



DAILY BRIEF

From March 18, 2014

Economic Development

SB 654 – relating to Business Organizations

On Tuesday, March 18th, SB 654, relating to Business Organizations, by Senator Jeff Clemens (D-Lake Worth) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Rules, its last stop before the Senate floor.

The bill amends the Florida Business Corporation Act to allow for the creation of two new forms of corporate enterprise: the social purpose corporation and the benefit corporation. These new entities will allow businesses to engage in societal benefit programs that may not involve or satisfy the traditional corporate norm of profit maximization.

AIF supports this legislation that will attract new businesses and entrepreneurs to the state of Florida.

Education & Workforce

SB 1400 – relating to Postsecondary Student Tuition

On Tuesday, March 18th, SB 1400, relating to Postsecondary Student Tuition, by Senator Jack Latvala (R-Clearwater) passed the Senate Committee on Education by a 5-4 vote. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of this bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Judiciary.



The bill eliminates the automatic annual tuition increases at public postsecondary institutions, revises the Florida Prepaid Program contract conditions, and extends an in-state tuition benefit to students who are undocumented aliens and clarifies that such students are not eligible for state financial aid. The bill also codifies the 2012 United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida ruling that U.S. citizens, who would otherwise meet Florida's residency requirements for tuition purposes but for their status as dependents and their parents' undocumented immigration status, may not be denied in-state tuition benefits based upon their parents' undocumented immigration status.

AIF supports legislation that would allow all Florida high school graduates to qualify for in-state tuition at our public colleges, universities and independent universities regardless of their immigration status, subject to meeting all admission standards.

SB 850 – relating to Education

On Tuesday, March 18th, SB 850, relating to Education, by Senator John Legg (R-Lutz) unanimously passed the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, its last stop before the Senate floor.

The bill expands options to elementary students, expands options and strengthens requirements for middle school and high school students, creates a new middle grades early warning system to identify at-risk students, expands and strengthens anti-hazing provisions, and requires the Florida College System (FCS) institutions to establish a collegiate high school program for students in every school district in the colleges' designated service area.

AIF supports this bill because improving our workforce through education reforms will be a key ingredient to job creation and also ensuring businesses continue to locate to Florida.

Environment

HB 601 – relating to Reclaimed Water

On Tuesday, March 18th, HB 601, relating to Reclaimed Water, by Representative Lake Ray (R-Jacksonville) passed the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee by a 10-3 vote. AIF spoke in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House State Affairs Committee.

The bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, in cooperation with the five Water Management Districts, to conduct a study and submit a report on the expansion of the beneficial use of reclaimed water, including stormwater and excess surface water.

AIF supports state funding for alternative water supply projects. Water retention and storage are vital to expanding Florida's water supply, which will give the state a head start on economic development and jobs in the future.

HB 487 – relating to Agricultural Industry Certifications

On Tuesday, March 18th, HB 487, relating to Agricultural Industry Certifications, by Representative Jake Raburn (R-Valrico) unanimously passed the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Appropriations Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

The bill would develop a pathway for students to show their expertise in the agricultural industry. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS), in cooperation with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science at the University of Florida and the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University, to annually provide to the state board and the Department of Education information and industry certifications for farm occupations to be considered for placement on the Industry Certification Funding List and the Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List.

AIF supports adding agriculture to industry certifications because it recognizes the critical need for agricultural careers in the state of Florida.

Health Care

HB 379 – relating to Damages for Medical or Health Care Services

On Tuesday, March 18th, HB 379, relating to Damages for Medical or Health Care Services, by Representative Charles David Hood, Jr. (R-Daytona Beach) passed the House Civil Justice Subcommittee by a 9-4 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Judiciary Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

AIF released the following press release today regarding HB 379.

Tallahassee, Fla. – *The Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) today released the following statement attributed to its General Counsel Tammy Perdue regarding the passage of legal reform legislation, House Bill 379 by Representative David Hood (R-Daytona Beach), relating to damages for medical or health care services, by the Florida House Civil Justice Subcommittee.*

“AIF applauds the House Civil Justice Subcommittee for advancing Representative Hood’s legislation, addressing accuracy in medical damages, making certain medical treatments are indeed medically necessary.

“AIF supports HB 379 and believes Florida law should require that if medical expenses have already been paid, only evidence of the amount actually paid for medically necessary treatments should be admissible at trial.

“We look forward to continuing the discussion on how Florida can have a clear and level playing field in the courtroom, and advocating for legislation that makes Florida’s legal climate a better place to do business.”

HB 379 is now slated to move onto the House Judiciary Committee.

For more information on AIF, please visit AIF.com and follow [@VoiceofFLBiz](https://twitter.com/VoiceofFLBiz).

