Provides protections to persons or local governments that took action under **SB 360** from the 2009 session, including provisions relating to permit extensions, Development of Regional Impact (DRI) exemptions and comprehensive plan amendments relating to transportation concurrency exception areas.



The 2010 Session At-A-Glance

AIF Successfully **Defeated** the Following Attempts to Damage Florida's Legal and Business Climate:

BUSINESS REGULATION

Motor Vehicle Dealers	HB 1375 by Rep. Llorente SB 2410 by Sen. Baker	Would have enacted greater requirements in licensee franchise agreements with motor vehicle dealers	Died on Senate Floor
-----------------------	---------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------

HEALTHCARE

Health Insurance Mandates	SB 214 by Sen. Ring SB 182 by Sen. Crist HB 591 by Rep. Y. Roberson	Would have mandated additional health insurance coverages for autism, mental health, and AIDS medication	Died in Committee
---------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

State Contracting	SB 1706 by Sen. Alexander	Would have prohibited a state agency from paying early termination fees, current year obligations, and future payments when privately contracting	Died on House Calendar
-------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

Arbitration	SB 2034 by Sen. Wise	Would have weakened arbitration provisions for nursing homes	Died in Committee
-------------	----------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------

TAXATION

Bottle Water Tax	167 by Rep. Rehwinkel-Vasilinda 152 by Sen. Lynn	Would have established a surcharge on bottled water sold at retail in Florida	Died in Committee
------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------

As the Voice of Florida's Business, AIF Successfully **Advocated the Passage** of the Following Bills:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dynamic Scoring	SB 1178 by Sen. Haridopolos	Evaluates proposed legislation benefits by considering potential revenue enhancements	PASSED
-----------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

EDUCATION

Right Size Class Size	SB 2 by Sen. Gaetz	Proposes amendments to the State Constitution to revise class size requirements for public schools	PASSED
-----------------------	--------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Graduation Standards	SB 4 by Sen. Detert	Implements a more stringent curriculum for high school graduation	PASSED
----------------------	---------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

ENERGY

Property Assessed Clean Energy	HB 7179 by Rep. Precourt	Allows local governments to offer financing to property owners for energy conservation and efficiency improvements	PASSED
--------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

ENVIRONMENT

Water Policy	SB 550 by Sen. Constantine	Consolidates water supply-related law including water supply policy, planning, production and funding	PASSED
--------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Recycling	HB 7243 by Rep. T. Williams	Sets a goal for Florida to reach a 75% recycling goal by 2020	PASSED
-----------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

INSURANCE

Property Insurance	SB 2044 by Sen. Richter	Allows insurers to institute rate increases with minimal review from the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR)	PASSED
--------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Commercial Insurance De-Reg	SB 2176 by Sen. Peadar	Exempts certain commercial insurance products from the State's rate filing and prior approval process	PASSED
-----------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

Parental Waiver	SB 2440 by Sen. Bennett	Provides that a liability release signed by a natural guardian on behalf of a participating minor is valid	PASSED
-----------------	-------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

TPAC	HB 437 by Rep. Eisnaugle	Provides transparency for private attorney contracting by the AG	PASSED
------	--------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Slip & Fall	HB 689 by Rep. Aubuchon	Provides that a claimant must provide burden of proof in Slip & Fall cases.	PASSED
-------------	-------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

SEAPORTS

International Commercial Arbitration	HB 821 by Rep. Thurston	Allows Florida companies to conduct arbitrations on a more regular basis in Florida	PASSED
--------------------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Seaports	HB 963 by Rep. Ray	Authorizes seaports to enter into public-private infrastructure project agreements with private entities	PASSED
----------	--------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

SPACE

Space Florida	HB 451 by Rep. Crisafulli	Reorganizes the Board of Space Florida to include industry reps.	PASSED
---------------	---------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Space & Aerospace Infrastructure	HB 969 by Rep. Crisafulli	Provides flexibility to Space Florida in spending remaining Launch Complex 36 funds	PASSED
----------------------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Space Transition and Revitalization Act	HB 1389 by Rep. Crisafulli	Delegates resources to retain or create high-technology jobs directly associated with Florida's aerospace economy	PASSED
-----------------------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

