



VOTING RECORDS

On Key Business Issues

*2007 Regular Session
& Special Session B
of the Florida
Legislature*

2007
*Champions
for
Business*

Page 36





Barney T. Bishop III
President &
Chief Executive Officer

Associated Industries of Florida

Dear Employer:

It is my pleasure to provide you with this tabulation of the voting conduct of each member of the Florida Legislature during the 2007 Regular Session and Special Session on Property Tax Reform.

Voting Records reports on the votes made by every legislator on bills that were lobbied, advocated, promoted or opposed by Associated Industries of Florida. By reporting on 9,869 votes cast by legislators on 108 bills, this publication embodies the most exhaustive and complete record of the Legislature's approach to the concerns of Florida's employers.

We go to great lengths to ensure that legislators are aware of AIF's positions on issues of great importance to the business community. Every year before the session begins, we produce *AIF's Session Priorities*, which explains why we support or oppose key issues. In addition, during the session we provide each legislator with a *Daily Brief* on the activities of that day highlighting bills of interest to business and our positions on those issues. Our greatest asset, however, is our experienced and accomplished legislative team, which has compiled a record of success second to none.

This year and for the first time, we have combined our *Voting Records* publication with our annual *Champions for Business Awards*. This comprehensive report provides our members with one single source of information, presenting the most accurate "snapshot" of how legislators performed on important issues to the business community.

For more than three decades, AIF has published *Voting Records*, an analysis of every vote cast by every legislator on major business issues. Yet, voting records only tell part of the story. AIF also helps its member companies detect what bills and amendments are filed by whom, and who is taking part in behind-the-scene efforts and debates on behalf of the business community.

These intangible forms of support through non-voting actions are also of vital importance and merit recognition. AIF instituted the "Champion for Business" award to acknowledge lawmakers who 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 the opponents to the growing prosperity of Florida's citizens.

The four lawmakers (see page 36) honored this year are the epitome of a "Champion for Business." In addition, we have designated another five legislators for "Honorable Mention" and two of our AIF Councils have awarded "Legislator of the Year" Awards. 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. Maybe they are the exception, rather than the rule. But that's why we want to recognize them, because we need more of them in Florida government.

Visit

<http://aif.com>

to access the

complete

Voting

Records

report



Published by Associated
Industries of Florida
© 2007.

All rights reserved.

516 North Adams Street

Post Office Box 784

Tallahassee, FL 32301-0784

Phone: (850) 224-7173 Fax:

(850) 224-6532

E-mail: aif@aif.com

Internet: <http://aif.com>

Cover Photo:

Mark Foley,

House Photographer

Fresh Faces

The 2006 election cycle resulted in a dramatic turnover of leadership in both the executive and legislative branches of government. Gov. Charlie Crist (R) has been in office for a little over six months and has already presided over one regular session and two special sessions. In the Legislature, we have a new Speaker and Senate President. Thanks to term limits, over one-third of the Legislature is new (there are 38 freshmen in the House of Representatives as well as seven freshmen senators)^[1]. In 2010, the turnover will be even more dramatic — with over half of the Legislature facing term limits! This change in personnel has led to some interesting challenges and surprises for AIF and the business community. The effect of new leadership and fresh faces in the Legislature is also evident in the 2007 edition of AIF's *Voting Records*.

Even from first glance, it is evident that the Senate is down seven percentage points (85 percent) from last year's score of 92 percent. The House is also down a couple of percentage points to 92 percent. Several factors can be considered when trying to explain this drop in the Senate. For the first time in nearly eight years, the issue of health care mandates experienced quite a resurgence in the Senate. A health-insurance "mandate" is a legislative requirement that an insurance company cover a specific benefit or patient popula-

tion. AIF and the business community have been consistently opposed to additional mandates because the resultant cost increases could force insurers out of the market and make it harder for employers to purchase health insurance for their workers. The 2007 regular session saw the filing of a record number of these mandates and in the Senate several made it through all their committee stops and were even passed on the floor.

Other unfriendly issues for the business community were also advanced this session including: the expansion of Citizens Insurance Company, the undermining of the repeal of joint and several liability, and a proposed sales tax increase to offset property taxes. In each of these cases, some of the primary proponents were either fresh faces to the process or in new leadership positions. Not all fresh faces were bad of course; Rep. **Will Weatherford** (R-Zephyrhills) a freshman received the "Legislator of the Year Award" from AIF's Information Technology Council (see pg. 39). Two freshman Reps., **Seth McKeel** (R-Lakeland) and **Nick Thompson** (R-Ft. Myers), provided stalwart support to the business community with favorable scores of 98 percent. Freshman Sen. **Steve Oelrich** (R-Gainesville) was at the top of his class with a 93 percent voting record.

The lesson to be learned from this year's *Voting Records* is that,

Because of term-limits, AIF and its members must continuously educate legislators and leadership on the issues important to the business community.

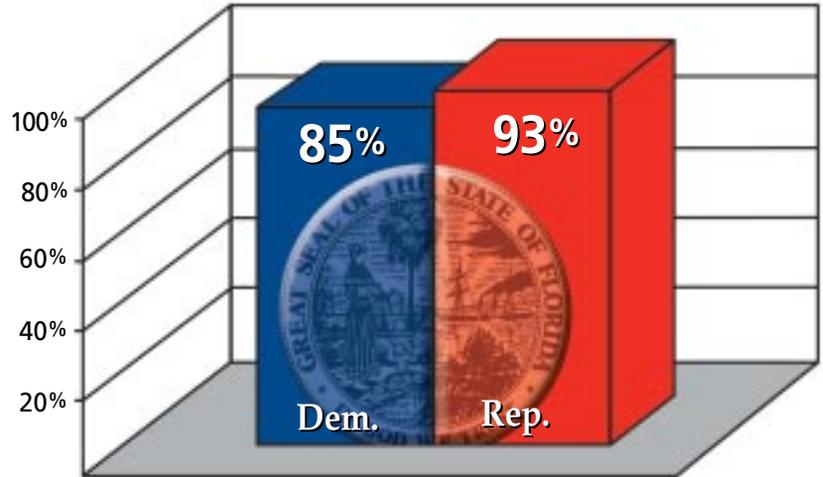
because of term limits, AIF and its members must continuously educate legislators and leadership on the issues important to the business community. In this new era of term limits, we must be ever-vigilant of the fresh faces because you never know when a bad idea may pop up and gather steam... no matter how many times it was defeated in the past.

[1] See how the '07 Freshman Class compares to its '05 counterparts in our "By the Numbers Section" on pg. 4

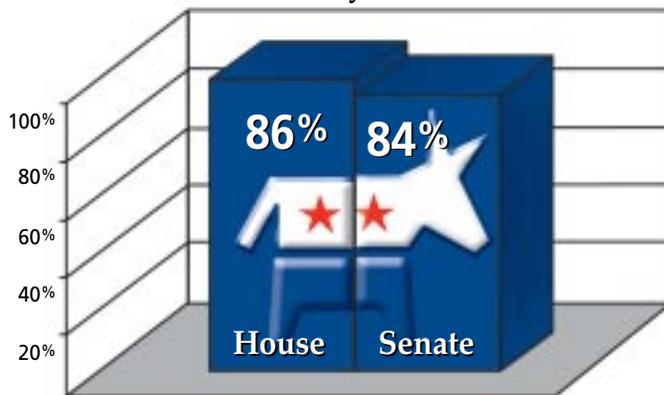
2007 Florida Legislature *by the Numbers*

Knowing how individual legislators cast their votes is extremely important when evaluating their stand on the issues facing our members. However, it is also important to look at the other areas of the data to find clues on how different segments of the Florida Legislature are casting their votes. For instance, which party in which chamber tends to support business issues more than the other? How do the current vote records compare to those from past years? This section will break down different segments of the votes and provide some interesting snapshots of what the mood of the Florida Legislature is on business issues.

