



# ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

*The Voice of Florida Business Since 1920*



## 2009 SESSION PRIORITIES



# 2009 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

The following is a listing of all the issues that AIF will be involved in (as of February 10, 2009) for the upcoming 2009 Session. These issues and our positions can change based on amendments. When our position does change, it will be noted in both the *Daily Brief* and *Weekly Update* Reports that AIF provides to members and legislators throughout the session.

## Contracting

- Support legislation to ensure consistent and fair contract elements for entities providing health and human services to the State of Florida

## Economic Development

- Support efforts to reduce regulatory burdens that inhibit businesses ability to establish and expend in Florida
- Support reestablishing funding levels of Enterprise Florida's economic development "Tool Kit," including the Innovation Incentive program designed to entice world class research centers like Scripps, Torrey Pines, Burnham, SRI and Marx Planck Society as well as hi-tech companies to the state
- Support legislation aimed at providing tax credits for venture capitalists that invest in Florida's emerging businesses
- Support efforts to draw down federal economic development dollars through the New Markets, Fast Track Economic Stimulus for Small Business Program
- Support efforts to expand the film and entertainment tax credit program

## Education

- Support increasing access to rigorous coursework and increased high school graduation standards, particularly in STEM subject areas: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math; so that students can compete globally in the 21st century
- Support efforts to increase education in the arts, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and technology literacy to assure the workforce is prepared for the creative economy
- Advocate flexibility in plans to fulfill the mandates of the class-size constitutional amendment
- Support the continuation of the Banner Centers for Workforce Development and Ready-to-Work programs

## Elections

- Support efforts to re-establish Florida's signature revocation process
- Support reforms to the process for amending the state constitution by citizen initiative
- Support efforts to change the life span of petition signatures for citizen initiatives from the current 4 years to 2 years

## Energy

- Encourage the exploration, production and storage of petroleum and natural gas in an environmentally safe manner while ensuring a continuous supply and reasonable cost of fuel for all of Florida's needs
- Support incentives for the use of hydrogen fuel and the future expansion of alternative fuels and clean coal technologies
- Support environmental and economic regulatory policies that create a stable investment climate so that electric utilities can build more fuel diverse generation systems to meet Florida's growing energy needs, and continue to maintain and enhance where possible the resiliency of the transmission and distribution system to hurricanes
- Oppose government mandates that will unnecessarily drive up the cost of essential energy services for businesses in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Support the expansion and building of future nuclear facilities in Florida

## Environmental

- Support "Incentive Based Permitting" for those companies who are good stewards of Florida's natural resources
- Support the environmental self-audit privilege
- Support the expansion of the Environmental Litigation Reform Act (ELRA)

## General Business

- Support legislation providing for personal identity-theft protection and for protection of personal and business data held by state and local governments while at the same time balancing the needs of commercial entities to have access to such information to service their customers and promote commerce
- Oppose legislation that requires businesses to rely on flawed federal verification systems for immigration status of employees
- Support efforts to create statewide regulation of fertilizer sales
- Support constitutional amendment protecting Floridians' right to a secret ballot

## Growth Management

- Support legislation to streamline the plan amendment process at the DCA level during the "sunset" review of the agency by the Legislature
- Support legislation prohibiting the inclusion of backlog in the determination of a developments school or transportation concurrency requirements
- Support legislation establishing transportation concurrency exception areas in highly urbanized settings
- Encourage the increase of affordable housing through the modification of the planning process at all levels of government
- Provide for the "fast track" of any project deemed to be economic development

## Health Care

- Support efforts to eliminate LIP council
- Oppose legislation that would mandate any percentage of payroll for health care benefits regardless of the size of the employer
- Continue to support Medicaid reform proposals that inject market-based solutions in order to control the program's growth, while protecting elderly, poor and disabled Floridians' access to services
- Support proposals that allow insurers more flexibility to ensure the health care products they offer to employers and individuals are tailored to their needs and resources
- Oppose proposals that would inject government regulation into the private contracting process between insurers and providers

## Insurance

- Continue efforts to bring about affordability and availability of commercial and residential property insurance utilizing sound business principles
- Support efforts to reform Florida's bad faith insurance laws
- Support efforts to curb the sale of "Stranger-owned Life Insurance" which threaten the basic tenant of life insurance
- Support continued funding of the My Safe Florida Home mitigation grants as well as home inspection programs
- Support efforts to ensure accessibility of surplus lines insurance in Florida
- Oppose burdensome restrictions on health insurers, such as "any willing provider" and provider contract restraints, that drive health care costs

- Support proposals to expand access to uninsured Floridians using market-based solutions which allow health plans to offer benefits tailored to consumers' needs and allow them to reduce the number of mandates they must provide
- Oppose legislation that would place additional mandates on health insurance policies

