



DAILY BRIEF

From March 3, 2016

HEALTH CARE

SB 1686 & HB 7087- Relating to Telehealth

As we reported **yesterday**, **HB 7087**, relating to telehealth was passed by the Florida House. Today, March 3rd, the Florida Senate took up HB 7087 in lieu of its Senate companion **SB 1686**.

Senator Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville) filed a comprehensive amendment which eliminates the provisions of the House bill relative to out of state providers. The amendment was adopted and HB 7087 passed by a vote of 38 yeas to 0 nays.

The bill will require the task force to compile data and submit a report by June 30, 2017, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that analyzes:

- Frequency and extent of the use of telehealth nationally and in this state;
- Costs and cost savings associated with using telehealth;
- Types of telehealth services available;
- Extent of available health insurance coverage available for telehealth services; and
- Barriers to implementing the use of, using, or accessing telehealth services.

HB 7087 must now return to the House for its consideration as amended.

AIF supports legislation that permits an unfettered role for telehealth services that will allow our citizens access to better quality care at lower costs.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

SB 912- Relating to Fraudulent Activities Associated with Payment Systems

On Thursday, March 3rd, **SB 912**, relating to Fraudulent Activities Associated with Payment Systems, by **Senator Anitere Flores (R-Miami)** was read for a third time on the Senate floor and passed by a vote of 39 yeas to 0 nays.

This bill 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 (DACS) 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.

SB 912 addresses fraudulent activity occurring at fuel stations by:

- Increasing from a third degree felony (maximum penalty of 5 years in state prison) to a second degree felony (maximum penalty of 15 years in state prison) for the unlawful conveyance of fuel;
- Requiring a retail petroleum fuel measuring device to have affixed to or installed onto the measuring device at least one security measure described in the bill and authorizing the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, under certain circumstances, to prohibit further use of the measuring device until a security measure is installed, replaced, or repaired;
- Indicating that possession of counterfeit cards is unlawful (not specified in current law); and

- Increasing the offense severity level ranking for unlawful conveyance of fuel and trafficking in or possession of counterfeit credit cards.

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

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

TAXATION

HB 7099- Relating to Taxation

On Thursday, March 3rd, **HB 7099**, relating to Taxation, by the **House Finance & Tax Committee** was referred to the **Senate Appropriations Committee** after passing through the floor of the House. After being heard by the **Senate Appropriations Committee**, HB 7099 unanimously passed with 18 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

HB 7099 aims to cut taxes in the state of Florida for the 2016-2017 fiscal year by a grand total of \$991.7 million. Much like last year's House tax package, this legislation will encompass some of our top taxation priorities that are of the utmost importance to our member, such as: makes sales tax exemptions for certain manufacturing machinery and equipment purchased by any eligible manufacturing businesses permanent; and provides a ten-day "back-to-school" holiday for clothing, footwear, school supplies and computers; a one-day "technology" sales holiday on computers and related accessories; and a one-day "small business" holiday for sales by small businesses.

This tax package will now head to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF supports tax cuts for Florida's consumers and businesses.

Below is a statement released from our President & CEO, Tom Feeney, commending the Senate Appropriations committee on the passage of HB 7099:

AIF Statement on Tax Package Passing Senate Appropriations

Tax Package to Repeal Manufacturing Equipment Sales Tax

Tallahassee, Fla. – The **Associated Industries of Florida (AIF)** today released the following statement attributed to its President & CEO Tom Feeney regarding the tax package passing the Senate Appropriations Committee. AIF applauds the inclusion of language to repeal the manufacturing equipment sales tax.

"AIF lauds the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee for advancing the tax package today. As Florida's leader in manufacturing and Florida's affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers, AIF supports eliminating the sales tax on manufacturing machinery and equipment once and for all.

"With Florida's manufacturing sector significantly providing high-wage and high-value added jobs, it is imperative that we grow this high-producing industry as the state continues to diversify the economy.

"As the tax package heads to the Senate floor, AIF encourages the full Senate to advance this pro-business tax cut that will reinvigorate manufacturing and accelerate job growth in the Sunshine State."

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WORKERS' COMPENSATION

HB 613 & SB 986- Relating to Workers' Compensation System Administration

On Thursday, March 3rd, **HB 613**, relating to Workers' Compensation System Administration, by **Rep. Jennifer Sullivan (R-Eustis)** was read for a third time and passed through the floor of the House by a vote of 115 yeas to 2 nays. After HB 613 passed through the House it was immediately sent to the Senate chamber and was considered instead of its Senate companion, **SB 986**, and a vote was taken. HB 613 passed through the Senate floor by a vote of 40 yeas to 0 nays.

The workers' compensation law requires an employer to obtain coverage for their "employees" that provides for lost income and all medically necessary remedial treatment, attendance, and care resulting from work related injuries and occupational diseases. The Division of Workers' Compensation within the Department of Financial Services (DFS) provides regulatory oversight of the system. The DFS' responsibilities include enforcing employer compliance with coverage requirements, administration of the workers' compensation health care delivery system, collecting system data, and assisting injured workers regarding their benefits and rights.

HB 613 will now go to the desk of the Governor.

AIF supports Florida's current workers' compensation law and any proposed change to the workers' compensation system- in the courtroom or Legislature- will be evaluated through the prism of coverage affordability, market stability, and employee safety.

SB 1402-Relating to Ratification of Department of Financial Services Rule

On Thursday, March 3rd, **SB 1402**, relating to Ratification of Department of Financial Services Rule, by **Senator David Simmons (R-Longwood)** was read a third time on the Senate floor and passed by a unanimous vote of 40 yeas to 0 nays.

SB 1402 addresses adoption of the current version of the Florida Worker's Compensation healthcare provider reimbursement manual. This manual has not been adopted or updated since 2008, leaving Florida well behind every other state in the amount of reimbursement it pays to healthcare providers for the treatment of injured workers.

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

AIF supports legislation that will keep Florida's Workers' Compensation system a stable and self-executing mechanism that benefits both injured workers and Florida's employers.

WORKFORCE

HB 1133- Relating to Applicability of Revenue Laws to Out-of-state Businesses During Disaster-Response Periods

On Thursday, March 3rd, **HB 1133**, relating to relating to Applicability of Revenue Laws to Out-of-state Businesses During Disaster-Response Periods, by **Rep. Dana Young (R-Tampa)** was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 115 yeas to 0 nays.

This legislation would remove hindrances, such as taxes and regulations that in any other situation would be the normal course of business for out of state companies coming to Florida to assist with emergency response during a disaster situation.

HB 1133 was sent to the Senate chamber and referred to **Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee, Senate Finance and Tax Committee, and Senate Appropriations Committee.**

AIF supports legislation that will remove the loop holes' businesses would ordinarily have to go through when coming to Florida to aide in a state of emergency.