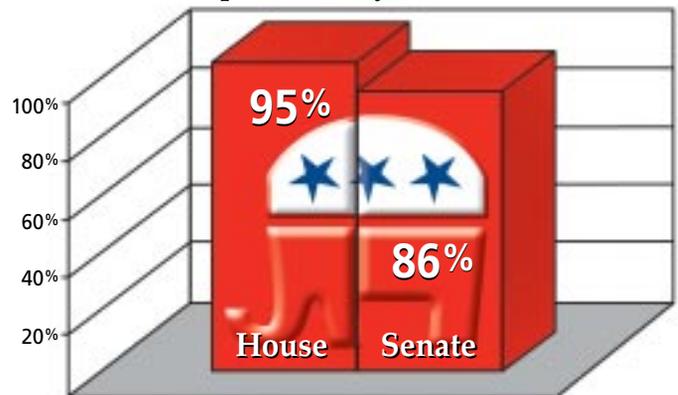
2007 Florida Legislature by Party



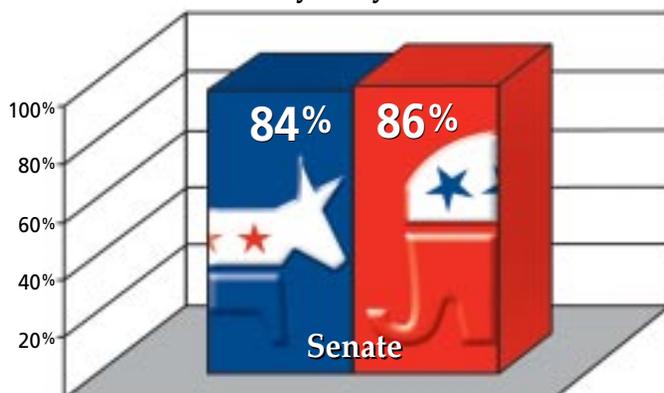
Democrats by Chamber



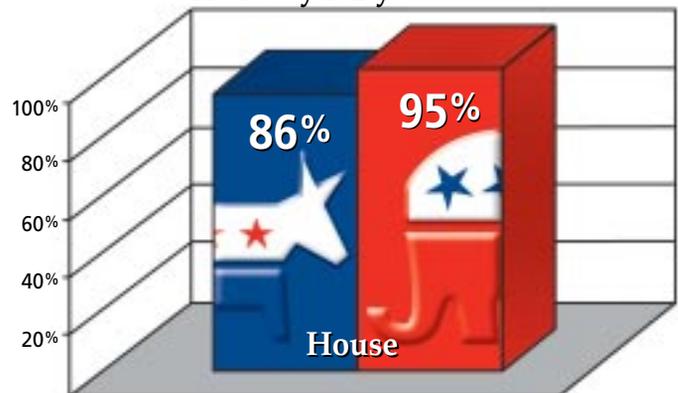
Republicans by Chamber



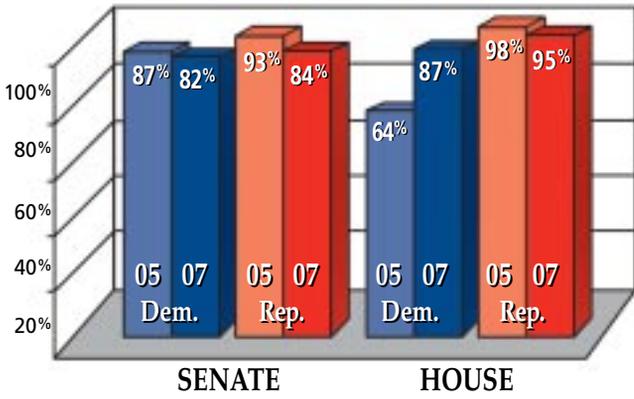
Senate by Party



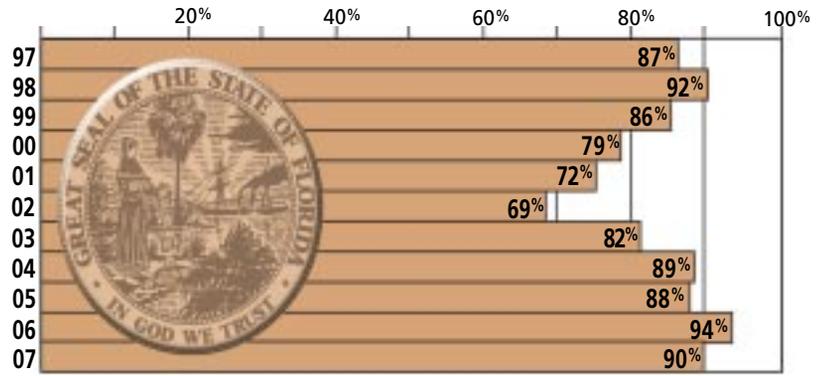
House by Party



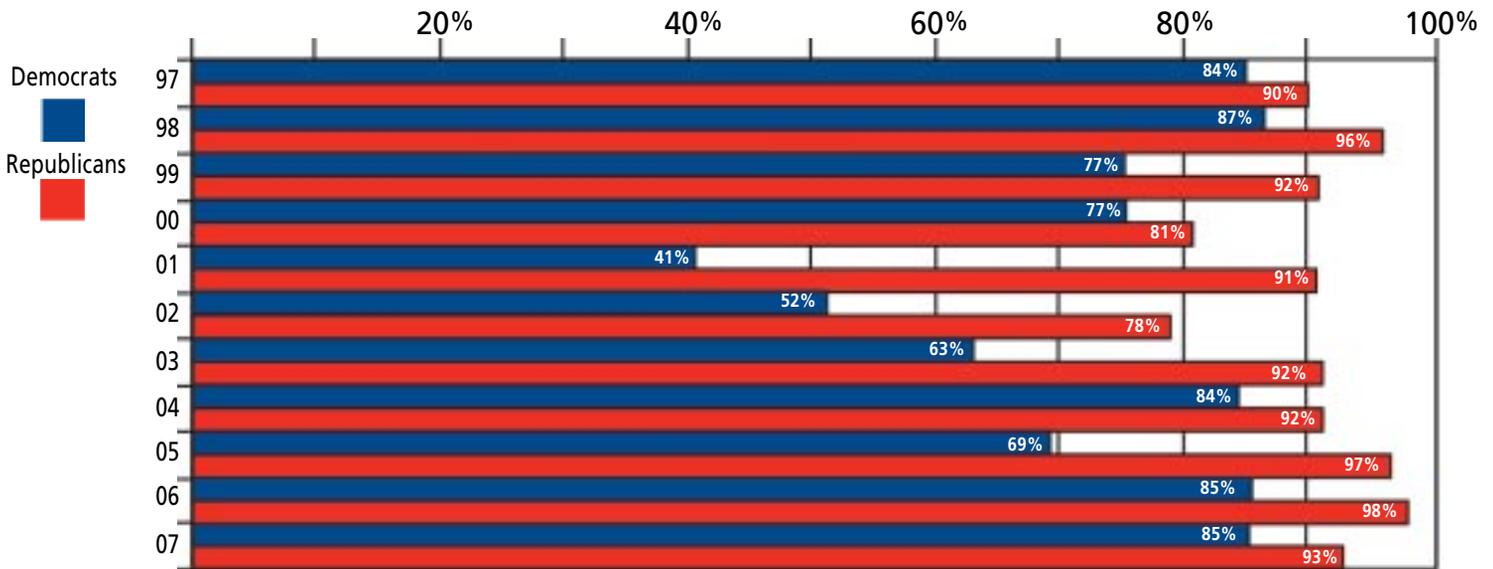
05/07 Freshman Comparison by Party



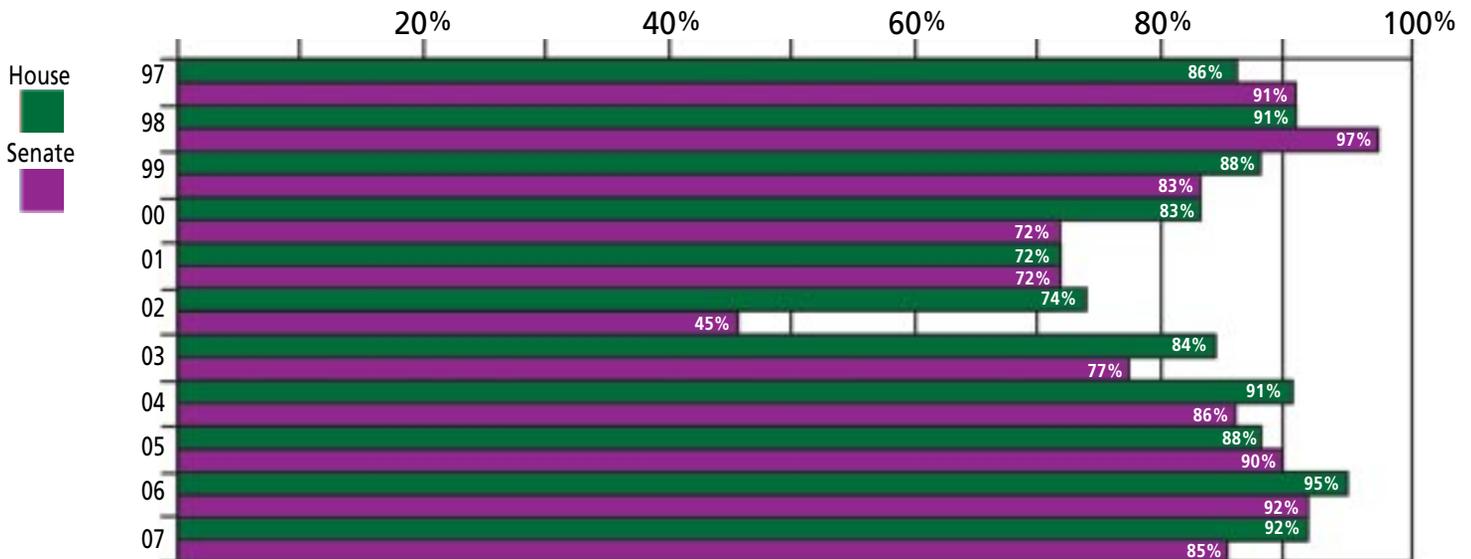
Legislature — Historical Voting Records



Party — Historical Voting Records



Chamber — Historical Voting Records



2007 FLORIDA LEGISLATURE VOTING RECORDS

On Key Business Issues – Percentage with AIF

Voting Records is compiled using actual votes cast as reported in official state records. It does not include changed or paired votes. Some votes may be corrected by the Legislature at a later date, but those changes will not be reflected in *Voting Records*, which relies on the positions of members of the Legislature at the time the votes are recorded. Each vote cast is measured equally, with no added points to certain bills.

FLORIDA SENATE							
% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against
94%	Haridopolos (R)	58	4	85%	Margolis (D)	50	9
93%	Diaz de la Portilla (R)	62	5	85%	Ring (D)	50	9
93%	Oelrich (R)	54	4	85%	Saunders (R)	50	9
91%	King (R)	51	5	84%	Aronberg (D)	49	9
90%	Pruitt (R)	36	4	84%	Peaden (R)	41	8
90%	Siplin (D)	57	6	84%	Posey (R)	48	9
89%	Constantine (R)	48	6	83%	Justice (D)	48	10
89%	Fasano (R)	50	6	83%	Lawson (D)	55	11
89%	Webster (R)	51	6	82%	Alexander (R)	47	10
89%	Wise (R)	54	7	82%	Bullard (D)	45	10
88%	Dockery (R)	49	7	82%	Carlton (R)	40	9
88%	Lynn (R)	52	7	82%	Gaetz (R)	46	10
86%	Baker (R)	50	8	82%	Rich (D)	37	8
86%	Dawson (D)	37	6	82%	Storms (R)	56	12
86%	Hill (D)	50	8	81%	Deutch (D)	59	14
86%	Jones (R)	49	8	80%	Garcia (R)	45	11
85%	Atwater (R)	52	9	80%	Wilson (D)	47	12
85%	Bennett (R)	50	9	79%	Joyner (D)	46	12
85%	Crist (R)	56	10	79%	Villalobos (R)	42	11
85%	Geller (D)	55	10	76%	Argenziano (R)	25	8

Total Votes With AIF/Business = 85%

H O U S E O F R E P R E S E N T A T I V E S

% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against
100%	Davis, D. (R)	2	0	96%	Sansom (R)	78	3	90%	Waldman (D)	46	5
98%	Brown (R)	80	2	96%	Schenck (R)	55	2	89%	Garcia, Rene (R)	48	6
98%	Cannon (R)	82	2	96%	Simmons (R)	53	2	89%	Machek (D)	49	6
98%	Cretul (R)	63	1	96%	Snyder (R)	54	2	89%	Peterman (D)	51	6
98%	Grimsley (R)	55	1	96%	Williams (R)	54	2	89%	Saunders (D)	73	9
98%	Harrell (R)	54	1	95%	Ambler (R)	78	4	88%	Gibbons (D)	49	7
98%	Hukill (R)	57	1	95%	Bogdanoff (R)	74	4	88%	Heller (D)	52	7
98%	Jordan (R)	54	1	95%	Carroll (R)	53	3	88%	Kiar (D)	51	7
98%	McKeel (R)	59	1	95%	Dean (R)	69	4	88%	Meadows (D)	72	10
98%	Mealor (R)	58	1	95%	Frishe (R)	59	3	88%	Randolph (D)	50	7
98%	Patterson (R)	64	1	95%	Gardiner (R)	73	4	88%	Scionti (D)	44	6
98%	Thompson, N. (R)	54	1	95%	Gibson, H. (R)	54	3	88%	Soto (D)	30	4
97%	Adams (R)	56	2	95%	Hasner (R)	76	4	87%	Bullard (D)	53	8
97%	Attkisson (R)	74	2	95%	Hays (R)	52	3	87%	Chestnut (D)	45	7
97%	Aubuchon (R)	69	2	95%	Mahon (R)	52	3	87%	Gibson, Audrey (D)	46	7
97%	Coley (R)	61	2	95%	Mayfield (R)	37	2	87%	Sands (D)	53	8
97%	Davis, M. (R)	66	2	95%	Precourt (R)	57	3	87%	Thompson, G. (D)	40	6
97%	Flores (R)	56	2	95%	Richter (R)	55	3	86%	Ausley (D)	70	11
97%	Holder (R)	62	2	95%	Rivera (R)	70	4	86%	Bendross-Mindingall (D)	72	12
97%	Legg (R)	60	2	95%	Troutman (R)	69	4	86%	Fields (D)	49	8
97%	Murzin (R)	58	2	94%	Galvano (R)	78	5	86%	Fitzgerald (D)	56	9
97%	Nehr (R)	64	2	94%	Kendrick (R)	64	4	86%	Holloway (D)	50	8
97%	Pickens (R)	72	2	94%	Planas (R)	47	3	85%	Porth (D)	58	10
96%	Allen (R)	46	2	94%	Traviesa (R)	76	5	85%	Roberson (D)	70	12
96%	Altman (R)	54	2	93%	Culp (R)	52	4	85%	Skidmore (D)	50	9
96%	Baxley (R)	49	2	93%	Homan (R)	52	4	85%	Taylor (D)	70	12
96%	Bean (R)	73	3	93%	Hooper (R)	57	4	84%	Gelber (D)	43	8
96%	Bowen (R)	73	3	93%	Llorente (R)	53	4	84%	Sachs (D)	51	10
96%	Evers (R)	54	2	93%	Lopez-Cantera (R)	56	4	84%	Thurston (D)	48	9
96%	Ford (R)	55	2	93%	Poppell (R)	56	4	83%	Brise (D)	49	10
96%	Glorioso (R)	67	3	93%	Reagan (R)	75	6	83%	Cusack (D)	75	15
96%	Grant (R)	86	4	93%	Zapata (R)	77	6	83%	Jenne (D)	44	9
96%	Kravitz (R)	94	4	92%	Anderson (R)	48	4	83%	Seiler (D)	69	14
96%	Kreegel (R)	49	2	92%	Boyd (D)	54	5	82%	Garcia, L. (D)	46	10
96%	Needelman (R)	53	2	92%	Domino (R)	47	4	82%	Reed (D)	59	13
96%	Nelson (R)	55	2	92%	Gonzalez (R)	55	5	82%	Schwartz (D)	47	10
96%	Proctor (R)	53	2	92%	Patronis (R)	59	5	82%	Vana (D)	68	15
96%	Robaina (R)	48	2	92%	Weatherford (R)	54	5	81%	Richardson (D)	74	17
96%	Ross (R)	73	3	91%	Long (D)	51	5	80%	Kriseman (D)	45	11
96%	Rubio (R)	43	2	90%	Brandenburg (D)	75	8	78%	Bucher (D)	52	15

Total Votes With AIF/Business = 92%

2007 FLORIDA LEGISLATURE VOTING RECORDS

On Key Business Issues – Alphabetically

Voting Records is compiled using actual votes cast as reported in official state records. It does not include changed or paired votes. Some votes may be corrected by the Legislature at a later date, but those changes will not be reflected in *Voting Records*, which relies on the positions of members of the Legislature at the time the votes are recorded. Each vote cast is measured equally, with no added points to certain bills.

FLORIDA SENATE							
Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF
Alexander (R)	47	10	82%	Jones (R)	49	8	86%
Argenziano (R)	25	8	76%	Joyner (D)	46	12	79%
Aronberg (D)	49	9	84%	Justice (D)	48	10	83%
Atwater (R)	52	9	85%	King (R)	51	5	91%
Baker (R)	50	8	86%	Lawson (D)	55	11	83%
Bennett (R)	50	9	85%	Lynn (R)	52	7	88%
Bullard (D)	45	10	82%	Margolis (D)	50	9	85%
Carlton (R)	40	9	82%	Oelrich (R)	54	4	93%
Constantine (R)	48	6	89%	Peaden (R)	41	8	84%
Crist (R)	56	10	85%	Posey (R)	48	9	84%
Dawson (D)	37	6	86%	Pruitt (R)	36	4	90%
Deutch (D)	59	14	81%	Rich (D)	37	8	82%
Diaz de la Portilla (R)	62	5	93%	Ring (D)	50	9	85%
Dockery (R)	49	7	88%	Saunders (R)	50	9	85%
Fasano (R)	50	6	89%	Siplin (D)	57	6	90%
Gaetz (R)	46	10	82%	Storms (R)	56	12	82%
Garcia (R)	45	11	80%	Villalobos (R)	42	11	79%
Geller (D)	55	10	85%	Webster (R)	51	6	89%
Haridopolos (R)	58	4	94%	Wilson (D)	47	12	80%
Hill (D)	50	8	86%	Wise (R)	54	7	89%

Total Votes With AIF/Business = 85%

H O U S E O F R E P R E S E N T A T I V E S

Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF	Name/Party	For	Against	% w/AIF
Adams (R)	56	2	97%	Gelber (D)	43	8	84%	Peterman (D)	51	6	89%
Allen (R)	46	2	96%	Gibbons (D)	49	7	88%	Pickens (R)	72	2	97%
Altman (R)	54	2	96%	Gibson, A. (D)	46	7	87%	Planas (R)	47	3	94%
Ambler (R)	78	4	95%	Gibson, H. (R)	54	3	95%	Poppell (R)	56	4	93%
Anderson (R)	48	4	92%	Glorioso (R)	67	3	96%	Porth (D)	58	10	85%
Attkisson (R)	74	2	97%	Gonzalez (R)	55	5	92%	Precourt (R)	57	3	95%
Aubuchon (R)	69	2	97%	Grant (R)	86	4	96%	Proctor (R)	53	2	96%
Ausley (D)	70	11	86%	Grimsley (R)	55	1	98%	Randolph (D)	50	7	88%
Baxley (R)	49	2	96%	Harrell (R)	54	1	98%	Reagan (R)	75	6	93%
Bean (R)	73	3	96%	Hasner (R)	76	4	95%	Reed (D)	59	13	82%
Bendross-Mindingall (D)	72	12	86%	Hays (R)	52	3	95%	Richardson (D)	74	17	81%
Bogdanoff (R)	74	4	95%	Heller (D)	52	7	88%	Richter (R)	55	3	95%
Bowen (R)	73	3	96%	Holder (R)	62	2	97%	Rivera (R)	70	4	95%
Boyd (D)	54	5	92%	Holloway (D)	50	8	86%	Robaina (R)	48	2	96%
Brandenburg (D)	75	8	90%	Homan (R)	52	4	93%	Roberson (D)	70	12	85%
Brise (D)	49	10	83%	Hooper (R)	57	4	93%	Ross (R)	73	3	96%
Brown (R)	80	2	98%	Hukill (R)	57	1	98%	Rubio (R)	43	2	96%
Bucher (D)	52	15	78%	Jenne (D)	44	9	83%	Sachs (D)	51	10	84%
Bullard (D)	53	8	87%	Jordan (R)	54	1	98%	Sands (D)	53	8	87%
Cannon (R)	82	2	98%	Kendrick (R)	64	4	94%	Sansom (R)	78	3	96%
Carroll (R)	53	3	95%	Kiar (D)	51	7	88%	Saunders (D)	73	9	89%
Chestnut (D)	45	7	87%	Kravitz (R)	94	4	96%	Schenck (R)	55	2	96%
Coley (R)	61	2	97%	Kreegel (R)	49	2	96%	Schwartz (D)	47	10	82%
Cretul (R)	63	1	98%	Kriseman (D)	45	11	80%	Scionti (D)	44	6	88%
Culp (R)	52	4	93%	Legg (R)	60	2	97%	Seiler (D)	69	14	83%
Cusack (D)	75	15	83%	Llorente (R)	53	4	93%	Simmons (R)	53	2	96%
Davis, D. (R)	2	0	100%	Long (D)	51	5	91%	Skidmore (D)	50	9	85%
Davis, M. (R)	66	2	97%	Lopez-Cantera (R)	56	4	93%	Snyder (R)	54	2	96%
Dean (R)	69	4	95%	Machek (D)	49	6	89%	Soto (D)	30	4	88%
Domino (R)	47	4	92%	Mahon (R)	52	3	95%	Taylor (D)	70	12	85%
Evers (R)	54	2	96%	Mayfield (R)	37	2	95%	Thompson, G. (D)	40	6	87%
Fields (D)	49	8	86%	McKeel (R)	59	1	98%	Thompson, N. (R)	54	1	98%
Fitzgerald (D)	56	9	86%	Meadows (D)	72	10	88%	Thurston (D)	48	9	84%
Flores (R)	56	2	97%	Mealor (R)	58	1	98%	Traviesa (R)	76	5	94%
Ford (R)	55	2	96%	Murzin (R)	58	2	97%	Troutman (R)	69	4	95%
Frishe (R)	59	3	95%	Needelman (R)	53	2	96%	Vana (D)	68	15	82%
Galvano (R)	78	5	94%	Nehr (R)	64	2	97%	Waldman (D)	46	5	90%
Garcia, Luis (D)	46	10	82%	Nelson (R)	55	2	96%	Weatherford (R)	54	5	92%
Garcia, Rene (R)	48	6	89%	Patronis (R)	59	5	92%	Williams (R)	54	2	96%
Gardiner (R)	73	4	95%	Patterson (R)	64	1	98%	Zapata (R)	77	6	93%

Total Votes With AIF/Business = 92%

HISTORICAL FLORIDA LEGISLATURE VOTING RECORDS

On Business Issues – Alphabetically

The AIF Historical Vote Records provides a cumulative tally of all the votes cast by legislators on AIF issues over their careers in the Florida Legislature.