TAXATION

School Sales Tax Holiday	HB 483 by Rep. Rivera	Specifies period during which the sale of books, clothing, & school supplies are exempt from tax	PASSED
--------------------------	-----------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

UNEMPLOYMENT COMP

UC Tax Decrease	HB 7033 by Rep. Murzin	Significantly reduces unemployment compensation taxes	PASSED
-----------------	------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------	---------------

Unemployment Compensation	SB 1736 by Sen. Garcia	Provides provisions that will better allocate the calculations of unemployment taxes for all Florida companies	PASSED
---------------------------	------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------



The Issue ...

Saving Florida's Space Industry

Florida's Cape Canaveral is synonymous with manned space flight. However, the impending retirement of the Space Shuttle at the end of this year will result in a loss of 9,000 high-paying, Shuttle Program-dependent jobs and an additional 13,000 subcontractor and space-affiliated jobs. For the last three years, AIF has led the charge in advocating on behalf of protecting this industry in Florida. All the advocacy efforts finally paid dividends this session as the Florida Legislature considered significant space legislation and approved much-needed funding for our state's space infrastructure. The Legislature's efforts will go a long way in saving many of the jobs associated with space activity, and they should go a long way in spurring commercial space operations in Florida, which will create jobs in the future.

"Jobs for Florida" Package

SB 1752 by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Destin) – The state's major jobs bill which passed this session included a number of important provisions and funding for space activities in Florida. The bill provides \$10 million to *Space Florida* for establishing an internal source of financing and investment funds in order to provide additional opportunities for expanding space businesses, and **\$3.2 million** to *Space Florida* for workforce development assistance through a partnership among state and local agencies. It also includes **\$3 million** to allow for the growth and recruitment of new space-based enterprises by using *Space Florida's* resources to secure federal programs. **\$3.6 million** has been allocated to address infrastructure projects to assist in the continued development of Florida's aerospace industry and management of state-of-the-art facilities for space businesses that will create high-technology, high-wage jobs. Finally, the bill includes a Manufacturing and Spaceport Investment Incentive, which will encourage capital investment and job creation in manufacturing and spaceport activities in the state by providing tax refunds to businesses making significant investments in Florida.

Flexibility for Space Florida Funding

One of the critical pieces of space legislation that passed in 2010 was **HB 969 by Rep. Steve Crisafulli (R-Merritt Island)**. This bill provides *Space Florida*, the state's main space economic development agency, with the needed flexibility to spend approximately **\$10 million** of funds allocated in 2008 to make improvements at the existing launch complexes in Florida. This legislation is critical to keep Florida a leader in space and will allow our state to leverage the existing infrastructure to lure commercial space projects to Florida.

Space Transition and Revitalization Act (STAR)

Rep. Crisafulli sponsored another important piece of space-related legislation, **HB 1389**, which passed with overwhelming support. HB 1389 will make more dollars from Florida's Quick

The Bottom Line ...

- The Florida Legislature responded to AIF and its partners' advocacy efforts by passing a budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year that included over **\$30 million** for Florida's aerospace industry.
- The budget included **\$7.5 million** from the transportation trust fund for space infrastructure development, **\$3 million** for *Space Florida* to provide targeted business development and recruitment services, and **\$3.2 million** to retrain aerospace workers as a result of the Space Shuttle phase-out.

What AIF Followed ...

