



From April 24, 2017

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

HB 687-Relating to Utilities

On Monday, April 24th, HB 687, relating to Utilities by Representative Mike La Rosa (R-Saint Cloud) was heard by the House Commerce Committee and passed by a vote of 25 yeas to 2 nays **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

This bill creates the Advanced Wireless Infrastructure Deployment Act which would ultimately allow for 5G technology throughout the state of Florida.

HB 687 will now go to its second committee hearing in the House floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation that accommodates for the increasing need for reliable wireless networks to help support communities and businesses of the future.

Please see the below statement from our President & CEO, Tom Feeney, regarding HB 687:

AIF: HB 687 Makes 5G Possible in Florida

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney regarding support of House Bill 687, by Representative Mike La Rosa, relating to Utilities. HB 687 was today heard in the House Commerce Committee, its second and last committee of reference.

“AIF supports legislation making the technology of the future possible in Florida. By deploying uniform small cell technology across the Sunshine State, our local communities will be able to be a part of the smart cities revolution, advancing not only our wireless network speeds but the ability to attract innovative, technologically advanced companies to Florida.

“AIF commends Representative La Rosa and the House Commerce Committee for advancing this good legislation today. HB 687, which is now ready to be taken up by the full House, is the answer to autonomous vehicles, instantaneous wireless speeds and smart cities becoming a reality for Floridians.”

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LEGAL & JUDICIAL

HB 423-Relating to Beverage Law

On Monday, April 24th, HB 423, by Representative Mike La Rosa (R-Saint Cloud), was heard before the House Commerce Committee and passed by a vote of 17 yeas to 9 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

Florida's "Tied House Evil Law," s. 561.42, F.S., prohibits a manufacturer or distributor of alcoholic beverages from having a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in the establishment or business of a licensed vendor, and prohibits a manufacturer or distributor from giving gifts, loans, property, or rebates to retail vendors.

The bill exempts financial transactions between a vendor and a manufacturer from all tied evil house prohibitions if the following conditions are met:

- The financial transaction must be negotiated at arm's length for fair market value between a manufacturer of beer or malt beverages, and
- The financial transaction cannot involve, either all or in part, the direct sale or distribution of beer or malt beverages between the manufacturer and the licensed vendor.

HB 423 will go to the House floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation that removes burdensome regulations on Florida's businesses.

HB 727-Relating to Accessibility of Places of Public Accommodation

On Monday, April 24th, HB 727, by Representative Tom Lee (R-Daytona Beach), was heard by the House Commerce Committee and passed by a vote of 20 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. One of the goals of the ADA is to guarantee that individuals with disabilities are offered full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations offered by a place of public accommodation.

However, individuals with disabilities may sue places of public accommodation including private businesses for alleged violations of the ADA, a problem that is currently rampant throughout the state.

The bill would:

- Create a license type for ADA experts;
- Require the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to establish licensing requirements and regulation for ADA experts;
- Allow ADA experts to determine if the businesses are compliant with the ADA;
- Allow businesses to hire ADA experts and file ADA expert reports with DBPR;

- Allow businesses to file remediation plans with DBPR if they are not in compliance with the ADA;
- Require DBPR to establish a public website with a registry of remediation plans and certifications of conformity; and
- Require courts to consider remediation plans to determine if a plaintiff filed a claim in good faith and whether the plaintiff is entitled to attorney's fees in lawsuits involving alleged violations of the ADA.

HB 727 will go on to the House floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation that makes filing frivolous lawsuits against Florida's businesses more difficult to accomplish.

WORKFORCE

HB 265-Relating to Computer Coding Instruction

On Monday, April 24th, HB 265 by Representative Elizabeth Porter (R-Lake City), was heard by the House Education Committee and passed by a vote of 17 yeas to 0 nays **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This bill will allow high school students the option of taking computer coding courses and promotes student access to education in computer science and related fields. HB 265 was amended during its previous committee stop to take out the provision allowing a computer coding course to satisfy foreign language credits.

HB 265 will now go 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.