F L O R I D A				S E N A T E			
Name/Party	% w/AIF —	'07	History	Name/Party	% w/AIF —	'07	History
Alexander (R)		82%	91% ▲	Jones (R)		86%	83% ▼
Argenziano (R)		76%	82% ▲	Joyner (D)		79%	64% ▼
Aronberg (D)		84%	81% ▼	Justice (D)		83%	68% ▼
Atwater (R)		85%	89% ▲	King (R)		91%	83% ▼
Baker (R)		86%	91% ▲	Lawson (D)		83%	75% ▼
Bennett (R)		85%	92% ▲	Lynn (R)		88%	89% ▲
Bullard (D)		82%	84% ▲	Margolis (D)		85%	77% ▼
Carlton (R)		82%	81% ▼	Oelrich (R)		93%	93% —
Constantine (R)		89%	89% —	Peaden (R)		84%	83% ▼
Crist (R)		85%	87% ▲	Posey (R)		84%	85% ▲
Dawson (D)		86%	74% ▼	Pruitt (R)		90%	87% ▼
Deutch (D)		81%	81% —	Rich (D)		82%	73% ▼
Diaz de la Portilla (R)		93%	87% ▼	Ring (D)		85%	85% —
Dockery (R)		88%	90% ▲	Saunders (R)		85%	81% ▼
Fasano (R)		89%	87% ▼	Siplin (D)		90%	77% ▼
Gaetz (R)		82%	82% —	Storms (R)		82%	82% —
Garcia (R)		80%	83% ▲	Villalobos (R)		79%	84% ▲
Geller (D)		85%	74% ▼	Webster (R)		89%	88% ▼
Haridopolos (R)		94%	93% ▼	Wilson (D)		80%	72% ▼
Hill (D)		86%	79% ▼	Wise (R)		89%	87% ▼

H O U S E O F R E P R E S E N T A T I V E S

Name/Party	% w/AIF — '07	History	Name/Party	% w/AIF — '07	History	Name/Party	% w/AIF — '07	History
Adams (R)	97%	97%—	Gelber (D)	84%	63%↓	Peterman (D)	89%	69%↓
Allen (R)	96%	93%↓	Gibbons (D)	88%	88%—	Pickens (R)	97%	96%↓
Altman (R)	96%	98%↑	Gibson, A. (D)	87%	75%↓	Planas (R)	94%	94%—
Ambler (R)	95%	91%↓	Gibson, H. (R)	95%	96%↑	Poppell (R)	93%	98%↑
Anderson (R)	92%	95%↑	Glorioso (R)	96%	98%↑	Porth (D)	85%	81%↓
Attkisson (R)	97%	96%↓	Gonzalez (R)	92%	92%—	Precourt (R)	95%	95%—
Aubuchon (R)	97%	97%—	Grant (R)	96%	98%↑	Proctor (R)	96%	98%↑
Ausley (D)	86%	72%↓	Grimsley (R)	98%	99%↑	Randolph (D)	88%	88%—
Baxley (R)	96%	96%—	Harrell (R)	98%	96%↓	Reagan (R)	93%	97%↑
Bean (R)	96%	95%—	Hasner (R)	95%	97%↑	Reed (D)	82%	82%—
Bendross-Mindingall (D)	86%	72%↓	Hays (R)	95%	98%↑	Richardson (D)	81%	70%↓
Bogdanoff (R)	95%	98%↑	Heller (D)	88%	88%—	Richter (R)	95%	95%—
Bowen (R)	96%	97%↑	Holder (R)	97%	97%—	Rivera (R)	95%	97%↑
Boyd (D)	92%	92%—	Holloway (D)	86%	76%↓	Robaina (R)	96%	97%↑
Brandenburg (D)	90%	82%↓	Homan (R)	93%	95%↑	Roberson (D)	85%	78%↓
Brise (D)	83%	83%—	Hooper (R)	93%	93%—	Ross (R)	96%	94%↓
Brown (R)	98%	96%↓	Hukill (R)	98%	98%—	Rubio (R)	96%	95%↓
Bucher (D)	78%	58%↓	Jenne (D)	83%	83%—	Sachs (D)	84%	84%—
Bullard (D)	87%	75%↓	Jordan (R)	98%	96%↓	Sands (D)	87%	83%↓
Cannon (R)	98%	99%↑	Kendrick (R)	94%	81%↓	Sansom (R)	96%	98%↑
Carroll (R)	95%	98%↑	Kiar (D)	88%	88%—	Saunders (D)	89%	78%↓
Chestnut (D)	87%	87%—	Kravitz (R)	96%	94%↓	Schenck (R)	96%	96%—
Coley (R)	97%	99%↑	Kreegel (R)	96%	98%↑	Schwartz (D)	82%	82%↑
Cretul (R)	98%	98%—	Kriseman (D)	80%	80%—	Scionti (D)	88%	88%—
Culp (R)	93%	95%↑	Legg (R)	97%	98%↑	Seiler (D)	83%	70%↓
Cusack (D)	83%	70%↓	Llorente (R)	93%	98%↑	Simmons (R)	96%	94%↓
Davis, Don (R)	100%	97%↓	Long (D)	91%	91%—	Skidmore (D)	85%	85%—
Davis, Mike (R)	97%	97%—	Lopez-Cantera (R)	93%	97%↑	Snyder (R)	96%	96%—
Dean (R)	95%	97%↑	Machek (D)	89%	74%↓	Soto (D)	88%	88%—
Domino (R)	92%	97%↑	Mahon (R)	95%	94%↓	Taylor (D)	85%	80%↓
Evers (R)	96%	96%—	Mayfield (R)	95%	97%↑	Thompson, G. (D)	87%	87%—
Fields (D)	86%	75%↓	McKeel (R)	98%	98%—	Thompson, N. (R)	98%	98%—
Fitzgerald (D)	86%	86%—	Meadows (D)	88%	80%↓	Thurston (D)	84%	84%—
Flores (R)	97%	98%↑	Mealor (R)	98%	97%↓	Traviesa (R)	94%	97%↑
Ford (R)	96%	96%—	Murzin (R)	97%	98%↑	Troutman (R)	95%	96%↑
Frishe (R)	95%	92%↓	Needelman (R)	96%	93%↓	Vana (D)	82%	75%↓
Galvano (R)	94%	96%↑	Nehr (R)	97%	97%—	Waldman (D)	90%	90%—
Garcia, Luis (D)	82%	82%—	Nelson (R)	96%	96%—	Weatherford (R)	92%	92%—
Garcia, Rene (R)	89%	91%↑	Patronis (R)	92%	92%—	Williams (R)	96%	98%↑
Gardiner (R)	95%	95%—	Patterson (R)	98%	97%↓	Zapata (R)	93%	97%↑

The Bills

Voting Records was compiled using com floor votes cast on each of the following

Unless otherwise noted, AIF took the same position on the bills listed in the summary at the end of each write-up as it did on the bill in the write-up.

BUSINESS REGULATION

SB 2234 – Relating to Regulation of Building Inspection Professionals by Sen. Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville)

This pro-consumer bill establishes a licensure process administered by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation for home inspectors, mold assessors, and mold remediators in Florida.

Currently, any person or business can operate as a home inspector or mold assessor without having to uphold any uniform standards or educational requirements. The bill provides uniformity and peace of mind for the thousands of homeowners that trust their largest investments to these individuals. The bill gives current home inspectors and mold assessors/remediators until 2010 to comply with the bill's requirements.

AIF supports this measure since it would provide accountability to home inspectors and mold remediators and would assist insurance companies to better assess the risks of certain homes that are affected by mold, thereby, potentially reducing the amount of litigation associated with this problem.

CS/CS/CS/SB 2234 was approved by Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-235; House companion bill CS/CS/HB 1399 was laid on the table.

SB 2434 – Relating to Electronic Gaming Machines by Sen. Steven Geller (D-Hallandale Beach)

This bill provides for the establishment, operation, and regulation of video lottery games. The games would be located at pari-mutuel sites and regulated by the Department of Lottery. Thirty-three pari-mutuel permit holders at 26 facilities and the Ocala Breeders facility would be eligible for licensure of video lottery terminals. According to the March 22, 2007, Revenue Estimating Conference, the fiscal impact to General

Revenue is \$67.3 million and \$920 million in additional revenues to the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund.

The bill provides for 2,500 slot machines per facility. It provides for extension of hours of operation by local governments, provides that ATM machines and check cashing are not allowed in the gaming areas, and provides for progressive games within or between the facilities. It allows shipment of gaming devices, including slot machines, into this state provided the destination of the shipment is an eligible facility.

AIF supports allowing existing pari-mutuel facilities to provide VLTs for their customers. The economic impact of this type of gaming cannot be ignored, especially given the tough revenue year Florida is experiencing. Not only would VLTs provide significant revenues to the state; they also represent increased economic development in the form of greater tourist activity.

CS/CS/CS/SB 2434 died in House messages.

CIVIL JUSTICE

HB 733 – Relating to Apportionment of Damages by Rep. Mitch Needelman (R-Melbourne)

In 2006, Florida's business community reaped the rewards of over 30 years of legislative battles, by successfully and completely abolishing the doctrine of joint and several liability from Florida's comparative fault system, which governs all negligence cases.

Unfortunately, HB 733 was filed this year to significantly undermine this important legal reform. This bill, also known as the "Fabre Fix," would prohibit defendants to a lawsuit from allocating any portion of liability or fault to any person or entity who is not a formal defendant to the lawsuit, whether or not the other entity actually caused the harm involved in the case. Current law was originally developed in 1993 by

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Barney T. Bishop III

President & CEO of Associated Industries of Florida ... former aide to state Treasurer Bill Gunter ... former executive director of the Florida Democratic Party ... more than 28 years of experience in legislative and political affairs ... areas of expertise include appropriations, criminal justice, and behavioral health care issues ... B.S. in political & judicial communication from Emerson College in Boston.

Committee and bills.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HB 83 – Relating to Venture Capital Investments by Rep. Michael Grant (R-Punta Gorda)

The bill appropriates a total of \$35 million dollars for venture capital investments and creates the Florida Capital Formation Act, which is designed to increase the amount of venture capital investment in Florida. Investments must be made in Florida-based businesses involved in the life sciences; information technology; advanced manufacturing processes; aviation and aerospace; and homeland security and defense.

The bill also creates the Institute for the Commercialization of Public Research to serve as a clearinghouse for research projects generated by universities and colleges, research institutes, and publicly supported organizations. The purpose of the institute is to assist in the commercialization of products by attracting private investment into projects generated in the state.

AIF supports legislation aimed at increasing the amount of venture capital investment in our state. Florida is significantly behind other growth states including Texas and California in the amount of money it spends on attracting venturing capital. This type of investment is essential for the growth of Florida’s emerging businesses.

CS/CS/HB 83 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-189; Senate companion bill CS/CS/CS/CS/SB 2420 was laid on the table.

HB 1325 – Relating to Don Davis Entertainment Industry Act by Rep. Don Davis (R-Jacksonville Beach)

The legislation is designed to encourage Florida to become a key state for filming and to develop the infrastructure and workforce to sustain a competitive market for film and entertainment. The bill was amended during the last days of session by replacing the tax credit provisions in the original bill with a direct appropriation that will fund incentives for encouraging film and TV productions to come to Florida. Another amendment specified the amount of the appropriation (\$25 million).

the Florida Supreme Court and was codified by the Florida Legislature in 1999. Last year’s legislation to abolish joint and several liability only complimented that established course of jurisprudence. In order for juries to fairly assign responsibility in a lawsuit they must be able to consider all parties — not just the ones selected by plaintiff attorneys. HB 733 would undo the Florida Supreme Court’s “Fabre” decision, which requires that all possible parties be included in the jury verdict form. Passage of this law would have allowed plaintiff attorneys to selectively chose which parties to go after — typically those with the deepest pockets.

AIF opposes any legislation aimed at weakening the Florida Supreme Court’s “Fabre” decision. Fair distribution of fault cannot be achieved if a jury cannot consider the actions of all parties involved.

HB 733 died in the House Safety & Security Council; Senate companion bill CS/SB 1558 died in the Senate Commerce Committee.



Tamela Ivey Perdue, Esq.

General Counsel and Shareholder with the law firm of Stiles, Taylor & Grace, P.A., managing the firm’s Tallahassee office ... more than 15 years legislative and legal experience, representing insurers and the business community on tort, workers’ compensation, insurance and other legal issues before the Legislative and Executive branches of government ... established legal practice specializing in insurance defense and administrative law ... formerly worked in the Florida Senate ... B.S. from Lee University and J.D. from Stetson University.

Issues: Workers’ Compensation Reform, Tort, Civil Justice

Bill supported by AIF

Bill opposed by AIF

Film and TV productions have the ability to employ a workforce for a longer period and provide greater stability to the state's entertainment industry infrastructure. To date, approximately 53 percent of qualified expenditures for the incentive program have been spent on Florida resident wages. The remaining 47 percent has been spent with Florida vendors or businesses. In fiscal year 05/06 alone, approximately 4,027 Florida jobs were created due to productions qualifying for the incentive program.

AIF supports legislation that encourages growth in Florida's emerging film industry. The unequivocal success of this program is hard to ignore. Attracting large-scale film and entertainment productions to Florida is a boon to our economy.

CS/CS/HB 1325 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-125; Senate companion bill CS/SB 96 was laid on the table.

👍 HB 1503 – Relating to Super Enterprise Zones by Rep. David Rivera (R-Miami)

This bill creates Super Enterprise Zones and gives the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development the ability to designate five Super Enterprise Zones in the state for a 10-year period each. To qualify as a super enterprise zone an area must be located in an enterprise zone and meet specific economic criteria. Designation as a super enterprise zone will provide certified businesses in the zone with a tax-free status. Certified businesses will be eligible for a 100 percent exemption from sales and discretionary tax on tangible personal property. In addition, retail sales made by certified businesses in a Super Enterprise Zone are provided a 100 percent exemption on sales and discretionary tax for any tangible personal property item priced up to \$1,000.

Initially, the bill was to create five of these zones, but due to the tough budget year the bill was amended early on to reduce the number to one. As amended, the bill creates a Super Enterprise Zone in the city of Overtown in Miami-Dade County. This Super Enterprise Zone will be implemented as a pilot program.

AIF supports the concept of establishing Super



Enterprise Zones. There are several examples from states with similar programs that show that these Super Enterprise Zones are successful in attracting new investment and new companies to areas that need it the most. The potential for increased job creation and higher wages makes this idea good public policy.