HB 451 (Space Florida Board) by Rep. Steve Crisafulli (R-Merritt Island) **PASSED**

HB 969 (Space & Infrastructure Funding) by Rep. Steve Crisafulli (R-Merritt Island) **PASSED**

HB 1389 (Space Transition and Revitalization Act) by Rep. Steve Crisafulli (R-Merritt Island) **PASSED**

SB 944 (Space Shuttle Orbiter Retirement) by Sen. Thad Altman (R-Melbourne) **PASSED**

SB 1188 (Commercial Launch Zone) by Sen. Thad Altman (R-Melbourne) **died in committee**

SB 2572 (Aerospace Tax Credits) by Sen. Thad Altman (R-Melbourne) **died in committee**

Action Closing Fund available to aerospace businesses. Furthermore, it allows Enterprise Florida to consider the importance of maintaining Florida's dominance in space when evaluating applications for state economic development dollars.

What was at Stake for Florida Employers...

The economic impact of Florida's space industry is unmistakable. No other region in the world has the space infrastructure, workforce, or strategic position that can compare with Florida's space assets. **Currently, there is a total of \$20 billion in economic impact from space activities in Florida. Investing in our space infrastructure will help Florida compete for the \$250 billion-plus global aerospace market.** Over 2,156 companies with approximately 65,000 employees are associated with the space industry in Florida. Protecting this industry is essential for Florida's future.



The Issue ...

Efforts to Strengthen Florida's Private Insurance Market

The Following Issues Were **SUPPORTED BY**

AIF's Financial Services Council

Insurance issues once again dominated the legislative landscape in 2010. This year, legislators tackled issues relating to company solvency, fraud, and mitigation discounts. In addition, another run at passing "Consumer Choice" legislation was attempted. **HB 447 and SB 876** would have provided homeowners with the option of purchasing their homeowners' insurance from a private insurance company using rates higher than their approved rates in lieu of the state's insurance company, Citizens. Although the Consumer Choice bill progressed all the way to the House floor and passed two Senate committees, the effort was stalled when Governor Charlie Crist made it crystal clear that he would once again veto any type of Consumer Choice legislation that made it to his desk. Even with this setback, AIF was able to pass some significant pieces of insurance reform legislation.

Commercial Insurance De-Regulation

SB 2176 by Sen. Durrell Peaden (R-Crestview) was literally the last piece of legislation that passed on the last day of session. AIF's top insurance priority for 2010 — the bill exempts certain commercial insurance products from the State's rate filing and prior approval process. Nonetheless, an insurer must notify the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) of any changes to rates for these exempted types of insurance within 30 days after the effective date of the change. The bill specifies the information that must be included in the notice, and requires that underwriting files, premiums, and loss and expense statistics must be maintained by the insurer and are subject to review by the OIR.

Property Insurance

In the area of property insurance, **SB 2044 by Sen. Garrett Richter (R-Naples)** is on the way to the Governor for his consideration. This bill allows insurers to withhold a portion of replacement costs until documentation is submitted that the repairs are being made; provides for expedited rate filings reflecting an inflation factor as developed by the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) and increased reinsurance costs; delays the reduction of Citizens' wind-only high risk areas; requires a personal residential property insured to file all claims within three years of loss; places restrictions on abusive public adjusters' advertising, solicitation, and compensation practices; and

The Bottom Line ...

- To attract and retain private capital to meet Florida's insurance needs, rates must be "market based" and determined by consumers in a competitive environment, not by government (**SB 2176**).
- Important steps to increase the solvency of property insurance companies, especially new entrants into the market, were taken (**SB 2044**).
- Fraud and abuse by public adjusters will be reigned in thanks to legislation passed this session (**SB 2044**).

What AIF Followed ...

HB 447 (Consumer Choice) by Rep. Bill Proctor (R-St. Augustine) **died on the House Calendar**

HB 663 (Building Safety) by Rep. Gary Aubuchon (R-Cape Coral) **PASSED**

HB 5603 (Workers' Compensation) by Rep. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla) **PASSED**

SB 2044 (Property Insurance) by Sen. Garrett Richter (R-Naples) **PASSED**

SB 2176 (Commercial Insurance De-Reg.) by Sen. Durrell Peaden (R-Crestview) **PASSED**

provides for administrative penalties in addition to the existing criminal penalties for mitigation home inspectors who violate certain provisions in the law.

