



From March 31, 2017

EDUCATION

HB 859 & SB 668-Relating to Postsecondary Distance Education

On Monday, March 27th, HB 859, by Representative Amber Mariano (R-Port Richey), was heard by the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee and passed unanimously by a vote of 12 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis stood in support of this bill.**

Also on Monday, March 27th, SB 668, by Senator Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville), was heard by the Senate Committee on Education and passed unanimously by 9 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This legislation seeks to authorize Florida's participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement known as "SARA" created by the Southern Regional Education Board and the National Council on State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. This would allow for Florida's postsecondary institutions to voluntarily participate in what is a multi-state reciprocity agreement allowing them to offer online education without excessive fees and regulatory compliance processes. This reciprocity offers student's greater access to more distance education, enhances oversight of distance education offerings to Florida students by another state, and expands experiential learning opportunities across state lines. Not only is this good for students but it also helps lessen the burden on Florida businesses and taxpayers to fund construction and facility costs.

HB 859 will move on to the House Education Committee for its third hearing.

SB 668 will move on to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education.

AIF SUPPORTS our state university system's continued efforts to address the growing challenges that comes with increased enrollment, which in turn increases the workforce throughout Florida.

INSURANCE

HB 1299-Relating to Preinsurance Inspection

On Monday, March 27th, HB 1299, by Representative Bobby DuBose (D-Fort Lauderdale), was heard by the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee and passed by a vote of 13 yeas to 1 nay. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This bill repeals an antiquated vehicle inspection program only required in a handful of counties in Florida. Initially designed to prevent "phantom vehicles," its usefulness has been eroded due to technological advancements such as VIN numbers and automated car reporting. Currently, insurers and premium payers bear the cost of this program which, according to the NICB, has only led to the successful recovery of one vehicle in several years.

HB 1299 will go to the House Commerce Committee for its next hearing.

AIF SUPPORTS repealing outdated programs to ensure low costs for businesses and consumers.

HB 1107-Relating to Public Records/Workers' Compensation

On Tuesday, March 28th, HB 1107, relating to Public Records/Workers' Compensation, by Representative Ben Albritton (R-Bartow) was heard by the House Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee and passed unanimously by a vote of 14 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This bill would exempt private and personal identifying information of an injured worker or deceased employee from public record. Currently, this information is open to the public and often times injured workers are inundated with outreach from attorneys wanting to take on their cases immediately after filing their claim.

HB 1107 will now go to the House Commerce Committee for its third hearing.

AIF SUPPORTS protecting the private information of injured or deceased employees.

Please see the statement below from our President & CEO, Tom Feeney, regarding HB 1107:

AIF: HB 1107 is a Solution to Restoring Stable, Self-executing & Affordable Workers' Compensation System

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney, who also serves as the chair of its "Florida Workers' Compensation Strategic Task Force," in support of House Bill 1107, by Representative Ben Albritton, relating to Public Records/Workers' Compensation. HB 1107 was today heard in the House Oversight, Transparency and Administration Subcommittee, its second committee of reference.

"Since the Florida Supreme Court declared the workers' compensation system unconstitutional, AIF's 'Florida Workers' Compensation Strategic Task Force' has proposed legislation that would provide a stable, self-executing and affordable system to care for injured workers.

"HB 1107 heard today in the House Oversight, Transparency and Administration Subcommittee addresses one component of our overall goal to relieve burdensome pressures on Florida's employers by exempting public record requirements relating to injured or deceased workers.

"AIF commends Representative Albritton and the committee for recognizing the importance of not publicizing personal information of injured workers, and looks forward to seeing this good public policy move through the process."

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WORKFORCE

HB 265-Relating to Computer Coding Instruction

On Monday, March 27th, HB 265 by Representative Elizabeth Porter (R-Lake City), was heard by the House PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee and passed unanimously by a vote of 14 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

HB 265 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.). Furthermore, HB 265, would require the Florida College System institutions and state universities to acknowledge computer coding course credits as foreign language credits.

HB 265 will now go to its second committee stop in the House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee.

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.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

SB 466-Relating to Motor Vehicle Warranty Repairs and Recall Repairs

On Monday, March 27th, SB 466, by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast), was heard in Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism and passed by a vote of 8 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in opposition to this bill.**

This bill prohibits a licensee, except as authorized by law, from denying a dealer's claim, reducing the dealer's compensation, or processing a chargeback to a dealer for performing covered warranty or recall repairs on a used motor vehicle under specified circumstances. The bill alters the playing field and may have a chilling effect on manufacturing in general. The complex issue surrounding safety recalls should be a federal matter, better addressed at the national level with the goal of creating uniform public policy that improves motor vehicle safety, encourages technological innovation, and protects our planet.