CS/HB 1503 died in Senate messages; Senate companion bill CS/SB 856 died in the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

👍 HB 1521, HB 1523, HB 1525, HB 1527 – Relating to Sure Ventures Program by Rep. Gayle Harrell (R-Port St. Lucie)

HB 1521 creates the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program to finance through grants the commercialization of products and services developed through research and development at public universities in Florida. The goal is to convert goods or services produced by public universities into consumer products. The bill creates an entity called Sure Ventures Commercialization Inc. for the purposes of receiving, holding, and distributing the venture capital funds appropriated by the Legislature. Furthermore, the bill would have appropriated \$13 million for fiscal year 2007-2008 from the

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Chris Verlander

Senior vice president – corporate development of Associated Industries of Florida ... more than 27 years of expertise in insurance lobbying activities ... former president (1994-1997) and vice chairman (1997-1999) of American Heritage Life Insurance Company ... B.S. from Georgia Tech and M.B.A. from the University of Florida.

Issues: General Issues

General Revenue Fund for the costs associated with starting these new programs, plus \$35 million in tax credits that may be issued at no more than \$10 million per fiscal year from July 1, 2012 and July 1, 2037.

Venture capital is essential for emerging technologies and companies to be able to get their products to the market. Presently, Florida's colleges and universities provide excellent support for research and development, but they fall behind in their ability to market these products and grow these companies. According to the bill's staff analysis "Venture capital investment in Florida is low compared to the amount of investment found in other states such as California, Massachusetts, New York, and Texas. In 2006, California had 1,445 venture capital deals totaling over \$12 billion in investment. Massachusetts, New York, and Texas all had at least \$1.25 billion in venture capital investment. Florida attracted only \$305 million in venture capital investment."

HB 1523, 1525, and 1527 are linked with HB 1521 and create the necessary trust funds (HB 1525) and establish the necessary public records exemptions (HB 1523 & 1527) for the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program to be able to operate.

AIF supports legislation that creates the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program. Florida must begin to get in the proper posture to be able to compete with other states for these valuable venture capital dollars. This type of investment is critical for the growth of high-paying, high-skill companies and for the diversification of Florida's economy. The jobs created by these emerging technologies are typically much higher-paying than others and attract the very best workers to our state.

HB 1521, HB 1523, HB 1525, and HB 1527 died in the House Economic Expansion & Infrastructure Council; Senate companion bills CS/CS/CS/SB 2414 died on the Senate Calendar; SB 2424 and SB 2426 died in the Senate Governmental Operations Committee.

👍 HB 1283 – Relating to Black Business Investment Board by Rep. Jennifer Carroll (R-Jacksonville)

The bill makes revisions to the operation of the Black Business Investment Board, a state-run entity that will

advise the Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development (OTTED) on the needs and progress of minority-owned businesses in the state. The bill also creates the Florida Black Business Investment Act, which is intended to increase the availability of capital to black business enterprises. Additionally, the bill creates the Black Business Loan Program, also to be housed under OTTED, to provide loans, loan guarantees, and investments through eligible recipients such as Black Business Investment Corporations or others, to black business enterprises that cannot otherwise obtain capital through conventional lending institutions.

AIF supports this legislation as it will aid in the development and success of minority businesses in the state.

CS/CS/HB 1283 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007- 157; Senate companion bill CS/CS/CS/SB 2860 was laid on the table.

EDUCATION

👎 SB 148 – Relating to Opening of Schools/Labor Day by Sen. Bill Posey (R-Rockledge)

The bill allows district school boards to adopt opening dates for the school year earlier than 14 days before Labor Day for schools that operate year-round or that offer an AP or dual enrollment program. The bill essentially revises last year's school start date legislation to exempt all secondary schools from the 14-day prior to Labor Day requirement. This could result in school boards adopting a start date for all secondary schools that is different than the start date for elementary and middle schools.

The business community is a supporter of a later school start date because state tourism benefits, as families with school-aged children would continue with vacation activities during the late summer months.

AIF opposes any changes to last year's legislation, which prohibits school boards from adopting opening dates for the school year earlier than 14 days before Labor Day each year.

SB 148 was laid on the table.



Jose L. Gonzalez

Coordinates AIF's lobbying team and all research and advocacy efforts for the association ... Master's degree in Public Administration with a specialization in Public Policy and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Florida.

Issues: Ethics & Elections, Government Accountability, Workforce Housing

👍 Bill supported by AIF

👎 Bill opposed by AIF

👍 HB 343 – Relating to Florida Work Experience Program by Rep. Aaron Bean (R-Fernandina Beach)

The bill expands the eligibility criteria for the Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP). FWEP is a work-study financial aid program that enables certain Florida postsecondary students to gain work experience in their field of study. Participating students work for an employer in their field of study and employers receive reimbursement from the student's postsecondary institution for wages paid to the student.

Florida's workforce must meet the demands of our state's employers. Therefore, AIF supports legislation that would increase participation and funding for the Florida Work Experience Program. Allowing students to gain valuable, real-world experience in their field of study is sound public policy.

CS/HB 343 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-113; Senate companion bill CS/CS/SB 918 was laid on the table.

👍 HB 1161 – Relating to High School to Business Career Enhancement Act by Rep. Kevin Ambler (R-Tampa)

This bill creates the High School to Business Career Enhancement Act and authorizes district school boards to adopt policies to provide for up to 100 high school internships annually through employers that partner with the school district. As an incentive to participate in this program, the businesses that partner with a school district to provide paid internships will receive a credit for 50 percent of the total wages paid to each student during the internship. Students are not authorized to work more than twenty hours a week and businesses may claim up to four internships each year. A student can participate in the ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade and must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 and not be required to work more than 20 hours per week.

AIF supports legislation that encourages partnerships between local school boards and the private sector for the creation of internship programs that provide valuable real-world experience for Florida's future workforce.

CS/HB 1161 was approved by the Governor and

assigned Chapter number 2007-122; Senate companion bill CS/CS/SB 2458 was laid on the table.

👍 SB 1222 – Relating to Student Financial Assistance by Sen. Jeremy Ring (D-Margate)

The bill creates the Sure Futures Postgraduate Scholarship Program to match private-sector businesses with students who are seeking advanced degrees and employment. A corporate sponsor would provide a scholarship for a student, who would agree to work for the corporate sponsor for a minimum of 4 years after graduation. In return, the corporate sponsor becomes eligible for a credit against its corporate income tax liabilities equal to the donation. The maximum corporate income tax credits available the first 2 years of the program shall be \$10 million annually, minus the costs to administer the scholarship program. The bill also creates a non-profit board of directors to administer the program.



**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Keyna Cory (Chief Lobbyist)

President, Public Affairs Consultants, a public affairs and governmental relations consulting firm ... more than 22 years of experience representing a variety of clients, from small entrepreneurs to Fortune 500 companies, before the Florida Legislature ... majored in political science at the University of Florida.

Issues: Environment, Finance, General Business, Natural Resources, Taxation, Workforce Housing

AIF supports legislation that strengthens the quality of Florida's workforce by encouraging the state's best and brightest to remain in state and work for business and corporations based in Florida. In addition, the bill has the potential to increase the number of post-graduate degrees being awarded in Florida by allowing businesses in Florida to pay students to obtain these advanced degrees.

CS/SB 1222 died in the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

👍 SB 1232 – Relating to Career & Professional Education by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Niceville)

The bill creates the Florida Career and Professional Education Act to provide a statewide planning partnership between business and education communities, to expand and retain high-value industry, and sustain a vibrant state economy. Public high schools are required to meet the following standards for career and professional academies: a rigorous and relevant curriculum that leads to industry-recognized certification in high-demand occupations; the award of a standard high school diploma; and opportunities for high school students to simultaneously earn college credit. High school graduates who attain industry certification are better prepared to enter both postsecondary education and the workforce in high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand careers.

The bill requires school districts to develop, in collaboration with local workforce boards and the postsecondary community, strategic five-year plans that objectively address the needs of local and regional workforce through the development and implementation of career academies. The strategic plan must include provisions for at least one career and professional academy to be operational in the school district at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

AIF supports legislation aimed at increasing the number of career academies throughout Florida's school boards. Data has proven that students who enroll and graduate from these career academies earn higher wages and are more prepared to enter the workforce. In order to attract the very best companies

and employers to Florida, we must graduate students with advance technical skills and with real-world experience.

CS/CS/SB 1232 was approved by Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-216.

👍 SB 1238 – Relating to Education by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Niceville)

The bill is a comprehensive education initiative, which requires the State Board of Education to systematically review and replace the Sunshine State Standards with the new World Class Education Standards. The World Class Education Standards would more closely align Florida's curriculum standards to the knowledge demands students will face in a global economy by integrating the following skills: critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, effective communication, effective collaboration, self-directed learning, information and media literacy, global awareness, and civic engagement.

AIF supports legislation that will help prepare students to compete in a global economy. Florida must no longer compare its students with those in other states; instead, we must compare our students with those in other countries if our goal is to compete in the global economy. School curriculums should emphasize the core skills such as math, reading, and writing.

CS/SB 1238 died in the Senate Education Pre-K - 12 Appropriations Committee; House companion bill CS/HB 7151 died in Senate messages.

👍 SB 2598 – Relating to Governor's School for Science & Technology by Sen. Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville)

Currently, Florida does not operate a residential program for secondary students, which emphasizes the areas of accelerated math, science, and technology. SB 2598 creates the Governor's School, a residential program that focuses on those areas for qualifying students in grades 9-12. The school would also provide summer training programs for teachers. The program would be located in Brevard County, and be operated



Robert P. Asztalos

Partner with Buigas, Asztalos & Associates and the Director of Governmental Affairs for Delta Health Group ... directed the Nursing Home profession's litigation reform campaign in 2000-01 and served as the Director of the Heal Healthcare in Florida Coalition ... Master's degree in Legislative Affairs and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from George Washington University.

Issues: Health Care, Medical Malpractice

👍 Bill supported by AIF

👎 Bill opposed by AIF

by the Florida Virtual School (FLVS), which was founded in 1997 as the nation's first statewide Internet-based public high school.

The FLVS would appoint a school director and adopt rules to specify requirements for admission, standards for selection of students, and the number of students to be enrolled. Students would apply and be selected for enrollment based on test scores or favorable recommendations from teachers or school staff.

AIF supports innovative programs in education that help prepare students compete in a global economy by focusing on core subjects like reading, writing, and math. Florida must no longer compare its students with those in other states; instead we must compare our students with those in other countries if our goal is to compete in the global economy.

CS/SB 2598 died in the Senate pending reference review.

ELECTIONS

👍 HB 537 – Relating to Elections Rep. David Rivera (R-Miami)

The bill establishes January 29 as the new date for Florida's presidential primary starting in 2008. The idea behind this proposal was to make Florida more relevant in the national political picture. Florida now bypasses a number of states that hold their primaries on February 5. In addition, the bill contains language which requires all voting machines to have a paper trail, thus fulfilling one of Governor Crist's (R) campaign promises.

HB 537 also contains a number of changes to Florida's election law, including a new provision which allows elected officials to run for federal office without having to resign from their current offices. It also includes a signature-revocation process for voters who sign a petition form to place a citizen initiative on the ballot. This signature-revocation process allows voters who have changed their mind about supporting a proposed amendment or who signed by mistake to revoke their signature. Voters have 150 days from the date their original petition is verified by the supervisor

of elections to fill out a revocation form.

AIF supports moving up Florida's presidential primary date in order to make Florida and its voters more relevant in the national selection of presidential candidates. Few other states can match Florida's diversity of population and geography; therefore, Florida is much better equipped to serve as cross-section of the entire country. AIF also strongly supports the establishment of a signature revocation process.

CS/HB 537 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-30.

👍 SB 900 – Relating Initiative Petitions by Sen. Bill Posey (R-Rockledge)

This bill imposes additional requirements on petition gathering to secure ballot position for an issue. The bill specifies what information must be presented to a supervisor of election in order for the petition to be valid. The bill requires voters who sign a petition form to date the form when it is signed. Additionally, the bill requires petition forms to be submitted to a supervisor of elections within 30 days from the date they are signed by the voter in order to be verified as valid.

The bill also provides a means for revocation of previously signed petitions by electors, which essentially mirrors the process by which the petition was initially secured. Signatures on a petition may be revoked within 120 days after a signature has been verified by the supervisor of elections by submitting a signed petition-revocation form to the appropriate supervisor. These forms must be made available at all supervisors of elections' main offices and branch offices.

AIF supports legislation that establishes a transparent and structured signature gathering process that is accountable to the voters of Florida. AIF also strongly supports the establishment of a signature revocation process.

CS/SB 900 was vetoed by the Governor.

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Pete J. Buigas

Pete Buigas, partner in Buigas, Asztalos & Associates, has represented various associations and corporations and developed strategies to direct legislative action on health care and education issues ... formerly served as Deputy Director for AHCA and managed division responsible for statewide regulation of all health care facilities, manage care industry, Certificate of Need (CON) program, and provider/facility complaints.

Issues: Education, Workforce Development

👍 SB 1920 – Relating to Ballot Initiatives by Sen. Mike Fasano (R-New Port Richey)

The bill grants private property owners the explicit right to prohibit signature-gathering activities relating to citizen ballot initiatives. A property owner may prohibit activities generally or on any specific initiative, or may permit such activities with reasonable “time, place, and manner” restrictions to be uniformly applied. The bill codifies into statute recent case law including a case involving Publix supermarkets in which the courts found that property owners do have the right to regulate petitioners.

AIF supports legislation, which allows property owners to regulate the gathering of petitions on their property.

CS/SB 1920 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-231; House companion bill CS/HB 559 was laid on the table.

ENERGY

👍 SB 436 – Relating to Oil or Natural Gas Drilling by Sen. Michael Bennett (R-Bradenton)

This Senate resolution proposes an amendment to Florida’s Constitution that prohibits drilling for oil or natural gas within submerged lands of the state and within 250 miles from Florida’s coastline. Furthermore, the bill directs the Legislature to enact legislation to enforce the provision.

AIF opposes any limitations on drilling in the outer continental shelf (OCS) of the Gulf of Mexico. Florida and our nation as a whole should concentrate on achieving energy interdependence so that our businesses have access to affordable and reliable sources of energy.

SJR 436 died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

👍 SB 996 – Relating to Energy Efficient Products/ Sales Tax by Sen. Lee Constantine (R-Altamonte Springs)

The bill creates a sales tax holiday for energy-efficient products beginning on the first Saturday in October 2007, for a 14-day period, on the sale of new energy-

efficient products having a selling price of \$1,500 per product or less during that period. The exemption would apply only when the energy-efficient product is purchased for non-commercial home or personal use rather than for trade, business, or resale. As used in this section, the term “energy-efficient product” means a dishwasher, clothes washer, air conditioner, ceiling fan, compact florescent light bulb, dehumidifier, programmable thermostat, or refrigerator that has been designated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency or by the United States Department of Energy as meeting or exceeding the requirements under the Energy Star Program of either agency.

SB 996 eventually became the Senate companion for the House’s energy policy legislation, HB 7123.

AIF supports this bill because exempting these products from sales tax should increase business activity, thus helping the retailers of this state while at the same time promoting the use of more energy efficient products across the state.

CS/CS/CS/SB 996 was laid on the table; refer to CS/HB 7123.