Workers' Compensation Drug Re-packaging Fix

AIF was able to deliver a huge victory for the business community by including language in a budget conforming bill, **HB 5603 by Rep. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla)**, that has the potential to save Florida employers close to **\$100 million** in workers' comp costs. This statutory fix will prevent providers from charging exorbitant prices for re-packaged medications.

What Was at Stake for Employers ...

In the event that new domestic property insurance companies go out of business due to their inability to pay for future losses, a new four percent tax will be imposed on most businesses' property and casualty insurance premiums to pay for unfunded losses. This would be in addition to the assessments, or "hurricane taxes," businesses are already paying in response to the losses from the 2004-2005 hurricane seasons.

The Issue ...

Environmental Sustainability

The Following Issues Were
SUPPORTED BY

AIF's Environmental Sustainability Council

Two years ago, the Legislature passed the Energy, Climate Change and Economic Security Act of 2008 (ECCESA) which initiated a statewide goal to increase recycling rates to 75 percent by 2020. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was responsible for creating a plan to achieve this goal, which had to be submitted to the Legislature by January 2010. In response to this requirement, the Florida Legislature filed legislation this year to establish a plan for achieving this goal. AIF's *Environmental Sustainability Council* (ESC) rapidly engaged the bill's sponsors, **Sen. Lee Constantine (R-Altamonte Springs)** and **Rep. Trudi Williams (R-Ft. Myers)**, and developed the business community's plan to achieve the 75 percent goal without having to implement mandates or regulatory burdens.

HB 7243 by Rep. Williams instructs state agencies and public buildings to release their recycling rates to their respective counties and requires the DEP to detail the state's recycling rates to the Legislature every two years. These new requirements will allow Florida to become a national leader in recycling. Additionally, the Legislature will now regularly review Florida's recycling program and ensure recycling efforts increase throughout the state by setting *attainable goals* for cities and counties. Private businesses will have the opportunity to participate in the program, but the legislation will not enforce any mandates on businesses. Businesses will report recycling rates to DEP, which will create a comprehensive system for collecting information on recycling activity in the state. The bill included many of AIF's recommendations, including the *Recycling Business Assistance Center* (RBAC), and will provide an opportunity for businesses to expand their recycling efforts in Florida.

Water Policy

The Legislature also undertook a major overhaul of water policy in Florida by passing **SB 550 by Sen. Constantine**. This bill was a consensus driven product that contains many issues important to the business community. In light of the upcoming EPA rule on numeric nutrient criteria, language is included that states the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program is the best approach for establishing numeric criteria. It also states that the EPA's proposed criteria does not take into consideration the unique characteristics of Florida's thousands of lakes, rivers, and streams. The legislation consolidates all water supply-related sections such as water supply policy, planning, production and funding currently spread throughout Chapter 373 into a new



The Bottom Line ...

- Florida's 75 percent recycling goal can be achieved without costly mandates for businesses.
- The establishment of a *Recycling Business Assistance Center* will go a long way in creating new recycling markets and jobs in Florida.
- Environmental issues, including recycling, are crucial to the business community because they impact existing industry, as well as companies that wish to bring their business to Florida.

What AIF Followed ...

HB 1109 (Water Supply) by Rep. Trudi Williams (R-Ft. Myers) **died in committee**

SB 550 (Environmental Protection) by Sen. Lee Constantine (R-Altamonte Springs) **PASSED**

HB 1589 (Numeric Nutrient Criteria Memorial) by Rep. John Legg (R-Port Richey) **died in Senate Messages**

HB 7243 (Recycling) by Rep. Trudi Williams (R-Ft. Myers) **PASSED**

Part VII of that Chapter. It will centralize water supply provisions into one location and will lead to a more efficient management and administration of water law. Instead of the "Responsible Management Entity" (RME) system as found in the original bill, an inspection program was included which was supported by the business community. The inspection program would begin next year and would require an inspection to take place every five years to see if the system needs to be pumped out, repaired or replaced. If replacement is needed, a grant program has been created to help those at 200% of the poverty level.