SB 466 will move on to the Senate Committee on Rules to be heard.

AIF OPPOSES legislation that would intervene in any contractual agreement between a dealer franchise and an auto manufacturer, voluntarily entered by each party, and dictate new terms and conditions of such mutual agreement that favor one party over the other.

HB 423-Relating to Beverage Law

On Tuesday, March 28th, HB 423, by Representative Mike La Rosa (R-Saint Cloud), was heard before the House Careers and Competition Subcommittee and passed by a vote of 9 yeas and 6 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 Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee for its next hearing.

HB 727-Relating to Accessibility of Places of Public Accommodation

On Tuesday, March 28th, HB 727, by Representative Tom Leek (R-Daytona Beach), was heard by the House Careers and Competition Subcommittee and passed unanimously by a vote of 14 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

The United States 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.

The bill:

- Creates a license type for ADA experts;
- Requires the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to establish licensing requirements and regulation for ADA experts;
- Allows ADA experts to determine if the businesses are compliant with the ADA;
- Allows businesses to hire ADA experts and file ADA expert reports with DBPR;
- Allows businesses to file remediation plans with DBPR if they are not in compliance with the ADA;
- Requires DBPR to establish a public website with a registry of remediation plans and certifications of conformity; and
- Requires 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 Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee for its next hearing.

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

HB 1027- Relating to Unmanned Aircraft

On Tuesday, March 28th, HB 1027, by Representative Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville,) was heard by the House Careers and Competition Subcommittee and unanimously passed by a vote of 14 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

This bill will ensure a consistent framework for the use of drones. As the use of drones becomes increasingly more common in many different sectors of the business community throughout the state, implementing statewide regulations will establish safeguards while operating drones.

HB 1027 will go to the House Government Accountability Committee for its next hearing.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation that will streamline business regulation throughout the state.

HB 1175-Relating to Motor Vehicle Manufacturers and Dealers

On Tuesday, March 28th, HB 1175, by Representative Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens), was heard before the House Careers and Competition Subcommittee and passed by a vote of 9 yeas to 6 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in opposition to this bill.**

The bill provides additional grounds to deny, suspend, or revoke a license held by a motor vehicle manufacturer, factory branch, distributor, or importer ("manufacturer") within their contractual agreement. The bill prohibits manufacturers from taking certain actions against motor vehicle dealers and requires certain procedures be followed by the manufacturer when dealing with motor vehicle dealers.

HB 1175 will go on to the House Civil Justice and Claims Subcommittee for its next hearing.

AIF OPPOSES legislation that would intervene in any contractual agreement between a dealer franchise and an auto manufacturer, voluntarily entered by each party, and dictate new terms and conditions of such mutual agreement that favor one party over the other.

SB 334-Relating to Prejudgment Interest

On Wednesday, March 29th, SB 334, by **Senator Greg Steube (R-Sarasota)**, was heard by the Senate Committee on Rules, amended and passed by a vote of 6 yeas to 2 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in opposition to this bill.**

During committee, an amendment that takes out the provision requiring prejudgment interest be paid on noneconomic damages offered by Senator Rob Bradley (R-Orange Park) was adopted. This bill now seeks to mandate that prejudgment interest be awarded only to economic damages recovered. This prejudgment interest would accrue starting from the date the plaintiff incurs economic losses. Currently, prejudgment interest is awardable on economic losses at the discretion of the judge therefore we view this legislation as a way to overburden our court systems resulting in cost increases for Florida's businesses.

SB 334 will move on to be heard on the floor of the Senate.

AIF OPPOSES legislation that will increase the already daunting costs of litigation on Florida's businesses.

Please see the statement below from our President & CEO, Tom Feeney, regarding SB 334:

AIF: Prejudgment Interest to Drive Businesses from Sunshine State

Tallahassee, Fla. – The **Associated Industries of Florida** (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney regarding the opposition to Senate Bill 334, by Senator Greg Steube (R-Sarasota), relating to Prejudgment Interest. SB 334 was today heard in the Senate Rules Committee, its second and last committee of reference.

“AIF opposes legislation that would make it more expensive for businesses to operate in our state, and that is exactly what SB 334 would do.

“The prejudgment interest bill being pushed by the trial bar would only put further strain on our already overburdened court system and create an additional cost driver to Florida businesses.