Al Cardenas, Esq.

Partner with the law firm of Tew Cardenas LLP, chairs the Advocacy and Governmental Affairs group in Miami, Tallahassee and Washington, DC ... served two terms as Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida ... served as an appointee for President Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush ... twice-named one of Washington, DC’s top lobbyists ... currently represents some of Florida’s largest corporate and governmental entities before the Florida Legislature ... graduate of Florida Atlantic University and the Seton Hall University School of Law.

Issues: Federal and General Business

👍 Bill supported by AIF

👎 Bill opposed by AIF

👍 HB 7123 – Relating to Energy by Rep. Stan Mayfield (R-Vero Beach) and Rep. Bob Allen (R-Merit Island)

This bill picks up where the Legislature left off with the passage of SB 888, last year's energy policy legislation, and establishes a number of new provisions that should make Florida one of the nation's leaders in renewable energy policy. Originally, the bill would have appropriated around \$80 million dollars in incentives for energy efficient products and renewable energy grants. This amount was reduced to \$62 million after negotiations with the Senate. As amended by the Senate, the bill now contains less consumer-oriented provisions (sales tax holidays on energy efficient products, for example) and focuses more on ways to jump-start the production of alternative energy in Florida. Some of the funding will go towards the construction of a cellulosic ethanol demonstration plant at the University of Florida.

AIF recognizes the importance energy plays in keeping Florida's economy healthy and vibrant. Any legislation aimed at providing incentives for the development of new energy and efficiency technologies should be supported. Every effort should be made to undertake a balanced approach that avoids mandates and unrealistic requirements on energy suppliers and producers.

CS/HB 7123 was vetoed by the Governor.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

👍 HB 1375 – Relating to Affordable Housing by Rep. Mike Davis (R-Naples)

The bill provides property tax relief for affordable housing projects by stipulating that these projects must be appraised according to their current use rather than "highest and best" use. It also requires certain local governments to identify adequate sites for affordable housing by July 1, 2008 or face the loss of state housing dollars. It also exempts developers from having to meet transportation concurrency requirements if a project is in near proximity to an employment center and 50 percent of the housing units in such project are occu-

piated by an employee of this employment center. The bill also establishes expedited permitting for certain affordable housing projects.

AIF supports legislation that provides incentives for local governments and developers to build new workforce housing projects. Employers in Florida must be able to attract a stable and dependable workforce. This can only be accomplished if employees can find affordable homes close to the jobsite. In addition, local governments must be held accountable so that the dollars they receive from the state are well spent.

CS/HB 1375 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-198; Senate companion bill CS/CS/CS/SB 780 was laid on the table.

👍 SB 988 – Relating to High-Risk Offenders by Sen. Nancy Argenziano (R-Crystal River)

The bill makes significant changes to the Jessica Lunsford Act, which was enacted in 2005 to keep sexual predators away from school children. Unfortunately, the way the legislation was written, it made it very difficult for businesses to comply with its intent. Multiple background checks were being required for those businesses that had contracts with multiple districts. Definitions describing individuals not allowed to step on school grounds were also not clear.

Under the bill, non-instructional personnel who are under direct supervision will not need the finger-print background screening previously required and school districts will be able to share information with other school districts. Also, the amount a school district can charge for the background screening was capped.

AIF supports SB 988 since it will help companies who do business with school districts save time and money on the background screening for those employees who do not have direct contact with students, while upholding the integrity of the original law, which was to protect our children from sexual predators.

CS/SB 988 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-207.

👍 HB 1117 – Relating to Personal Identification Information by Rep. John Legg (R-Port Richey)

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Chris Dudley

Joined Southern Strategy Group in 2000 after serving seven years in state government ... formerly served as Assistant to the Chief of Staff and Acting Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Jeb Bush and as Deputy Chief of Staff, Deputy Legislative Director, and Special Assistant to former Lt. Governor Frank T. Brogan ... Bachelor's degree in Political Science from University of South Florida.

Issues: Economic Development, International Trade



The bill amends current law dealing with identity theft by enhancing the penalties for those individuals who willfully and without authorization fraudulently use personal identification information concerning an individual who is 65 years of age or older. In addition, the bill provides that any person who willfully possesses “sensitive personal information” concerning an individual without first obtaining that individual’s consent commits a third-degree felony. The term “sensitive personal information” is defined to mean any name or number that may be used, alone or in conjunction with any other information, to identify a specific individual including bank account numbers, credit or debit card numbers, etc.

AIF supports HB 1117 and the increased penalties it enacts for those individuals who fraudulently obtain the personal information of our state’s seniors.

CS/HB 1117 died in Senate messages.

👍 HB 7197 – Relating to Social Security and Financial Account Numbers by Rep. Frank Attkisson (R-Kissimmee)

The bill reenacts a public records exemption for social security numbers contained in public records. Despite opposition from the Florida League of Cities, AIF was able to maintain the ability of commercial entities to obtain social security numbers contained in public records for legitimate commercial purposes such as matching and verifying information, credit granting,

insurance purposes and other commercial uses.

AIF supports this legislation because it continues to allow businesses to access critical personal identity information. Most financial institutions in our state depend on the sharing of personal information in order to cross reference loan and credit applications, verify the identity of customers, and even prevent fraud.

HB 7197 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-251.

GOVERNMENT REFORM

HB 7177 – Relating to Florida Government Accountability Act by the House Policy and Budget Council

The bill makes modifications and strengthens the existing Florida Government Accountability Act, which was passed last session. The Act provides for a periodic review process for the continuation, modification, or abolition of many of the state agencies currently in existence. The Act also establishes an eight-year review schedule under which each state agency is given a termination date. The Act also attempts to address the issue of redundancy and red-tape by reviewing an agency’s service delivery so that duplicitous rules and procedures are done away with. This is important to the business community because employers interact with state agencies on a daily basis through the application of permits or through enforcement of licensure.

This year’s legislation makes changes to the agency review schedule by grouping agencies according to subject matter so that the review commission can consider the agencies across a common policy arena.

AIF supports the strengthening and continuation of the Florida Government Accountability Act. Curbing unnecessary government expansion is wise public policy. Businesses and employers in Florida must be lean and efficient. Holding state agencies to this standard is not only appropriate, but also necessary for Florida’s economy to continue to prosper.

HB 7177 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-161; Senate companion bill CS/SB 1152 was laid on the table.



Mark Flynn

Vice president of J. Keith Arnold & Associates ... former economic development executive with extensive experience representing business on a broad range of issues, including growth management and transportation ... has also worked for both a member of Congress and a member of the Florida House of Representatives ... graduate from the University of South Dakota with a B.S. in mass communications.

Issues: Economic Issues, Transportation

👍 Bill supported by AIF

👎 Bill opposed by AIF

HEALTH CARE

SB 110 – Relating to Health Insurance / Prostate Cancer Coverage by Sen. Tony Hill (D-Jacksonville)

The bill mandates health insurance policies, group health insurance policies and health maintenance contracts to provide coverage for annual screenings for prostate cancer for men age 40 or older and provides coverage for these prostate cancer screenings. It was named the “Senator Les Miller Act” after the former senator from Tampa who is battling prostate cancer.



Currently, insurance coverage issued in the state of Florida covers testing done as medically necessary and preventative services for the screening of prostate cancer. However, there is a discrepancy as to what ages should be covered in such testing. Most testing covered by insurance plans limits them to age fifty and over. The current plans do not include younger men who are of a higher risk of contracting prostate cancer.

AIF consistently opposes additional mandated coverages because the resultant cost increases could force some insurers out of the market and price health care insurance out of the reach of many employers and businesses.

CS/SB 110 died in House messages; House companion bill CS/HB 345 died in the House Policy & Budget Council.

HB 201 – Relating to Health Care Clinic Indigent Care Trust Fund and HB 203 – Relating to Health Care Clinic Indigent Care Tax Credit by Rep. Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring)

HB 201 creates the Health Care Clinic Indigent Care Trust Fund within the Department of Revenue, effective July 1, 2007. This fund is established as a depository for monies received from corporate taxpayers and is to be used to make disbursements to qualifying health care clinics that provide medical care to indigent persons. The fund will be administered by a board of directors, with the assistance of the Department.

The bill specifies that corporate taxpayer contributions are accepted into the fund in the order contributions are received; however, the trust fund is subject to an aggregate limit of \$50 million. An eligible health care clinic can apply to the board of the Health Care Clinic Indigent Care Trust Fund for disbursements for operations, personnel, and capital improvements. Applications must be accepted by the board semiannually on June 1 and December 1. The board will determine disbursements on the basis of need, the date of request, and the applicant’s ability to obtain alternative funding. The bill stipulates that a single health care clinic may not receive more than \$2.5 million in total assistance from the fund in a given year. Applications

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Richard Gentry

Head of Gentry & Associates, a government consulting firm in Tallahassee ... prior General and Legislative Counsel for the Florida Home Builders Association ... in his 23 years with the association, Mr. Gentry was actively involved in legislation which included growth management, affordable housing and environmental laws.

Issues: Growth Management, Transportation, Workforce Housing

received at the end of the fiscal year can be carried over and determined in the next fiscal year.

HB 203, which is linked to HB 201, would provide an income tax credit for corporate tax payers who contribute to The Health Care Clinic Indigent Care Trust Fund. The intent of the bill is to encourage corporate taxpayers to make monetary contributions to provide relief to health care clinics who provide a disproportionate share of medical care for indigent persons.

AIF supports market-based solutions to the problem of Florida's uninsured. According to a study by the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), approximately 19 percent of all Floridians do not have health insurance. These individuals usually rely on emergency rooms for their primary care. Typically, this kind of care is the most expensive option. Encouraging businesses to help fund indigent care clinics is sound public policy.

HB 201 and 203 died in House Healthcare Council; Senate companion bills CS/SB 1654 and CS/SB 1646 died in the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

 **SB 274 – Relating to Cystic Fibrosis Treatment by Sen. Gwen Margolis (D-Miami Beach)**

The bill requires group health insurance policies and group health maintenance organization (HMO) contracts to provide coverage for all medically necessary chest physiotherapy provided by a licensed respiratory therapist, home health care, equipment, supplies, and enteral formulas used to treat cystic fibrosis if the patient's treating physician or a physician authorized by the insurer or HMO who specializes in the treatment of cystic fibrosis certifies that such services are medically necessary. The insurer may require that the policyholder or subscriber is responsible for any deductible or co-payment that generally applies under the policy or contract.

The bill would not apply to any individual health insurance policy or individual HMO contract. It would also not apply to the standard policy, basic policy, or limited benefit policy sold to a small employer since a mandated benefit does not apply without a specific reference to such small group policies.

AIF consistently opposes additional mandated coverages because the resultant cost increases could force some insurers out of the market and price health care insurance out of the reach of many employers and businesses.

SB 274 died in House messages.

 **HB 291 – Relating to Mental & Nervous Disorders/ Coverage by Rep. Ed Homan (R-Temple Terrace)**

The bill specifically defines those mental health conditions that must be covered within the mandated offering, generally including all diagnostic categories of mental health conditions listed in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and as listed in the mental and behavioral disorders section of the current International Classification of Diseases. In addition, the bill includes language dealing with the issue of mental health parity and outlines that mental health benefits may not be more restrictive than the treatment limitations and cost-sharing requirements that are applicable to other diseases, illnesses, and medical conditions.

AIF consistently opposes additional mandated coverages because the resultant cost increases could force some insurers out of the market and price health care insurance out of the reach of many employers and businesses.

CS/HB 291 died in the House Policy & Budget Council.

 **HB 833 – Relating to Infant Eye Care by Rep. Luis Garcia (D-Miami)**

The bill requires every baby born in a hospital to receive, prior to being discharged from the hospital; an eye examination performed using an ophthalmoscope and dilation of the pupils for detection of pediatric congenital and ocular abnormalities. The bill specifies that failure to comply with this requirement does not make a person guilty of a second-degree misdemeanor, which is the penalty for failure to comply with the requirement to instill a prophylactic in the eyes of a newborn.



Peter Harris, Esq.

President and CEO of ADG Business & Governmental Consultants ... more than 16 years of experience successfully designing and implementing substantive legislative, governmental and management programs for business and government ... effectively worked with key policy makers in all branches of government ... graduate of the University of Miami and Florida State University College of Law.

Issues: Education, Governmental Outsourcing, Workforce Development

 Bill supported by AIF

 Bill opposed by AIF

An eye examination performed using an ophthalmoscope and dilation of the pupils can result in the early diagnosis of serious ocular conditions, including retinoblastoma and congenital cataract, in which early treatment is essential for future ocular and systemic health. Also, the bill requires health insurance policies, health maintenance contracts and Medicaid to provide coverage for an eye examination performed using an ophthalmoscope and dilation of the pupils at birth, at 6 to 8 weeks of age, and at 6 to 9 months of age to detect pediatric congenital and ocular abnormalities and developmental abnormalities.

AIF consistently opposes additional mandated coverages because the resultant cost increases could force some insurers out of the market and price health care insurance out of the reach of many employers and businesses.

HB 833 died in House Healthcare Council.

👍 HB 1121, HB 1123 – Relating to Florida Health Information Network Corporation by Rep. Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring)

HB 1121 creates the Florida Health Information Network Corporation as a public/private partnership that will establish a secure, privacy-protected, and integrated statewide network for the communication of electronic health information. The not-for-profit corporation will be managed by an uncompensated board of directors that will consist of 15 members.

The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) is required to develop a plan and performance standards for the formation and operation of the network and must contract with the corporation to implement the plan for the period of July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2010. The primary duty of the Florida Health Information Network Corporation is implementing and overseeing a statewide health information network. Among the other duties given to the corporation, the Florida Health Information Network Corporation is charged with developing and enforcing interoperability, privacy, and security standards, fostering the creation and expansion of regional health information organizations, and recruiting participants into the network.

HB 1123 creates a public records exemption for certain information held by the Florida Health Information Network Corporation established in HB 1121.

Furthermore, HB 1123 provides that patient medical records may be disclosed with a patient's written consent and in a medical emergency.

AIF supports the creation of Health Information Network, which will increase efficiency and reduce the number of unnecessary treatments. The creation of a statewide network for the exchange of electronic medical records may result in substantial savings, therefore reducing the cost of health insurance for employers and their employees.

CS/HB 1121 and HB 1123 died in Senate messages; HB 1121's Senate Companion bill CS/CS/SB 2348 died in the Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee.

👎 SB 1172 – Relating to Breast Cancer Treatment by Sen. Arthenia Joyner (D-Tampa)

This bill requires that, if an insurance policy or health maintenance organization (HMO) contract provides coverage for breast cancer treatment, the inpatient hospital coverage for lymph node dissections must be for the time period determined to be medically necessary by the treating physician in accordance with prevailing medical standards. The bill also requires the policy or contract providing such breast cancer treatment to provide outpatient follow-up care for a lymph node dissection consistent with prevailing medical standards. Also, the bill specifies that these provisions do not require an insured patient to have a lymph node dissection in the hospital or stay in the hospital for any fixed period of time following a lymph node dissection.

AIF consistently opposes additional mandated coverages because the resultant cost increases could force some insurers out of the market and price health care insurance out of the reach of many employers and businesses.

SB 1172 died in House messages.

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Nick Iarossi, Esq.