What Was at Stake for Employers ...

Businesses across the state of Florida are currently recycling and reusing waste by employing some of the most innovative methods and technologies in the country. AIF was able to provide early feedback and specific recommendations so that Florida's recycling and environmental goals could be achieved without expensive mandates, government-run programs, or excessive regulations and red tape.

The Issue ...

Legal Reform

As opposed to previous years, the Florida Legislature did not wait until the final days of session to consider and pass legislation dealing with tort reform. Early into the 2010 session, both presiding officers reached an agreement on a package of four proposals designed to reform Florida's legal climate. These AIF priority bills were passed before the mid-point of session and have subsequently been signed into law by the Governor.

Transparency in Private Attorney Contracting (TPAC)

HB 437 by Rep. Eric Eisnaugle (R-Orlando) establishes fairness in contracting for legal representation of the State of Florida. It puts reasonable limitations on contingency fee awards to private law firms, exclusive of costs and expenses of the litigation. These limitations ensure the people of Florida get the maximum benefit from the litigation while adequately compensating attorneys who work on these cases. Additionally, it creates an open and accountable process for the procurement and management of these private legal services. The bill requires that private legal services engaged on a contingency fee basis be competitively procured, if possible. It also requires the Attorney General to post those contracts, time cards and payment records online, thus providing more transparency and accountability to the people of Florida.

Negligence

Sponsored by **Rep. Gary Aubuchon (R-Cape Coral), HB 689** levels the playing field and provides stability and fairness in litigated cases. The bill clarifies that a plaintiff bears the burden of proving a business owner had constructive or actual knowledge of a hazardous condition on its premises when the plaintiff sues for damages from a slip and fall injury. A 2001 Florida Supreme Court decision placed the burden of disproving an injury allegation on the business owner, which has led to a significant increase in slip and fall litigation throughout the state. Since the plaintiff initiates the lawsuit, the plaintiff should be responsible for proving the case. This bill restores that important requirement.

Parental Authority

Sponsored by **Sen. Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton), SB 2440** addresses an important issue affecting Florida's tourist and recreational businesses. The bill seeks to clarify a Florida Supreme Court ruling relating to a parent's ability to sign waivers for their children to participate in certain recreational activities. It provides more clarity for the use of waivers and should generate more predictability in those types of cases.

Sovereign Immunity

Also sponsored by **Sen. Bennett, SB 2060** increases the amount of damages a local government can pay without requir-



The Bottom Line ...

- Important tort reform legislation was passed in the first half of the 2010 session.
- These reforms will strengthen Florida's legal and business climate, thereby making it more attractive for businesses to relocate to or expand in Florida.

What AIF Followed ...

HB 437 (TPAC) by Rep. Eric Eisnaugle (R-Orlando)
SIGNED INTO LAW

HB 689 (Slip & Fall) by Rep. Gary Aubuchon (R-Cape Coral)
SIGNED INTO LAW

SB 2440 (Parental Waivers) by Sen. Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton)
SIGNED INTO LAW

SB 2060 (Sovereign Immunity) by Sen. Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton)
SIGNED INTO LAW

ing a claims bill before the Legislature. The bill increases the current caps of \$100,000 per person and \$200,000 per incident to \$200,000 and \$300,000, respectively. These amounts had not been raised since 1981. The measure is supported by local governments and attorneys for the injured claimants, and provides a more efficient and equitable process for resolving disputes.

What Was at Stake for Employers ...

Without positive action by the Legislature, especially in regards to the parental waiver legislation, businesses in our state that depend on families and children to participate in recreational activities could have seen their businesses take a major hit, thanks to a bad ruling by Florida's Supreme Court. In addition, legislation addressing "slip and fall" lawsuits will make Florida a more competitive state in the region by bringing our statutes more in line with other states in the Southeast.

The Issue ...