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SB 248 – relating to Assisted Living Facilities

On Tuesday, March 18th, SB 248, relating to Assisted Living Facilities, by the Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs unanimously passed on the Senate floor. The bill will now be sent to the House for consideration.

The bill strengthens the enforcement of current regulations for assisted living facilities by revising fines imposed for licensure violations, clarifying existing enforcement tools, and requiring an additional inspection for facilities having significant violations. The bill is estimated to have a net positive fiscal impact of approximately \$1 million on the AHCA’s Health Care Trust Fund.

AIF supports this bill because Florida’s seniors deserve assisted living facilities that operate with high standards and provide quality healthcare.

Legal & Judicial

SB 670 – relating to Nursing Home Litigation

On Tuesday, March 18th, SB 670, relating to Nursing Home Litigation, by Senator John Thrasher (R-St. Augustine) passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary by an 8-1 vote. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of this bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate floor.



The bill provides that the statutory cause of action is the exclusive remedy against a nursing home licensee, its management or consulting company, managing employees, and direct caregivers alleging direct or vicarious liability for the recovery of damages for the personal injury or death of a nursing home resident arising out of negligence or a violation of a resident's statutory rights.

AIF supports the streamlining of litigation in order to preserve the growth of the nursing home industry while protecting our vulnerable elderly.

SB 1138/HB 1135 – relating to Civil Liability of Farmers

On Monday, March 17th, SB 1138, relating to Civil Liability of Farmers, by Senator Greg Evers (R-Crestview) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, its last stop before the Senate floor.

On Tuesday, March 18th, HB 1135, relating to Civil Liability of Farmers, by Representative Kevin Rader (D-Boca Raton) unanimously passed the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Judiciary Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

These bills exempt a farmer from civil liability if he gratuitously allows a person to come onto his/her land to remove farm produce or crops at any time. Presently the exemption applies only when that activity takes place after harvesting.

AIF supports legislation that will reduce the number of frivolous lawsuits brought against Florida's business owners.

Taxation & Budget

HB 4017 – relating to Cable and Video Services

On Tuesday, March 18th, HB 4017, relating to Cable and Video Services, by Representative Ray Wesley Rodrigues (R-Fort Myers) unanimously passed the House Energy & Utilities Subcommittee. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of this bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Regulatory Affairs Committee, its last stop before the House floor.



The bill repeals a study by the Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability on the status of video competition in Florida. This is a study that duplicates an annual national study done by the Federal Communications Commission and is an unnecessary expense for government and for companies to compile and submit proprietary information.

AIF supports eliminating duplicative laws that put an unnecessary compliance burden on Florida's businesses and government.

SB 1342 – relating to Nonresidential Farm Buildings

On Monday, March 17th, SB 1342, relating to Nonresidential Farm Buildings, by Senator Charles Dean, Sr. (R-Inverness) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Community Affairs.

The bill exempts nonresidential farm buildings from county or municipal assessments in addition to the presently exemption from county and municipal codes or fees.

AIF supports reducing taxes on Florida's farming families and on Florida businesses in general. Reduced taxes make Florida more attractive for families and businesses to relocate.

SB 156 – relating to Motor Vehicle and Mobile Home Taxes, Fees and Surcharges

On Tuesday, March 18th, SB 156, relating to Motor Vehicle and Mobile Home Taxes, Fees and Surcharges, by Senator Joe Negron (R-Palm City) unanimously passed on the Senate floor. The bill will now be sent to the House for consideration.

The bill reduces some of the fees required to register a motor vehicle, vessel or mobile home, and returns them to the amount required prior to September 1, 2009. The fee reductions result in a \$12 per year savings in the amount paid to register a motor vehicle, \$2.00 to register a vessel, and either \$4.50 or \$9.00 to register a mobile home.

AIF supports the roll back in fees and surcharges imposed on motorist when they buy, replace or transfer a license plate or register their vehicle with the state.

Transportation

HB 947- Relating to Fuel Terminals

On Tuesday, March 18th, HB 947, relating to Fuel Terminals, by Representative Lake Ray (R-Jacksonville) passed the House Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee by a 13-1 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Local & Federal Affairs Committee.

The bill would declare fuel terminals located in or next to Florida's ports as critical state infrastructure. The bill would also limit local governments' regulation of the existing terminals and prohibit them from declaring the terminals illegal or non-conforming. It goes further to allow for expansion of existing fuel terminals within the terminals property boundaries, while limiting local governments' regulation of permitting although nothing in the bill will prevent local government from enforcing state and federal safety standards.

AIF supports terminals being designed as critical infrastructure preempting local governments from changing the land use designation. Terminals are essential components to petroleum logistics, and Florida's energy portfolio, enabling the bulk transfer of the 27 million gallons of gasoline and diesel into Florida each day for further distribution.