Founding partner of Capital City Consulting, LLC ... formerly worked in the Florida Senate, the Florida House of Representatives and the Office of Insurance Regulation ... expertise in banking and insurance, privacy and public records, health care, procurement, parimutuels, technology, and education ... graduate from the Florida State University College of Law.

Issues: Insurance, Consumer Fraud, Privacy



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SB 1974 – Relating to State Information Technology by the Senate Governmental Operations Committee

The bill establishes a series of policy goals and objectives for the organization and delivery of state technology resources. It creates the Agency for Enterprise Information Technology as the successor organization to the State Technology Office. The agency head is the Governor and Cabinet. The agency will act as the focal point for large-scale enterprise policy for state agencies, initially in four defined areas, and ultimately embracing the development of architecture standards and the consolidation of state agency data centers. The bill requires the new agency to develop and publish a strategic enterprise information technology plan to ensure effective and efficient government services. The bill provides an appropriation of \$2.3 million from the General Revenue Fund and 15 full-time equivalent positions to staff both the new agency and the Office of Information Security.

AIF and its Information Technology Council (ITC) support this major overhaul of how IT systems are managed by the State. SB 1974 represents a real improvement in enterprise IT governance and a real improvement in agency chief information officer training and responsibilities.

CS/CS/SB 1974 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-105; House companion bill CS/HB 1557 was laid on the table.

INSURANCE

HB 1223 – Relating to Citizens Property Insurance Corporation/Task Force by Rep. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla)

The bill seeks to address ways to curb the expansion of Citizens Insurance Company by creating the Citizens Property Insurance Mission Review Task Force whose role is to figure out a way to reduce the number of policies covered by this government-created insurance company. The bill was amended by entirely removing Section 2 from the bill, which would have prevented

HB 1401 – Relating to Health Care Access/Health Flex Plans by Rep. Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City)

The bill implements idea #88 from the 100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future. The bill expands health flex plan eligibility from 200 to 250 percent of the federal poverty level, which is \$20,650 for a family of four. The bill provides health flex plans with access to the employee group market (in certain circumstances) and allows certain licensed health care entities, local governments and health care districts to be deemed in compliance with the financial requirements to offer health flex plans; thereby expediting the Office of Insurance Regulation application process for those entities.

The bill creates a small business health insurance grant program to be administered by the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and provides a \$250,000 nonrecurring general revenue appropriation to the Agency for Workforce Innovation to award small business health insurance plan grants to eligible businesses.

AIF supports the market-based solutions to the problem of Florida's uninsured found in this legislation. According to a study by the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), approximately 19 percent of all Floridians do not have health insurance. These individuals typically rely on emergency rooms for their primary care. Unfortunately, this kind of care is the most expensive option. Expanding access for low-income employees to health flex plans is sound public policy.

CS/CS/HB 1401 died in Senate messages.



H. Frank Meiners

President, Frank Meiners Governmental Consultants, LLC ... formerly with BellSouth as their Executive Director in Tallahassee where he lobbied communications issues ... graduate of the University of South Florida in Mathematics and of the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University.

Issues: Taxes, Technology, Telecommunications

 Bill supported by AIF

 Bill opposed by AIF

the Office of Insurance Regulation from disapproving insurance rate increases on the grounds that the proposed rates were excessive. This section was found objectionable because it would most likely bring rates to actuarially sound levels, thus increasing them dramatically.

Florida businesses are now liable for 41 percent of Citizens' deficits as a result of legislation passing during the 2007 Special Session on Property Insurance Reform. Floridians could be slapped with assessments ranging from \$1,400 to \$17,000 a year to bail out Citizens if the state has another hurricane season like it did in 2005.

AIF supports this legislation because it begins to develop strategies for curbing artificially suppressed insurance rates and the irresponsible expansion of Citizens Insurance Company, a government-administered insurance company that should be an insurer of last resort not the State's primary provider of insurance coverage.

CS/CS/HB 1223 died on the House calendar.

👍 HB 1267 – Relating to Property Insurance by Rep. Julio Robaina (R-Miami)

The bill lowers the threshold for Citizens' eligibility. Prior to this year's Special Session on Property Insurance Reform, an applicant was not eligible for Citizens coverage if they received a quote for coverage from a private insurer. The Special Session legislation, HB 1A, provides that a private insurer quote, in which the proposed premium is greater than 25 percent does not disqualify an applicant from coverage through Citizens. The bill lowers this threshold from 25 percent to 15 percent, thus further making Citizens a competitor as opposed to a provider of last resort. In addition, HB 1A froze Citizens' rates at the 2006 level through 2007. HB 1267 extends this moratorium on Citizens rate increases to January 1, 2009. Both of these provisions will shift additional exposure from the private sector to the state and further increases the likelihood of future deficits which businesses will be taxed to cover.

The bill was amended during its last committee stop by removing a provision reducing Citizens' eligibility



threshold from 25 percent to 15 percent. Also, the provision that would have extended the Citizens' rate freeze an additional year to January 1, 2009, was also removed. AIF was glad that these good amendments were adopted, but they do not do enough to fix this bad bill. The bill was also amended to include language from HB 1223, which creates the Citizens Property Insurance Mission Review Task Force.

AIF opposes this legislation because it establishes parameters conducive to the expansion of Citizens Insurance Company. Citizens was originally created to be the government's insurer of last resort, however, recent actions by the Florida Legislature have provided Citizens with certain competitive advantages that allow it to compete directly with the private market. The bill further allows for the establishment of artificially suppressed rates and for the potential of future assessments on all lines of insurance.

CS/CS/HB 1267 died on the House calendar.

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



David Rancourt

Founding partner of Southern Strategy Group ... spent entire career in politics and government ... formerly served as Director of the Florida Division of Elections, as Deputy Secretary of State, and Deputy Chief of Staff under Jeb Bush ... serves a strong client base with varied interests in both executive and legislative branches of government ... holds a B.S. in Economics from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Florida.

Issues: Executive Branch

 **SB 2498 – Relating to Hurricane Preparedness and Insurance by Sen. Rudy Garcia (R-Miami)**

This was one of the very last bills to pass this session. The bill establishes a number of additional property insurance reforms including: making it easier for Citizens to compete in the private market by allowing consumers to be covered if a private insurer is more than 15 percent higher than comparable coverage from Citizens, prohibiting insurers from establishing new wholly-owned subsidiaries that operate only in Florida (PUP companies), and extending a freeze on Citizens' rates until January 1, 2009.

During debate on the last day of Session, 37 House members courageously supported an amendment by Rep. Dennis Ross (R-Lakeland) that would have prevented non-Citizen policyholders from having to be assessed in order to pay for any deficits accrued by Citizens. Sadly, the amendment was not adopted.

AIF opposes legislation that would make it easier for Citizens Insurance Company to compete with private property insurance providers. Citizens was designed to be the insurer of last resort, instead it now covers over 1 million policies across the state, thus dangerously exposing Florida to a tremendous amount of risk. Any losses will be paid on the backs of businesses and taxpayers through assessments on their insurance premiums.

CS/SB 2498 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-90.

 **HB 7057 – Relating to Hurricane Damage Mitigation by the Jobs and Entrepreneurship Council**

The bill's general intent is to make modifications to strengthen the existing "My Safe Florida Home" program, which was passed two years ago. The program provides grants to homeowners to harden their homes in order to reduce losses as a result of hurricane damage.

As originally filed, the bill would provide grants and loans for mitigation to homeowners across the state. A significant change was made in the final days of session by the Senate to only offer grants to homes built before 2001, valued at \$300,000 or less, and located within the

state's high-risk zones – mainly coastal regions of the state. This was done in order for the state to get the "most bang for its bucks" since these homes are the ones that need mitigation the most. Several Representatives from inland districts expressed their frustration over this change in the bill, which does not allow homeowners outside the high-risk areas to apply for these grants.

In addition, the Senate added language that stipulates that homes in these high-risk areas that are valued at more than \$750,000 must install protective window coverings (shutters or other coverings approved by the Florida Building Code) in order to be eligible for coverage under Citizens Insurance Company, the government-run insurer of last resort. These same homes must also install shutters if they apply for any building permit for construction work estimated to cost more than \$50,000.

The bill specifies that 400,000 home inspections must take place within a two-year window. According to the Department of Financial Services, the state agency responsible for the "My Safe Florida Home" program, nearly 50,000 homeowners are currently on the program's waiting list.

One of the surest ways to minimize Florida's exposure to hurricane losses is by making sure our housing stock is hardened to withstand the dangers of wind-storm debris.

AIF supports legislation aimed at strengthening, expanding, and fully funding Florida's home hardening efforts established by the "My Safe Florida Home" program. We are encouraged to see that many of AIF's and its Florida Hurricane Crisis Coalition's (FHCC) recommendations have found their way into this piece of legislation.

CS/HB 7057 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-126; Senate companion bill CS/CS/SB 1864 was laid on the table.

 **HB 7077 – Relating to Hurricane Preparedness and Insurance by the Jobs and Entrepreneurship Council**

This bill was described as a "glitch" or clean-up bill for HB 1A, the landmark property insurance reform bill



Jim Rathbun

President of Rathbun & Associates ... more than 18 years of experience representing individuals and entities before the Legislature, state agencies, and the governor and Cabinet ... formerly worked with the Florida House of Representatives and served as staff director of the House Republican Office ... B.S. from Florida State University.

Issues: Agriculture, Business Regulation, Energy, General Government, Utilities

 Bill supported by AIF

 Bill opposed by AIF

that was passed earlier this year during the Special Session on Property Insurance. The bill was presented by Chairman Ron Reagan (R-Sarasota) who stated from the outset that the bill would not change any of the reforms passed by during the Special Session. The bill makes several tweaks to many of the provisions found in the original HB 1A including: establishment of monthly payment plans; requires property insurers to reevaluate mitigation discounts given to a property every 5 years; further clarifies the Legislature’s intent in HB 1A that FIGA can use emergency assessments to pay the claims of all insolvent insurer’s claims, if the insurer became insolvent due to claims from hurricane damage; and the inclusion of 90-day time “prompt-pay” provisions, meaning that insurance companies have 90 days from the moment a policyholder called his or her agent about damages to their property to pay or process a claim.

Although the bill never passed, several of its provisions did find their way in SB 2498, which was signed into law by the Governor.

AIF supports efforts by the Legislature to address some of the unintended consequences resulting from the passage of HB 1A, which have led to an uncertain property insurance market in Florida.

HB 7077 died in House messages; Senate companion bill CS/SB 1866 was laid on the table.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

👍 HB 9 – Relating to Trespass/Railroad Property by Rep. Mark Mahon (R-Jacksonville)

The bill provides reasonable limitations to signage requirements on Florida’s 2,788 miles of railroad right of way. Existing law requires trespassing signage every 500 feet along that right-of-way. That requirement is too burdensome and costly to maintain. The bill would clarify the understanding that trespassing on railroad property exists regardless if the right of way is physically posted as a “no trespassing” area.

AIF supports this bill because it removes onerous and over-burdensome regulations on Florida businesses. AIF supports legislation that helps keep our railroads safe



from trespassing and eliminates the unrealistic requirement to post warnings every 500 feet. Florida has thousands of miles of railroad tracks, many of which go through very remote and inaccessible areas.

HB 9 was vetoed by the Governor; Senate companion bill SB 320 was laid on the table.

👍 HB 553 – Relating to Trespass/Penalties/Agricultural Property by Rep. Baxter Troutman (R- Winter Haven)

The bill amends Florida’s trespass law and provides stiffer penalties for those who willfully and maliciously damage fencing surrounding a private property. Additionally, the bill provides that a trespasser cannot: sue an agricultural landowner for damages related to the trespasser’s unlawful conduct; creates a new means for posting notice of “no trespassing” by the painting of purple lines along the borders of property, in lieu of traditional “no trespassing signs”; increases the criminal penalty from a second-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony for intentionally damaging or removing posted “no trespassing” signs; and increases the criminal penalty from a first-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony for breaking or injuring fences.

AIF supports legislation that enforces and protects the rights of Florida’s property owners. Discouraging persons to trespass on a private property should help business owners and citizens reduce their exposure to liability and costly litigation.

CS/HB 553 was withdrawn from consideration.

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Stephen W. Shiver

Director of Governmental Affairs for the Advocacy Group at Tew Cardenas ... former aide to House Speaker Tom Feeney and Majority Office Liaison to House Majority Leader Mike Fasano ... former Executive Director for the Republican Party of Florida ... has represented some of Florida’s largest corporate and governmental agencies before the Florida Legislature, including health care, education, utilities, and private sector businesses ... graduate of Florida State University.

Issues: Growth Management, Transportation

👍 HB 1167 – Relating to Pilot Programs/Specialized Dispute Resolution Divisions by Rep. David Simmons (R-Altamonte Springs)

The bill establishes legislatively funded business court divisions in the Ninth, Eleventh and Thirteenth Judicial Circuits of Florida. These court divisions have already been established by administrative orders of the chief judge of each circuit. The business courts will be authorized to decide complex business cases on a judicially enforced docketing schedule.

Business courts specialize in handling complex business cases, such as antitrust suits, intellectual property cases, franchise cases and unfair competition cases. Their goal is to handle business litigation matters in an effective and efficient manner. Benefits of a business court include implementation of standardized procedures, a higher degree of consistency of rulings on recurring issues, and economic stimulus to the community.

AIF strongly encourages the Florida Legislature to adopt and fund the Ninth, Eleventh and Thirteenth Circuits' business courts as a pilot program to begin establishing a uniform business court system throughout the metropolitan areas of the state. Florida employers will benefit greatly from these specialized courts. Their cases will settle quicker and costly litigation will be avoided.

CS/HB 1167 died on the House calendar.

👍 SB 1644 – Relating to Retail Theft by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Niceville)

This bill provides an enhanced penalty (second-degree felony) for retail theft exceeding a specified amount for persons who individually, or in concert with others, coordinate the activities of one or more persons in committing the offense. A recent University of Florida study has shown a recent rise in retail theft. This legislation is aimed at curbing this practice.

AIF supports legislation that helps retailers protect their merchandise and their bottom line from the effects of criminal activity.

CS/SB 1644 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-177.



John Thrasher, Esq.

Florida's Speaker of the House from 1999-2000 ... While leading the House, helped to pass some of the landmark reforms advanced by Gov. Bush, including an overhaul of the state's entire system of education ... the new medical school at FSU, John's alma mater, honors his name... John was elected to his first term as a state representative and was re-elected without opposition in 1994, 1996, and 1998.

Issues: Economic Development, Tort Reform

PROPERTY RIGHTS

👎 HB 1417 – Relating to Individual Personal Private Property Protection by Rep. Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala)

The bill is formally called the "Individual Personal Private Property Protection Act." The goal of the bill however, is to allow individuals to keep firearms stored in their cars at their places of employment. AIF has opposed this bill for the past two years; primarily because of the limitations it places on the "employment at will" doctrine that Florida employers depend on for doing business.

The bill would restrict employers from creating or maintaining policies, which ban firearms from their premises. It would also prohibit an employer from conditioning employment on an individual's consent to a search of their vehicle while parked on the employer's premises. The bill, as drafted, does not specify that its purpose is to promote the transportation and storage of firearms in employee vehicles. Instead, it refers to personal private property.

