

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA
**LEGISLATIVE
DAILY BRIEF**



P.O. Box 784 • Tallahassee, FL 32302 • Phone: (850) 224-7173 • Fax: (850) 224-6532 • Internet: <http://aif.com> • fbnnet.com

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Daily Brief
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FINANCE AND TAX

Today the Senate Finance and Tax Committee met and combined SB 244 by Senator Anna Cowin (R-Leesburg) and SB 1566 by Senator Daniel Webster (R-Winter Garden) into one bill since both bills deal with the sales tax holiday. Senator Cowin has sponsored the bill since 1997, which has helped many families in their back-to-school needs. This is the sixth year that this bill has been before the legislature, however, it has not gained approval in the last two years.

This bill is similar to the bills passed in previous years with new inclusions for computer products, books, diaper bags, etc. This year the "holiday" period would be from July 24th to August 1st.

Senator Steven Geller (D-Hallandale Beach) stated he would not vote for the bill even though he had voted for it once or twice in the past. He remains concerned over the fiscal impact caused by the loss of state revenue. According to Senator Geller, the estimated loss is \$48.5 million.

Rick McAllister, of the Florida Retail Federation, voiced his support for the bill. He agreed with Senator Cowin that the sales tax holiday is a stimulus for Florida's economy. Senator Posey also spoke in support of the bill saying, "It's a good break, one of the few we allow any more...its good for business and good for families."

The CS for SB 244/SB 1566 passed with Senator Geller as the lone dissenting vote.

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

ETHICS AND ELECTIONS

The House Subcommittee on Ethics and Elections met today and passed HJR 659 by Representative Baxter Troutman (R-Winter Haven). This bill proposes to amend Article VI, Section 4, of the Florida Constitution increasing the current term limits, from eight years to twelve years for Florida Senators and Representatives and members of the Cabinet: Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Agriculture. It would not affect the eight year term limit on the office of the Governor nor Lieutenant Governor.

HJR 659 would delete the term limit language previously placed in Florida's Constitution that impacted Florida's delegation to the US House of Representatives and Senate. As a result of a 1995 US Supreme Court decision, state laws mandating term limits for Federal legislators was deemed unconstitutional. HJR 659 would bring Florida's Constitution into compliance with this decision.

HJR 659 will be heard next by the full House Procedures Committee. If approved by the legislature, HJR 659 would appear as a legislative initiative before the Florida voters on the November 2004 ballot.

AIF supports the repeal of legislative and cabinet term limits

Other Bills of Interest:

HB 141- RELATING TO INTERNET PHARMACIES

The House Health Care committee passed HB 141 by Representative Ed Homan (R-Temple Terrace). Representative Homan offered a strike all amendment to this controversial internet pharmacy bill which requires that anyone ordering from an internet pharmacy must have had a face-to-face meeting with a doctor and have a valid prescription written before purchasing any medications. In addition, internet pharmacies must also obtain a permit to sell medications in Florida. The bill generated numerous questions and concerns about how to enforce these provisions without running afoul of the Interstate Commerce Act. Representative Homan stated that this would prohibit the purchase of medications from Canadian pharmacies over the internet. Several members expressed concern over this prohibition.

HB 141 will now be heard on the floor of the House. Meanwhile a similar measure, SB 1372 by Senator Burt Saunders (R-Naples), is making its way through the Senate.

Please send your comments or suggestions to us at aif@aif.com or call the Governmental Affairs department at (850)224-7173.

- For more information on all of the important legislative information concerning the business community, go to our "members only" Florida Business Network web site at <http://fbnnet.com>
- Send us your E-mail address and we will begin to send this report to you automatically via E-mail.