Preparing Florida's Workforce of Tomorrow

The Following Issues Were
SUPPORTED BY
AIF's Education, Economic &
Workforce Development Council

2010 was a watershed year for education policy in the state of Florida. **Senate President Jeff Atwater (R-North Palm Beach)** set the tone early with his support for a major education overhaul which included proposals dealing with teacher tenure, increasing rigor in high school curriculums, and finding a solution to the Class Size Amendment issue. The teacher tenure and merit pay bill became a lightning rod for controversy in Florida as members of the business community aligned themselves with House and Senate leadership against an all-out attack by the teacher unions who strongly opposed the bill. In the end, and after much lobbying, Governor Crist went with the unions and *vetoed* the bill. AIF played a major role in education policy as we strongly supported all of these education reforms. AIF also supported legislation dealing with increasing students' access to technology in the classroom.

Right Size Class Size

Thanks to the Legislature's passage of **SJR 6 by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Destin)**, voters in Florida will be allowed to vote for a new constitutional amendment which will provide the state with some greater flexibility for complying with the Class Size amendment. If approved by 60 percent of the voters, the measure would require the same class sizes that are currently required — 18, in K-3, 22 in grades 4-8, and 25 in 9-12 — to be measured at the *school* level (rather than at the *class* level which is required for next year).

Teacher Tenure and Merit Pay

No other bill considered this past session created as much controversy as **SB 6 by Sen. John Thrasher (R-Jacksonville)**. This AIF-supported bill would have created a new system for rewarding teachers by requiring school districts to adopt salary schedules that determine salary increases based on performance, while current salary increases are based on seniority. These performance appraisals would have been based on two categories: 50 percent would be based on student learning gains and the remainder on other factors regarding classroom practices, including classroom management and knowledge of subject matter.

School Accountability

For the last three years, AIF and its *Education, Economic and Workforce Development Council* (EEWDC) have focused on college and career readiness for our state's students. AIF is pleased that the Legislature continued their commitment to increasing college and career readiness by passing **SB 4 by Sen. Nancy**

The Bottom Line ...

- AIF's top education priority for 2010 passed – **SB 4** Relating to Education Accountability, which will require students to complete more rigorous math and science courses to be eligible for graduation.
- Governor Charlie Crist's veto of **SB 6**, the teacher tenure and merit pay bill, will set Florida's education system back and could potentially endanger any funding from federal Race to the Top funds.
- Florida's business community played a large role this session in advocating for increased funding for technology in the classroom (**HB 623**).

What AIF Followed ...

HB 623 (Technology in the Classroom) by Rep. Rachel Burgin (R-Tampa) **died in committee but included in budget**

SJR 2 (Class Size Amendment) by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Destin) **PASSED**

SB 4 (Education Accountability) by Sen. Nancy Detert (R-Sarasota) **PASSED**

SB 6 (Teacher Tenure and Merit Pay) by Sen. John Thrasher (R-Jacksonville) **VETOED by the Governor**

Detert (R-Sarasota). This bill specifies Geometry and Algebra II as two of the four mathematics credits needed for graduation and Biology I and Chemistry or Physics as two of the three science credits needed for graduation. Additionally, the bill eliminates the 9th and 10th grade FCAT for math and science and replaces them with end-of-course exams in Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology I. Research shows that these courses are needed so that Florida's high school graduates are prepared for both higher education and jobs in the 21st century economy.

Technology in the Classroom

AIF was at the forefront of efforts to pass legislation that would have increased technology in classrooms across Florida. **HB 623 by Rep. Rachel Burgin (R-Tampa)** would have provided flexibility for school districts to purchase IT hardware in the instructional materials category so that students have more access to technology in the classroom. Although the bill did not pass, AIF was successful in including language in the 2010-2011 budget that would allow for funds available after March 1st to be used to purchase hardware for student instruction.

What was at Stake for Florida Employers ...

Our state's economic and financial future depends on a skilled and highly-trained workforce. The students of today represent the community leaders, business owners and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. They must be given the foundation necessary to prepare for their future with accountability for measurable outcomes.