AIF opposes legislation that prohibits businesses from enforcing or maintaining policies that ban guns in the workplace. Employers should be allowed to establish these types of policies and exert their rights as property owners. Maintaining a safe work environment is paramount for the longevity of any employer in Florida.

HB 1417 died in the Environment & Natural Resources Council; Senate companion bill CS/SB 2356 died on the Senate calendar.

TAXATION

👍 SB 90 – Relating to Motor Fuel Taxes/Commercial Aviation by Sen. Jim King (R-Jacksonville)

Persons who use motor fuel in off-road agricultural vehicles and farm equipment, commercial fishing vessels and related equipment, and vessels and other equipment used in aquaculture operations are entitled to a refund of certain motor fuel taxes. The refund is conditioned on the requirement that no amount of the fuel was used in any vehicle or equipment operated on public highways.

👍 Bill supported by AIF

👎 Bill opposed by AIF



SB 90 adds a fourth category of vehicles and equipment: those used exclusively for commercial aviation purposes on airport property. It entitles persons who purchase and use motor fuel in the operation of aviation ground support vehicles and equipment to a refund of the motor fuel sales tax, the State Comprehensive Enhanced Transportation System (SCETS) Tax, and the local-option fuel tax, provided none of the fuel is used in vehicles or equipment operated on public roads.

Commercial aviation ground support companies will receive, in the aggregate, an estimated \$200,000 annually in motor fuel tax refunds, with a commensurate recurring loss in motor fuel tax revenues to the State Transportation Trust Fund, and an insignificant recurring loss of local option fuel tax revenues to local governments.

AIF supports providing refunds on motor fuel taxes to the airline industry as an incentive for these com-

panies to perhaps expand their services in the future.

SB 90 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-31; House companion bill CS/HB 67 was laid on the table.

👍 HB 211 – Relating to Hurricane Preparedness/ Sales Tax by Rep. Peter Nehr (R-Tarpon Tower)

This bill provides for a sales tax exemption period for the purchase of items typically associated with hurricane preparedness and for the purchase of certain items used to protect a structure from possible damage resulting from a hurricane or tropical storm. This bill specifies that these items will be exempt from sales tax for a period of 12 days beginning on June 1 of each year.

AIF supports increasing business activity by allowing Floridians to purchase essential hurricane and school supplies without having to pay sales tax.

CS/HB 211 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-25; Senate companion bill CS/CS/SB 92 was laid on the table.

👍 SB 1456 – Relating to Sales Tax/School Supplies and Clothing by Sen. Dan Webster (R-Winter Garden)

The bill establishes a sales tax holiday from August 4-13, 2007. During this sales tax holiday, books, clothing, footwear, wallets, bags that cost \$50 or less, and school supplies that cost \$10 or less are exempt from the state sales tax and county discretionary sales surtaxes (commonly called “local option sales taxes”). The bill specifies that the sales tax holiday does not apply to sales within a theme park, entertainment complex, public lodging establishment, or airport.

AIF supports increasing business activity by allowing Floridians to purchase essential hurricane and school supplies without having to pay sales tax.

CS/SB 1456 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-144; House companion bill CS/HB 215 was laid on the table.

👍 HB 245 – Relating to Sales Tax/Agricultural and Farm Items by Rep. Baxter Troutman (R-Winter Haven)

**2007
AIF
Lobby
Team**



Gerald Wester

Managing Partner, Capital City Consulting, LLC ... former chief deputy over Florida Department of Insurance's regulatory staff ... more than 31 years of lobbying experience ... expertise in insurance, banking, and health care issues ... Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Florida State University.

Issues: Health Care, Health Care Maintenance Organizations, Insurance, Medical Malpractice

The bill provides a sales tax exemption for purchases of low-volume irrigation, or micro-irrigation equipment, or components that are used exclusively in agricultural production. On top of providing economic incentives to our state's farmers, the bill also encourages water preservation since this specific type of equipment uses much less water and accomplishes the same amount of irrigation as older, less efficient equipment.

The bill was amended, however, to include a one-year sunset of the sales tax exemption. The sunset was adopted because of the bill's fiscal impact (approximately \$2.4 million in general revenue) and because of the tight budget year the state is experiencing.

AIF supports legislation that establishes sales tax exemptions that benefit our state's farmers. Agriculture is one of Florida's largest industries employing more than 388,000 people and producing an excess of \$50 billion dollars in total sales.

CS/HB 245 died in the House Policy & Budget Council; Senate companion bill SB 1968 died in the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

👍 HB 261 – Relating to Just Valuation of Property by Rep. Carlos Lopez-Cantera (R-Miami)

The bill amends current law and removes the requirement that property appraisers consider the highest and best use to which a property can be expected to be put in the immediate future when arriving at just valuation. The bill adds a provision, which requires property appraisers to appraise income-producing properties based solely on the income produced from that property.

For the business community a change in the way property is assessed would provide much needed relief from high property taxes. Redefining what constitutes "highest and best" use and appraising property based on the income it generates would significantly reduce the value of assessed property.

AIF supports the concept of appraising property based on its "current" use and not its "highest and best" use. Furthermore, if a property generates income it should be assessed based on the amount of income it generates at the present time.

CS/CS/HB 261 died in Conference Committee.

👍 HB 473 – Relating to Homestead Real Property/ Assessed Value by Rep. Robert Schenck (R-Springhill)

This proposed legislation would have required all homestead assessed valuations to be rolled back to the

assessed value for a similar home in the same county in 1994. The assessment would then be adjusted for all subsequent years as if the Save-Our-Homes limitations contained within Article VII, s. 4 of the Florida Constitution had been continuously in effect since January 1, 1995, and had been applied in each subsequent year. The change in assessment valuation will be computed and will be effective for all assessments made for tax years beginning January 1, 2008.

AIF supports legislation that attempts to address the issue of "just valuation" in the appraisal of property. This legislation would ensure that properties are appraised in a more fair and predictable manner, thereby reducing the cost of property taxes.

CS/HB 473 died in the House Policy & Budget Council.

👍 SB 560 – Relating to Local Governments by Sen. Jeff Atwater (R-North Palm Beach)

The first part of the bill deals with eminent domain and would give homestead property owners compensation for the expected future tax benefits of the "Save Our Homes" constitutional amendment in an eminent domain taking. The bill also addresses the issue of "highest and best" use. It clarifies the definition of "highest and best" use and provides for several factors property appraisers must consider when arriving at "just value" or "taxable value." The transparency issue is also in this bill and would require local governments to post revenues, expenditures and other information related to the Truth in Millage "TRIM" notices and on its website so that citizens and businesses can easily see how their tax dollars are being spent.

There is also a section in the bill dealing with a study of the assessment appeal process. Currently tax payers find it very difficult to challenge Value Adjustment Boards. There was even an Auditor General report showing the flaws in the system. The study will be completed by next session, so that this issue can be addressed at that time.

AIF supports legislation that attempts to address the issue of "just valuation" in the appraisal of property. This legislation would ensure that properties are appraised in a more fair and predictable manner, thereby reducing the cost of property taxes. In addition, we support many of the transparency provisions in SB 560 that would have allowed tax

Visit <http://aif.com> to access the complete Voting Records report

payers to know how their tax dollars are being spent.
CS/CS/SB 560 died on Senate calendar.

👍 HB 567 – Relating to Communications Services Tax (CST) by Rep. Ron Reagan (R-Sarasota)

This bill was one of AIF's top priorities for the 2007 session because it lowers the tax on communications services by 1.17 percent. This includes business land line telephone service, all wireless service, cable TV service and satellite TV service. Reducing this tax is critical to the business community because Florida's CST (currently at 9.17 percent) is among the highest in the country. Econometric models have shown that lowering this regressive tax will help stimulate additional investment in Florida's communications infrastructure. As prices go down, spending on communications services goes up.

An amendment by Rep. Ron Reagan (R-Sarasota) was adopted that decreased the reduction from 1.17 percent to 0.25 percent. This was done in order to match Governor Charlie Crist's (R) budget proposal. Unfortunately, due to a tight budget year, this tax cut was not passed. AIF will be pursuing the passage of this proposed tax cut next session.

AIF supports reducing the Communications Services Tax. Reducing this regressive tax will save the businesses and taxpayers of Florida valuable money and help stimulate additional investments in Florida's communications infrastructure.

CS/CS/HB 567 died in Senate messages; Senate companion bill SB 980 died in the Senate General Government Appropriations Committee.

👍 SB 1014 – Relating to 2007 Internal Revenue Code Adoption by Sen. Mike Haridopolos (R-Melbourne)

Known as the "Corporate Piggyback Bill," SB 1014 updates the Florida Income Tax Code to reflect changes in the U.S. Internal Revenue Code enacted by Congress in 2006. This definition provides for "piggybacking" each change made during 2006 in the Internal Revenue Code. This bill takes effect upon becoming a law and operates retroactively until January 1, 2007. This critically important bill must be passed every year so that businesses in Florida do not have to keep two sets of books. Passage of this bill ensures that corporations, which are subject to Florida income tax, can base their calculations on current IRS rules.

AIF supports the passage of this bill so that Florida businesses do not have to endure the burdensome task of filing duplicative tax records.



SB 1014 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-35.

👍 SB 1020 – Relating to Ad Valorem Taxation by Sen. Mike Haridopolos (R-Melbourne)

This proposed legislation limits the millage rates that may be levied by cities and counties, and prohibits participation in the allocation of the half-cent sales tax revenue for the following fiscal year for any local government that exceeds the allowable millage rate it addresses the millage tax roll back. The bill includes a cap on the amount of ad valorem (property) taxes a local government can levy. To stabilize the ad valorem taxes levied by local governments, there will be a freeze on the millage rate and then a process where the rate can increase using a per capita Florida personal income plus growth formula. If an increase beyond this millage rate is needed, the governing body can increase it with a 2/3 vote of its members.

AIF supports the concept of rolling back millage rates for local governments as one way of addressing the property tax crisis.

CS/SB 1020 died on the Senate calendar.

👍 HB 1199 – Relating to Agricultural Sales Tax Exemptions by Rep. Bryan Nelson (R-Apopka)

The bill establishes a sales tax exemption for electricity that is being used directly or indirectly for production or processing of agricultural products on Florida's farms. Florida's farmers are looking at approximately \$1.7 million dollars in savings from this proposal. In 2006, the legislature passed an exemption for electricity

being used directly for production or processing. The goal behind this year's measure is to clarify the intent of the 2006 legislation to include indirect usage as well.

According to the Revenue Estimating Conference, the fiscal impact of this bill is a reduction in general revenue of \$1.5 million in Fiscal Year 2007-2008, and \$.8 million on a recurring basis.

AIF supports legislation that establishes sales tax exemptions that benefit our state's farmers. Agriculture is one of Florida's largest industries employing more than 388,000 people and producing an excess of \$50 billion dollars in total sales.

HB 1199 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007- 56; Senate companion SB 1416 was laid on the table.

 **SJR 3034 – Relating to Ad Valorem Taxation/Tangible Personal Property by Sen. Jeff Atwater (R-North Palm Beach)**

This Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) would amend the Florida Constitution (if approved by the voters) by creating a \$25,000 exemption for each tangible personal property return filed by businesses in Florida. The intent behind this proposed constitutional amendment is to help small businesses in the state by eliminating this tax, which costs more in filing fees than the actual tax. Approximately 77 percent of taxpayers will be exempted. Those not exempted will save about \$450 per return.

The proposed constitutional amendment would have also allowed limited portability of the "Save Our Homes" (SOH) assessment differential to a new homestead. Finally, it grants first time home buyers an additional \$25,000 homestead exemption, which will be offset as their SOH differential increases.

AIF supports providing businesses with a \$25,000 tangible personal property exemption and supports the concept of limited portability of SOH savings as one way of helping with the property tax crisis in Florida.

CS/SJR 3034 died on Senate calendar.

 **HJR 7089 - Relating to Ad Valorem Taxes/Discretionary Sales Surtax by Rep. Ray Sansom (R-Fort Walton Beach)**

This proposed constitutional amendment would have given counties the local option of putting to referendum the repeal of property taxes in exchange for a 2.5 percent increase in sales tax. The debate on this issue was framed as follows: members of the majority party described the measure as the most dramatic tax

cut in the history of Florida; those in the Democratic Party debated against the proposed Constitutional amendment by focusing on the potential sales tax increase and calling it the largest tax increase in the history of Florida.

In addition, the constitutional amendment would limit millage rates to 2003-2004 levels, plus inflation. Last, but not least, the amendment would exempt from property tax the first \$25,000 of tangible personal property value for businesses and grants the legislature authority to provide property tax relief for renters.

AIF is opposed to the idea of sales tax increase as a way to offset revenue raised by property taxes. Florida's economy is vibrant and our state's unemployment level is among the lowest in the country. An increase in sales tax could potentially disrupt the current state of Florida's economy.

HJR 7089 died in Conference Committee.

TRANSPORTATION

 **SB 506 – Relating to Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation by Sen. Mike Fasano (R-New Port Richey)**

The bill establishes the Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority (TBRTA) as an agency of the state to improve mobility and expand multimodal transportation options for passengers and freight in the seven-county Tampa Bay region. The bill provides authority board membership requirements, powers and duties, including eminent domain and bonding authority. The bill requires the TBRTA to adopt a regional transportation master plan by July 1, 2009.

The objective of the legislation is to create a new entity; able to overcome the parochial pitfalls of addressing infrastructure needs on a county by county basis. There was \$1 million in the budget dedicated to getting the authority started and more proviso language that obtains further support for the authority's mission by designating additional expenditures from the Florida Department of Transportation. Unfortunately, this funding was recently vetoed by Governor Charlie Crist (R).

AIF supports the ability of multi-county areas in Florida to form regional transportation authorities, empowered to implement infrastructure improvements and to increase consideration for vital transportation corridors, seaports, airports and other

 Bill supported by AIF

 Bill opposed by AIF

regionally significant business centers.

CS/CS/CS/SB 506 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-254; House companion bill CS/CS/HB 251 was laid on the table.

👍 HB 985 by Rep. Rich Glorioso (R-Plant City), SB 2804 by Sen. Carey Baker (R-Eustis) – Relating to Transportation

This bill was a comprehensive transportation package that became a train for many of the transportation issues filed this session. The bill raises the Turnpike Enterprise's revenue bond cap from \$4.5 billion to \$10 billion. That change has the capacity to raise \$900 million in new money for turnpike projects over the next five years. Also addressed by the legislation is the developing crisis with the availability of aggregate materials used in the production of concrete and asphalt used for road building and other projects. The bill places restrictions on a local government's ability to implement mining moratoriums and provides for an expedited permit process for such operations.

SB 2804 was another piece of legislation, which carried the 2007 Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) legislative package. The bill allows FDOT to fund up to 80 percent of the non-federal share of certain airport and aviation development projects, extends the authority for FDOT to support public airports and provide grants for security related projects, and requires FDOT to expand the advertising of bids, among other changes. In addition, the bill establishes a 19 member Strategic Aggregate Task Force created to evaluate the availability and disposition of construction aggregate materials and related mining and land use practices, as well as language stating that no moratoriums on mining of aggregate may be imposed by any local government or other agency lasting more than 12 months.

In the end, many of the provisions included in SB 2804 found their way into HB 985 and SB 1928 – an additional bill containing FDOT's legislative package.

