



# DAILY BRIEF

From April 15, 2013

## Health Care

The House Select Committee on PPACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) deliberated on a proposed committee bill **(PCB) SPPACA 13-03** designed to provide health care coverage for low income persons without expanding eligibility in the state's Medicaid Program. The House proposal would create the Florida Health Choices Plus (FHCP) program and would be available to low income parents and individuals with disabilities who do not qualify for Medicaid or other coverage assistance through the federal exchange. **PCB SPPACA 13-03** calls for CARE Accounts (Contribution Amount for Responsible Expenditures), to be jointly funded by the state and the participant. The state would contribute \$167/month (up to \$2,000 annual max) and the participant would contribute \$25/month. The combined funds could be used to purchase coverage through private companies that offer coverage through the FHCP. House actuaries estimate the plan would cover approximately 115,000 Floridians and will have an annualized cost of \$237 million from the state's recurring general revenue.

A strike-all amendment offered by Representative Mike Fasano (R-New Port Richey) sought to establish a premium assistance program for low income Floridians by utilizing state and federal Medicaid funds. A similar plan has been introduced in the Senate and is estimated to subsidize coverage for more than 1 million uninsured low income residents using both state and federal funds. In supporting the amendment, Rep. Fasano warned members that Florida's decision on health care has significant impacts to the economic future of the state as a whole. For example, a recent Moody's report revealed that state's that do not expand their coverage and utilize the federal funding available could experience a downgraded credit rating and jeopardize charitable care funding that currently funds millions to Florida. At today's meeting, AIF supported the amendment along with U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown (D-Florida) and many other members of the public. However after much debate, the amendment was not adopted after the Republican committee members all voted against it.

**PCB SPPACA 13-03** was passed on a party-line vote with approval from all Republicans and Democrats against.

**AIF supported the amendment offered by Rep. Fasano today because it addresses our state's current health care dilemma by utilizing federal funding to provide coverage to more Floridians in a manner that best safeguards Florida's citizens while protecting its financial health. AIF will continue to advocate for any thoughtful and deliberative approach like this that helps Florida's businesses not continue to be saddled with the enormous tax bill of the uninsured that hampers economic growth and job creation.**

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## Business Regulation

During the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, AIF stood in support of SB 1442, *Relating to Alarm System Contracting & Permitting*, by Senator Tom Lee (R-Brandon). The bill seeks to preempt local government regulation of alarm system contracting and to make uniform the regulatory aspect of such contracting while allowing local governments to maintain varying permit fees if below a certain amount.

The bill also provides an exception from alarm system regulatory requirements for certain in-state workers not accessing customer premises or alarm codes.

The bill passed unopposed and is now ready to be heard by the full Senate.

**AIF supports this bill because it establishes a statewide standardized rate which would reduce the current fees imposed by certain local governments.**

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## **Legal & Judicial**

During the Senate Committee on Judiciary, AIF stood in support of SB 1412, *Relating to Expert Testimony*, by Senator Garrett Richter (R-Naples) The bill aligns Florida's evidentiary standard for expert witness testimony with that of the federal courts. Currently, Florida is an outlier among states in its use of the outdated *Frye* standard for admissibility of expert witness testimony. The bill would align Florida with other leading states that utilize the *Daubert* standard, therefore ensuring that "junk science" is not admitted into our courts.

This issue is important to the business community because Florida-based companies are regularly joined into costly and unnecessary lawsuits so that trial lawyers may gain access to our courts, thereby increasing the cost of doing business in Florida. Representative Larry Metz (R-Groveland) has carried and passed this legislation off the House floor for the last two Legislative Sessions.

The bill passed by a vote of 6-3 and now moves to the Senate Rules Committee.

**AIF supports legislation to adopt the *Daubert* standard for expert witness testimony and to align Florida courts with the Federal Rules of Evidence utilized in federal courts and adopted by a majority of state courts.**

In the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism, AIF stood in support of SB 550, by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey). The legislation would allow Florida employers to recover payments from worthless checks and other transactions without the sending of a specified letter if the business has a notice posted at point of sale or on invoice. If enacted, this bill would allow Florida businesses to collect money due to them in a timelier manner.

The bill passed unanimously and will next be heard in the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

**AIF supports legislation that makes it easier for Florida employers to collect payment due to them.**