



DAILY BRIEF

From February 24, 2016

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HB 1325- Relating to Economic Development

On Wednesday, February 24th, **HB 1325**, relating to Economic Development, by **Rep. Jim Boyd (R-Bradenton)** was removed from its last committee of reference and sent to the House floor. HB 1325 was then read for a third time on the House floor and passed with 79 yeas and 39 nays.

HB 1325, much like its Senate companion **SB 1646**, is a very broad based economic development package that will bring the state and local governments together to improve their investment climate and business environment to enhance competitiveness, retain jobs, create jobs and improve incomes. This bill will modify economic development definitions, processes and administration.

View a complete list of what HB 1325 [here](#).

HB 1325 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF supports legislation that will bolster Florida's business community throughout the state and help our state become the premiere location to move and grow your business.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

SB 912- Relating to Fraudulent Activities Associated with Payment Systems

On Wednesday, February 24th, **SB 912**, relating to Fraudulent Activities Associated with Payment Systems, by **Senator Anitere Flores (R-Miami)** was heard before the **Senate Rules Committee** and passed by a vote of 10 yeas to 0 nays. After SB 912 passed through the **Senate Rules Committee** before heading to the floor. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

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 Senate floor for consideration.

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

SB 562- Relating to Consumer Debt Collection

On Wednesday, February 24th, **SB 562**, relating to Consumer Debt Collection, by **Senator Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland)** was heard in front of the **Senate Fiscal Policy Committee** and passed with 7 yeas and 4 nays. **AIF's General Counsel, Tammy Perdue, stood in support of this bill.**

SB 562 seeks to better define the parameters by which an attorney representing a debit or debtor must notify a creditor of their representation in order for that creditor to properly direct communications concerning the debt. During today's committee, through the amendment process, there was some confusion as to whether the bill's scope would be expanded. However, the amendments which were adopted, actually narrow the application of the bill to situations in which an attorney communicates the representation to the creditor.

The next stop for SB 562 will be on the floor of the Senate.

AIF supports legislation that eliminates a current scam against Florida's employers while also protecting legitimate debt collection processes by companies.

SB 196- Relating to Public Records/State –Funded Infrastructure Bank

On Wednesday, February 24th, **SB 196**, relating to Public Records/State-funded Infrastructure Bank, by **Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast)** was substituted for its House companion, **HB 267**, read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 88 yeas to 19 nays.

Currently, the state-funded infrastructure bank (SIB) is housed within Department of Transportation (department). The SIB provides loans and credit enhancements to public and private entities for constructing and improving transportation facilities. This bill creates a public record exemption for the financial statements or other financial information that is required for the application to the SIB.

However, the public records exemption does not apply to the financial records of an applicant who is in default of an SIB loan.

This exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and will be repealed on October 2, 2021 unless this bill is reenacted by the Legislature.

SB 196 will now go to the desk of Governor Scott to be signed into law.

AIF supports protecting the financial information of private companies.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

SB 416-Relating to Location of Utilities

On Wednesday, February 24th, **SB 416**, relating to the Location of Utilities, by **Senator Anitere Flores (R-Miami)** was substituted for its House companion bill, **HB 461**, read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 109 yeas to 4 nays.

SB 416 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.

SB 416 will now go to Governor Scott's desk to be signed into law.

AIF supports protecting the private property rights of Florida businesses.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

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

On Wednesday, February 24th, **SB 1402**, relating to Ratification of Department of Financial Services Rule, by **Senator David Simmons (R-Longwood)** was heard by the **Senate Fiscal Policy Committee**. and passed with 11 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's General Counsel, Tammy Perdue, stood in support of this bill.**

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 Senate 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

SB 468- Relating to Computer Coding Instruction

On Wednesday, February 24th, **SB 468**, relating to Computer Coding Instruction, by **Senator Jeremy Ring (D-Margate)** was read for a third time on the Senate floor and passed by a vote of 35 yeas to 5 nay.

SB 468 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, SB 468, would require the Florida College System institutions and state universities to acknowledge computer coding course credits as foreign language credits.

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

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.