



DAILY BRIEF

From February 9, 2016

ENERGY

HB 285- Relating to Natural Gas Rebate Program

On Tuesday, February 9th, **HB 285**, relating to Natural Gas Rebate Program, by **Rep. Lake Ray (R-Jacksonville)** passed unanimously through the **House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee** by a vote of 13 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

In 2013, the Legislature created the Natural Gas Fuel Fleet Vehicle Rebate Program (program) within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to "help reduce transportation costs in this state and encourage freight mobility investments that contribute to the economic growth of the state." Beginning with Fiscal Year 2013-2014 and continuing through Fiscal Year 2017-2018 (five years), DACS is required to award rebates, to those eligible, for the costs of converting a diesel- or gasoline-powered motor vehicle to a natural gas fuel-powered motor vehicle on or after July 1, 2013. An applicant is eligible to receive a maximum rebate of \$25,000 per vehicle up to a total of \$250,000 per applicant per fiscal year, on a first-come, first-served basis.

This bill would allow DACS to use any unencumbered funds remaining after June 30th of each fiscal year to award additional rebates for those that have not received a rebate under the program.

HB 285 will now go to the **House Regulatory Affairs Committee**.

AIF supports the natural gas fuel fleet vehicle rebate program, specifically the authorization of DACS to award additional rebates to applicants from unencumbered funds after each fiscal year.

HEALTH CARE

HB 221-Relating to Health Insurance Coverage for Emergency Services

On Tuesday, February 9th, **HB 221**, relating to Health Insurance Coverage for Emergency Services, by **Rep. Carlos Trujillo (R-Doral)** was heard before the **House Appropriations Committee** and unanimously passed. **AIF's General Counsel, Tammy Perdue, stood in support of this bill.**

HB 221 is aimed at helping patients avoid unexpected charges from a procedure received at a hospital. A strike all was adopted which made several clarifying changes. The bill would prohibit balance billing in PPOs under two scenarios. The first scenario explains that a patient cannot be balance billed in an emergency situation when the patient had no ability to choose a participating provider. The second scenario would be when an inpatient scheduled procedure at an approved in network hospital that patient cannot be balance billed.

Another provision in the bill would require hospitals to publish information on their websites regarding the plans with which the hospital contracts; and providers of hospital-based services with which the hospital has contracted. The hospital would also have to provide the providers' contact information.

HB 221 will now go to the **House Health & Human Services Committee**.

AIF supports legislation that requires a patient to be presented with documentation regarding any charges for out-of-network services.

IT GOVERNANCE

SB 1430-Relating to State Technology

On Tuesday, February 9th, **SB 1430**, relating to State Technology, by **Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg)** was heard by the **Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee** and passed by a vote of 4 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This bill is IT related and will provide additional authority to the Agency for State Technology (AST). Specifically, a chief data officer within the Agency for State Technology is to be appointed by the executive director. It authorizes the Agency for State Technology to oversee the transition of various licenses and identification cards to an optional digital proof of the licenses and identification cards for a specified fee and requires the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, in coordination with the Agency for State Technology, to develop a system for issuing an optional digital proof of driver license for a specified fee. It also provides additional authority to the AST to establish a governance structure for the management of state data to promote openness and interoperability.

The next committee stop for this bill will be in the **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government.**

AIF supports legislative changes that will designate systems and processes to be implemented and operated at an enterprise (statewide or agency grouping) level and provide operational authority and funding to the AST.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

HB 761-Relating to Fraudulent Activities Associated with Payment Systems

On Tuesday, February 9th, **HB 761**, relating to Fraudulent Activities Associated with Payment Systems, by **Rep. Dana Young (R-Tampa)** was heard before the **House Appropriations Committee** and unanimously passed. **AIF's General Counsel, Tammy Perdue, stood in support of this bill.**

HB 761 addresses "skimming" at gas stations, specifically at gas pumps themselves, which has become a significant issue in the state of Florida. "Skimmers" are typically found on the gas pumps themselves, disguised as the usual everyday credit card reader. Unbeknownst to the customer, their credit card information is stolen.

During recent investigations, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS) has found that skimmed payment information is being used as part of elaborate fraud schemes to purchase hundreds of gallons of gas that is pumped into unapproved, hidden gas tanks in vans, SUVs, and trucks. Such gas is then usually resold by the criminals to independent truck drivers at a fraction of its usual cost.

To establish greater protection for consumer payment information and enhance penalties for crimes involved in the fraud schemes, the bill:

- Requires owners and operators of retail fuel pumps in this state to install a security measure that hinders or prohibits the unauthorized opening of the panel on the fuel pump which leads to the scanning device used for customer payment.
- Increases the penalty for the offense of unlawfully conveying and fraudulently obtaining fuel from an unranked third degree felony to a second degree felony ranked as a Level 5 offense on the Offense Severity Ranking Chart (OSRC).
- Reduces the number of counterfeit credit cards or related specified documents required to constitute second degree felony trafficking from 10 to five and ranks this felony as a Level 5 offense on the OSRC.
- Creates a second degree felony ranked as a Level 5 offense on the OSRC for the offense of possessing five or more counterfeit credit cards or related specified documents.

HB 761 will now go to the **House Judiciary Committee** for a hearing.

AIF supports this legislation due to it cracking down on theft from Florida retailers while also protecting Florida's consumers.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

HB 461- Relating to Location of Utilities

On Tuesday, February 9th, **HB 461**, relating to Location of Utilities, by **Rep. Clay Ingram (R-Pensacola)** was heard in the **House Appropriations Committee** and passed with only 1 nay vote. **AIF's General Counsel, Tammy Perdue, stood in support of this bill.**

HB 461 will address who is the responsible party for the cost of relocating utility facilities in a public easement. Easements dedicated to the public for utilities are typically located along existing road or highway rights-of-way and are available for use by a variety of utility providers. The bill flips the responsibility to bear relocation costs from the utility owner to the state or local government requiring the facilities to be relocated. The owner of a utility that requires relocation will be liable for relocation costs only if their lines and facilities are across, on or "within" the right-of-way, rather than "along" any right-of-way.

This bill will now head to the House floor for consideration.

AIF supports protecting the private property rights of Florida businesses.

WORKFORCE

HB 887- Relating to Computer Coding Instruction

On Tuesday, February 9th, **HB 887**, relating to Computer Coding Instruction sponsored by **Rep. Janet Adkins (R-Fernandina Beach)** was heard before the **House Education Appropriations Subcommittee** and unanimously passed with 11 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

HB 887 would allow high school students the option of taking computer coding courses along with a related industry certification to satisfy the foreign language requirement currently in place. Under this bill high schools will provide students the opportunity to substitute two credits in computer coding and a related industry certification for two credits sequential foreign language courses (i.e. Spanish I and Spanish II; Latin I and Latin II; French I and French II; etc.).

The bill would require each district school board to submit a plan for offering computer coding to the Education Commissioner, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2017.

Furthermore, HB 887, would require the Florida College System institutions and state universities to acknowledge computer coding course credits as foreign language credits.

HB 887 will now go to its last committee of reference, the **House Education Committee.**

AIF supports legislation that will provide Florida's students the opportunity to become proficient in computer coding, which will in turn prepare our states next generation for a technology driven economy.