AIF supports many of the provisions found in these comprehensive bills, especially the concept of P3s as an alternative for dealing with Florida's huge backlog of transportation infrastructure projects. This legislation provides increased flexibility for the private sector to partner with local and state government to create a model transportation system that will benefit all Floridians. In addition, we support the inclusion of the aggregate issue in his omnibus transportation package. Florida's businesses and contractors depend on this raw material for building and road projects.

CS/CS/HB 985 Approved by Governor; Chapter No.

2007-196; Senate companion bill CS/CS/CS/SB 1928 was laid on the table.

👍 SB 1454 – Relating to Florida Transportation Commission by Rep. Daniel Webster (R-Winter Garden)

The bill requires the Florida Transportation Commission (FTC), as part of its primary functions, to monitor the efficiency, productivity, and management of regional transportation and transit authorities, and expressway and bridge authorities. The FTC must also conduct periodic reviews of each authority's operations and budget, acquisition of property, management of revenue and bond proceeds, and compliance with applicable laws and generally accepted accounting principles.

Regional transportation authorities can play a critical role in addressing the current backlog of transportation projects across Florida. AIF supports legislation aimed at increasing the level of oversight for these entities through the work of the Florida Transportation Commission.

CS/SB 1454 died in House messages.

UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

👍 HB 529 – Relating to Cable TV/Video Service Franchises by Rep. Trey Traviesa (R-Tampa)

This bill opens the door for consumers to have a choice in the cable TV market by establishing a state-wide cable TV franchise process administered by the Department of State rather than the existing method of obtaining franchises from negotiations with local governments. The effect of the change would be to expedite cable TV competition throughout the state. The bill also repeals future phone rate increases as a result of vibrant competition in the local phone market. This was perhaps one of the most lobbied bills this session, with advocates representing the incumbent cable TV providers, the telecommunication companies that want to offer video service, and representatives from local government who are affected by many of the provisions in the bill.

AIF supports legislation to allow for state-issued cable franchises because it opens up the cable market to the free market. Increased competition will only ensure better service, a better product, and more importantly, lower prices for the citizens and businesses of our state.

CS/CS/HB 529 was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter number 2007-29; Senate companion bill CS/CS/CS/SB 998 was laid on the table.

Property Tax Reform

 **HB 1B – Relating to Ad Valorem Taxation by Rep. Frank Attkisson (R-Kissimmee), SJR 4B – Relating to Ad Valorem Tax/Tax Assessments/Homestead Exemption by Sen. Mike Haridopolos (R-Melbourne), and HB 5B – Relating to Special Election by Rep. David Rivera (R-Miami)**

These three bills make up the property tax reform package approved by the Legislature during the 2007 Special Session B.

HB 1B contains the statutory changes needed for property tax relief and reform. It will immediately cut taxes and cap future tax increases for all property owners and limit local governments' ability to raise taxes in the future without a certain percentage vote, which will provide immediate savings to home-owners, second homeowners and commercial property owners. Capping the amount local governments can increase property taxes and tying it to the growth of per capita Florida personal income will provide a degree of predictability to an employer that has never been experienced before. In recent years, businesses across Florida experienced huge increases in their property tax bills. Under this new plan, employers will be able to do a much better job of budgeting because they will have a much better feel as to what their property tax increases will be.

SJR 4B, a Joint Resolution, contains language for a constitutional amendment that: authorizes exemptions from ad valorem taxation for a businesses' tangible personal property up to \$25,000; revises limitations in the difference between just value & assessed value for homestead property; provides for assessing rent-restricted affordable housing & commercial & public-access waterfront property by general law; and increases the homestead exemption for homestead property owners through a "super homestead exemption." If approved by the voters the new "super homestead exemption" would exempt 75 percent of the first \$200,000 of value and then another 15 percent of the next \$300,000.

A significant amendment to this proposal by Sen. Dan Webster (R-Winter Garden) was adopted by the Senate on the last day of the special session. Sen. Webster's amendment allows homestead property owners to make their own determination as to which property tax saving they can use. Everyone who has the benefits of the current "Save Our Homes" (SOH) cap



can remain under this system if they chose to. However, if a homestead property owner decides they would be better off with the super exemption, they have a one-time choice to switch to this new plan. There are no deadlines as to when they would need to make the choice between the current SOH cap and the new super exemption. Before being amended, the bill stipulated that local tax collectors would have been the ones to make this determination based on which option produced the greatest savings for the homeowner.

Finally, there is HB 5B. This legislation designates January 29, 2008, as the date for a special election to consider SJR 4B, the constitutional amendment that would create the "super homestead exemption." The date of this special election would coincide with the Presidential Preference Primary, which was moved up during this year's regular session.

AIF supports rolling back property tax rates and capping millage rates in order to provide homeowners and businesses with some much needed property tax relief. While the tax reform package passed by the Legislature is not perfect, it does begin to address some of the inequities in the system. We were disappointed that legislators were not able to come to an agreement on the issue of "highest and best use" and how property is appraised. AIF will work to pass legislation next session that addresses this important issue for Florida's employers.

HB 1B was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-321, SJR 4B was signed by Officers and filed with Secretary of State, HB 5B was approved by the Governor and assigned Chapter Number 2007-322; Senate companion bills SB 2B, HJR 3B, and SB 6B were laid on the table.

2 0 0 7

Champions for Business

What is a *Champion for Business* award? Simply put, it symbolizes our gratitude for extraordinary efforts by legislators on behalf of the business community.

For more than three decades, Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) published *Voting Records*, an analysis of every vote cast by every legislator on major business issues. The votes each legislator actually casts provides 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 also helps its member companies detect what bills and amendments are filed by whom, and who is taking part in behind-the-scene efforts and debates on behalf of the business community. These intangible forms of support through non-voting actions are also of vital importance and merit recognition.

AIF instituted the *Champion for Business* award to acknowledge law-makers who do more than vote for business and provide leadership on key legislation. A *Champion for Business* is a legislator who takes risks for their 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 the 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, the AIF Legislative Team selected those legislators who we deem are strong and forceful advocates for the business community. In our collective wisdom, these fifteen 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.

Throughout the 60-plus days of lawmaking, these were the senators and representatives we turned to when we needed someone on whom we could depend. They all deserve to be singled out for their dedication to our free-market economy.

Maybe they are the exception, rather than the rule. But that's why we want to recognize them, because we need more of them in the Florida government.

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

Representative Trey Traviesa



(R-Tampa) is receiving his second Champion for Business Award for following through on a promise to open up the

cable television market to real competition. This was perhaps one of the most lobbied bills this session, with advocates representing the incumbent cable TV providers; the telecommunication companies that want to offer video service; and representatives from local government who are affected by many of the provisions in the bill. Rep. Traviesa was able to bring all players to the table in order to work out a compromise that would be in the best interest of Florida's citizens and businesses. The enactment of this legislation will ensure more competition, better customer service, and most importantly it will save Floridians and employers money in the form of lower cable TV prices. AIF is proud to once again designate Rep. Traviesa as a Champion for Business.

Representative Charlie Dean



(R-Inverness) has been a steadfast supporter for thousands of small business owners in Florida. His attention to the needs

of employers makes him an easy choice as a Champion for Business. He has worked hard to ensure billions

of dollars in tax cuts and insurance-rate relief, as well as to provide staunch support for tort reform. As Chairman of the House Safety and Security Council, Rep. Dean thwarted attempts by the trial bar to undermine the repeal of Joint & Several Liability, a move that would have resulted in businesses and people paying more than their fair share in legal proceedings. In addition, Rep. Dean sponsored and passed legislation this year which helped businesses and contractors comply with the Jessica Lunsford Act. By establishing uniform guidelines and procedures while doing away with multiple and costly background screening requirements, these changes were achieved while keeping the integrity of the original law. AIF is proud to salute Rep. Dean's commitment to free market principles and his dedication to improve the quality of life for all Floridians.

Representative Alan Hays



(R-Umatilla), in only his second term as a legislator, has already proven that he is a true supporter of Florida's employers.

Rep. Hays filed legislation this year that brought attention to the expansion of Citizens Insurance Co., a concept that is not supported by AIF and the business community. The bill would have created the Citizens Property Insurance Mission Review Task Force, whose role would have been to figure out a way to reduce the number of policies covered by this government-created insurance

company. Florida businesses are now liable for 41% of Citizens' deficits as a result of legislation passing during the 2007 Special Session on Property Insurance Reform. Even though the bill was not passed, AIF applauds Rep. Hays' efforts to curb the expansion of Citizens, and we are proud to recognize him as Champion for Business Award recipient.

Representative Rich Glorioso



(R-Plant City) is receiving his Champion for Business Award for the leadership he displayed in filing and successfully passing one

of the most talked about transportation bills in recent history. The bill contains several provisions absolutely critical to preserving Florida's economic vitality and addressing the threat of transportation gridlock, which affects our employers' bottom-line. Rep. Glorioso fought to include language which tackles the developing crisis with the availability of aggregate materials used in the production of concrete and asphalt necessary for road building projects. The bill places restrictions on a local government's ability to implement aggregate mining moratoriums and provides for the development of expedited permitting processes for mining operations. Failure to enact such provisions could have brought road building across the state to a complete halt, thus affecting every aspect of Florida's economy. It is this forward thinking by Rep. Glorioso that warrants his Champion for Business Award.

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.



Representative Stan Mayfield
(R-Vero Beach)

For the second year in a row, AIF and the business community battled the NRA and other gun-rights supporters for the right to allow business owners to establish or maintain policies against allowing employees to bring guns onto the workplace. Legislation was filed again this year that would prohibit business owners from establishing, maintaining or enforcing a policy or rule that would not allow an employee or "invitee" to possess a firearm that is locked in or locked to a motor vehicle that is parked in the employers' parking lot. Representatives from the business community were united in opposition to this bill and the bad precedent it would set. Passage of this bill would weaken Florida's status as an "employment at will" state.

As Chairman of the House Environment & Natural Resources Council, Rep. Mayfield presided over the decisive vote on this bad bill for the business community. Rep. Mayfield allowed both sides of the debate to present their case fairly, and in the end, voted against the bill. AIF appreciates Rep. Mayfield's leadership and courage for standing with the business community on this important issue to the employers of our state.



Representative Don Brown
(R-Defuniak Springs)



Representative Dennis Ross
(R-Lakeland)

These two unique legislators deserve recognition for their outstanding courage demonstrated during the 2007 Special Session A on Property Insurance Reform. Despite tremendous political pressure from the public, the media, and state political leaders, Rep. Brown and Rep. Ross were the only two legislators out of 160 members of the House and Senate that voted against HB 1A, which places not only the State of Florida in potential financial peril, but also the business community.

AIF did not support some of the provisions in HB 1A because of the high level of financial risk it creates to the state and to the entire business community. However, despite our efforts, the act was passed by the Legislature to substantially increase the amount of hurricane losses covered by the state administered Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund (Cat Fund) and to allow the state administered Citizens Property Insurance Company to compete with the private insurance market at inadequate rates and expanded coverages.

When other members of the Legislature voted for this act because of the intense political pressures, Representatives Brown and Ross voted against the bill because they felt it was truly not in the best interests of the State of Florida and the business community.



Senator Jeremy Ring
(D-Margate)



Representative Michael Grant
(R-Punta Gorda)

One of the major economic development bills passed this session was championed by Sen. Ring and Rep. Grant. HB 83 seeks to attract more venture capital investment to Florida. The bill appropriates a total of \$35 million for venture capital investments and creates the Florida Capital Formation Act, which is designed to increase the amount of venture capital investment in Florida. Investments must be made in Florida-based businesses involved in life sciences, information technology, advanced manufacturing processes, aviation and aerospace, and homeland security and defense. This idea was part of a broader initiative championed by Sen. Ring called the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program, which encompasses many different aspects of economic development including workforce development and the conversion of goods and services developed at our public universities into consumer products available to the mass market.

AIF would like to recognize these two legislators for their tireless efforts to advance economic development in the state of Florida. Although the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program was not passed in its entirety, we expect both of them to return next session to work on the parts of the program that did not make it this year.

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. Over the last year and a half, AIF has organized a number of Councils in order to best represent groups of employers that share a common subject area or expertise. AIF's council system has already produced excellent results, both legislatively and politically.

Governmental Outsourcing Council:

To help balance the needs of government and the private sector, and in response to the growth of the outsourcing industry and its importance to Florida's government and taxpayer communities, AIF has created the Governmental Outsourcing Council (GOC) for both for-profit and non-profit outsourcing entities.

"Legislator of the Year" Award



Representative Aaron Bean

(R-Fernandina Beach) has long been a supporter of business interests in Florida; this year

was no exception. What was extraordinary was that he filed HB 495, a bill designed to help human service outsourcing providers interact more efficiently and with more accountability with state government, for the GOC. Against extreme odds, Rep. Bean persisted until the bill was heard in the House Safety and Security Council over the objections of several legislators who felt that there was no need for this critical piece of legislation.

His persistence and direct action has resulted in interim meetings with the Department of Financial Services and other executive branch agencies to review and correct the unstable business environment created by

agency action, which negatively impacts services provided to Florida citizens.

AIF applauds his diligence and dedication in seeking to create a fair and equitable atmosphere for businesses contracting to provide much needed human services to the state.

Information Technology Council:

The ITC is an organization of leading information technology and telecommunications companies representing all aspects of the technology industry. The Council includes IT systems integrators, hardware and software companies, consultants, service and support providers, resellers and more.

"Legislator of the Year" Award



Representative Will Weatherford

(R-Zephyrhills) had the confidence to sponsor the Enterprise Information Technology bill that

resulted from a Senate Governmental Operations Committee interim project on the governance of state information technology. He studied the legislation and made excellent presentations before the committees it was referred to, as well as on the floor of the House. Rep. Weatherford also wants to continue to be involved in future IT legislation and expressed support on

AIF's ITC recommendations. Even as a freshman, Rep. Weatherford did not shy away from the complexity of this issue. For this and many other reasons, the AIF Information Technology Council is proud to designate Rep. Weatherford as the "House IT Legislator of the Year."

"Legislator of the Year" Award



Senator Al Lawson

(D-Tallahassee), as Chairman of the Senate Governmental Operations Committee, sponsored the Informa-

tion Technology Council's "must pass bill" of the session, SB 1974 relating to IT Governance. He also sponsored an amendment supported by the Information Technology Council, requiring state government to consider refreshing IT equipment on a regularly scheduled basis. Without Senator Lawson's leadership on the IT Governance bill, the Council's other issues would not have made it into the final enrolled bill that was recently signed by the Governor. Since this bill will guide all enterprise information technology projects in the future, it was a very critical bill for the IT Council. Congratulations, Sen. Lawson, for being selected as the "Senate IT Legislator of the Year" by AIF's Information Technology Council.

WHAT YOU NEED WHEN YOU NEED IT!

[http:aif.com](http://aif.com)

[http:fbnnet.com](http://fbnnet.com)

[http:fbunet.com](http://fbunet.com)

When you need to know what lawmakers are doing for — and to — your business ... when tomorrow is too late ... when you want to make a difference ... visit AIF's Web sites.

The Internet's Home for Florida Business

Associated Industries of Florida

516 NORTH ADAMS STREET

P.O. BOX 784 TALLAHASSEE, FL 32302-0784



PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
TALLAHASSEE FL
PERMIT NO 904