## International Affairs

- Support additional funding for Enterprise Florida in the trade mission area so that Florida can continue to be a leader in international trade and expand our economy internationally
- Promote Florida's economic diversity by investing in projects that attract global investments and partnerships

## Legal & Judicial

- Oppose the weakening or repeal of any of the 2005-06 legal reform laws
- Support adequate funding of judicial branch
- Preserve the rights of parties to settle cases independently without interference from their attorneys
- Continue support for existing caps on non-economic damages arising from medical malpractice lawsuits
- Support measures expanding immunity to health care providers providing medical attention in certain emergency situations

## Taxation

- Support legislation to adopt the 2008 version of the IRS code so that Florida businesses do not have to keep two sets of records
- Support legislative ideas that would help to lower the rising cost of property tax for both homeowners and businesses across the state
- Support legislation to reduce the communications services tax currently on all communications devices (except residential lines)
- Support a resolution to Congress that would place Florida alongside other states in implementing the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement
- Fight the efforts to divert money from trust-fund revenue streams to general revenue
- Support sales tax holidays, such as exemptions from sales tax on items to be used for hurricanes supplies, school readiness, and energy efficient products
- Support legislative fix to the corporate income tax glitch created by the passage of HB 5065
- Support statutory efforts to review Florida's sales tax exemption, but oppose any mandated review or sunset provision associated with this review
- Support passage of Amendment 6 implementing bill
- Oppose the enactment of combined reporting or an "Unitary Tax" in Florida or increases in excise taxes

## Technology

- Encourage the enhanced government spending on IT in order to provide better services to citizens and businesses and to ensure that Florida's state government remains at the cutting edge of IT
- Support funding for redesign of legacy or outdated agency IT systems
- Support increasing compensation and competency requirements for state CIOs
- Support the creation of an "Innovation Fund" in order to incentivize state agencies to be more novel in their service delivery
- Monitor and influence any bill filed on the Agency for Enterprise Information Technology (AEIT), or data consolidation efforts
- Codify IT definitions in statute pursuant to AEIT direction

## Transportation

- Strongly support responsible measures that increase funding for transportation and infrastructure projects while securing existing streams of revenue for the Transportation Trust Fund

- Encourage changes in growth management policies that timely and fairly apportion the cost of transportation infrastructure
- Support legislation that would allow regional transportation authorities to operate
- Support legislation that allows for the installation of automated enforcement systems, such as red light cameras, at busy intersections and on all state highways
- Strongly support legislation that allows for aggregate rock materials to be mined without obstruction from irresponsible interest groups or ill intended county/municipal moratoriums
- Oppose efforts that would allow local governments to increase the rental car surcharge

## Unemployment Compensation

- Support enhanced IT solutions for AWI's legacy computer systems
- Oppose extending number of weeks unemployment benefits are paid with no additional funding or other incentives to employers to cover such expenses
- Oppose any uniform or arbitrary benefit amount increases
- Oppose enactment of permanent benefit expansion provisions
- Oppose funding ancillary programs unrelated to unemployment compensation programs, since this increases the cost of doing business while undermining the purpose for which the unemployment benefits program was created
- Oppose any increases to costs, including but not limited to defining additional beneficiaries
- Support a legislative fix to the 1st DCA ruling on extended unemployment compensation benefits
- Oppose expansion of mandatory leave benefits for non-work related activities
- Oppose any new reporting requirements that employers provide certain data or information to employees or governmental agencies regarding use of or eligibility for accrued leave time

## Workers' Compensation

- Support legislation to correct the statutory ambiguity identified by the Florida Supreme Court in Murray v. Mariner Health
- Oppose any efforts to erode the savings experienced by all Florida employers as a result of the AIF-supported 2003 Workers' Compensation Reform Act which resulted in savings now of over 50%
- Oppose the creation of a state fund or other state risk bearing entity
- Continue support for increased funding for state fraud investigations
- Oppose any efforts to statutorily establish procedures, guidelines or other provisions that are currently available through administrative action for which statutory authority already exists
- Oppose any raid on the Workers' Compensation Trust Fund without first giving back money to employers

## Workforce Development

- Support the establishment of career academies in Florida's schools that will prepare Florida's students with industry certifications to compete with students from around the world, not just other states
- Continue support for Florida's Banner Centers for Workforce Development.
- Support the "Ready to Work" program

## Workforce Housing

- Support legislation that would repeal the cap placed on the Sadowski Affordable Housing Act Trust Fund, which provides valuable financial assistance for housing
- Encourage local governments to establish "Fast-track permit" systems and reward those jurisdictions with proven systems with greater access to affordable housing funds