“By adding time-consuming and burdensome measures, SB 334 would only stand to make attorneys richer and drive businesses away from the Sunshine State.

“After today's action by the Senate Rules Committee, the bill is now ready for the Senate floor. AIF encourages Florida's elected officials to do what is best for Florida businesses and consumers and oppose this legislation.”

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

SB 596-Relating to Utilities

On Tuesday, March 7th, SB 596, by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast), was heard by the Senate Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability and passed by a vote of 5 yeas to 1 nay. **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.

SB 596 will now go to its third committee hearing in the Senate Committee on Rules.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HB 853-Relating to Beer or Malt Beverages

On Tuesday, March 28th, HB 843, by Representative Tom Goodson (R-Merritt Island) was heard by the House Careers and Competitions Subcommittee and passed by a vote of 10 yeas to 4 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

Currently, vendors must purchase glassware from distributors for use in their establishments.

This bill allows for beer distributors to provide beer or malt beverage branded glassware to vendors for their use, cutting down on the vendors over all costs.

HB 853 will now go on to the House Commerce Committee.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation that will reduce costs on Florida's businesses by allowing distributors to provide vendors, at no cost, glassware to use in their establishments.

HB 333-Relating to Rural Economic Development Initiative

On Tuesday, March 28th, HB 333, by Representative Chuck Clemons (R- Jonesville), was heard by the House Agriculture & Property Rights Subcommittee and unanimously passed by a vote of 12 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

Currently, Florida's rural communities are experiencing additional challenges compared to their urban counterparts in many quality of life indicators. The state has an opportunity to improve the economic competitiveness of Florida's rural communities by reforming the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI). This legislation accomplishes this by:

- Focusing the mission of REDI on challenges rural communities face in the areas of workforce development and education, infrastructure, and access to healthcare;
- Streamlining REDI membership to ensure decision makers are at the table; and
- Making REDI a real tool for rural communities as they navigate through the red tape of state government.

HB 333 will move on to the House Transportation & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee for its next hearing.

AIF SUPPORTS efforts to increase economic development in Florida's rural areas by increasing job growth.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

GOT1-Relating to State Agency Information Technology Reorganization

On Tuesday, March 28th, **GOT1**, by the Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee, was heard in front of the Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee and passed by a vote of 13 yeas to 1 nay. **AIF spoke in opposition to this bill.**

This bill abolishes the Agency for State Technology (AST), and creates a new smaller, anemic agency of only 7 people within Office of Tech and Data Services. It moves the State Data Center under DMS and eliminates the already weak responsibility for Enterprise technology. It is a further step in destroying, rather than empowering, an Enterprise Technology Agency for our state.

GOT1 was filed as HB 5301 and is not currently assigned to any committees of reference.

AIF OPPOSES the removal of the AST as it is a further step in destroying, rather than empowering, an Enterprise Technology Agency for our state.

TRANSPORTATION

SB 340-Relating to Transportation Network Companies

On Tuesday, March 28th, **SB 340**, relating to Transportation Network Companies, by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) was heard by the Senate Committee on Judiciary and passed unanimously by a vote of 9 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This bill was amended by the bill sponsor to more closely match the House companion bill, **HB 221**. This bill now aims to establish a statewide regulatory framework for transportation network companies and how they operate throughout communities in Florida. It also defines what constitutes as a “TNC vehicle”, sets in place insurance requirements and preempts authority to the state, which will allow for a streamlined set of rules to be followed throughout the state.

SB 340 will now go to the Senate Committee on Rules for its third hearing.

AIF SUPPORTS statewide digital transportation service policies to create price competition, promote consumer choice, enhance customer experience, create jobs and remove anti-competitive local regulations.

HEALTH CARE

HB 589-Relating to Prescription Drug Price Transparency

On Thursday, March 30th, HB 589, by Representative Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) was read for a third time on the House floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 114 yeas to 0 nays.

Currently, law requires MyFloridaRX.com to provide the top 150 most prescribed drugs including their customary prices by pharmacies. This bill would double that number to 300 and codifies monthly reporting to the Agency for Health Care Administration (“AHCA”). The goal of HB 589 is to create more transparency in drug pricing, which in turn will give employers and consumers the ability to make more informed decisions regarding their health care spending. Prescription drug costs continue to rise, and become a larger percentage of the overall health care spend in Florida.

HB 589 will now go to the Senate floor to be heard.

AIF SUPPORTS transparency in drug pricing as a tool for reducing the cost of health care coverage on Florida’s employers and employees.