



From April 28, 2017

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

HB 687 & SB 596-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.**

On Friday, April 28th, HB 687, was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 110 yeas to 3 nays and immediately sent to the Senate chamber. Once HB 687 was received by the Senate, the bill was substituted for the Senate version, SB 596, read for a third time on the Senate floor and passed by a vote of 33 yeas to 1 nay.

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 the desk of the Governor.

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 passage of HB 687 during committee on Monday, April 24th:

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 & SB 388 -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.**

On Friday, April 28th, HB 423 was laid on the table and substituted for its Senate companion SB 388, by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast). After the substitution, SB 388 was amended on the House floor to include provisions from HB 853 that will allow for beer distributors to provide beer or malt beverage branded glassware to vendors for their use, cutting down on the vendors over all costs.

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.

SB 388 must now return to the Senate for consideration as amended.

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

HB 727 & SB 1398-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.**

On Friday, April 28th, HB 727, was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a unanimous vote of 117 yeas to 0 nays.

On Tuesday, April 25th, SB 1398, by Senator Linda Stewart (R-Orlando), was heard before the Senate Committee on Appropriations and passed unanimously by a vote of 18 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.

After passing the House floor, HB 727 will go on to the Senate floor for consideration.

SB 1398 will go on to the Senate floor for consideration.

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

SB 832-Relating to Drones

On Tuesday, April 25th, SB 832, by Senator Dana Young (R-Tampa) was heard in Senate Committee on Rules and passed. **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.

SB 832 will go to the Senate floor for consideration.

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

SB 1678-Relating to Motor Vehicle Dealers & HB 1175-Relating to Motor Vehicle Manufacturers and Dealers

On Tuesday, April 25th, SB 1678 , by Senator Rene Garcia (Hialeah), was heard before the Senate Committee on Rules and passed. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in opposition to this bill.**

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 1175, by Representative Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 104 yeas to 12 nays.

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.

SB 1678 will move on to the Senate floor for consideration.

HB 1175 will go on to the Senate floor for consideration.

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 775-Relating to Motor Vehicle Warranty Repairs and Recall Repairs

On Friday, April 25th, HB 775, by Representative Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 116 yeas to 0 nays.

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.

HB 775 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

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.

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.

EDUCATION

SB 668 & HB 859-Relating to Postsecondary Distance Education

On Tuesday, April 25th, SB 668, by Senator Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville), was heard by Senate Committee on Appropriations and passed unanimously by a vote of 15 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 859, by Representative Amber Mariano (R-Port Richey), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 116 yeas to 0 nays.

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.

SB 668 will move on to the Senate floor for consideration.

HB 859 will move on to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS our State Universities and our Independent Colleges and Universities' continued efforts to address the growing challenges that comes with increased enrollment, which in turn increases the workforce throughout Florida.

SB 392-High School Graduation Requirements

On Wednesday, April 26th, SB 392, by Senator Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange), was read for a third time on the Senate and passed by a vote of 36 yeas to 0 nays.

Currently, based on 56 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in financial literacy, high school students receive financial literacy instruction as part of the one-half Economics course credit required for graduation. The bill requires students entering grade 9 in the 2017-2018 school year and thereafter to complete a one-half course credit in personal financial literacy and revises the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards to include additional specified financial literacy topics.

SB 392 will go on to House floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation that gives students tools to learn about relevant, and real life subjects that will prepare them for the workforce in the future.

INSURANCE

SB 1008-Relating to Public Records/Injured or Deceased Employee/Department of Financial Services

On Tuesday, April 25th, SB 1008, by Senator Keith Perry (R-Gainesville) was heard before the Senate Committee on Rules and passed. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, 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.

SB 1008 will now go to the Senate floor to be considered.

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

HB 1421-Relating to Property Insurance Assignment Agreements

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 1421 by Representative James Grant (R-Tampa) was read for a third time on the House floor and passed by a vote of 91 yeas to 26 nays.

The legislation seeks to address the fraud and abuse within the process of assignment of benefits (AOB) by removing the one-way attorney fee, which will reduce AOB lawsuits that drive up property insurance costs on Florida's businesses and homeowners. AOB is a practice whereby lawyers and contractors convince homeowners to sign over their right to sue insurers for certain kinds of home damage. Insurers typically settle these claims to avoid protracted and expensive court battles, and by current Florida law they're on the hook for attorney fees too.

HB 1421 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS reforms to the assignment of benefits process to protect consumers against these abuses.

Please see the below press release from our President and CEO, Tom Feeney, regarding HB 1421:

AIF: Floridians Need Lawmakers to Resolve Insurance Marketplace Crisis this Session

Tallahassee, Fla. – The **Associated Industries of Florida** (AIF) today released the following statement on behalf of its President & CEO Tom Feeney regarding House Bill 1421, by Representative James Grant, relating to Property Insurance Assignment

Agreements. HB 1421 today passed the full House and is now available for consideration by the Senate.

"Bad actors in Florida's insurance marketplace are driving up costs and creating a crisis for Florida homeowners by way of unnecessary litigation over auto glass repair and property water damage.

AIF has supported getting rid of this abuse in the system that is needlessly inflating insurance premiums for Florida families.

"AIF commends Representative Grant and members of the House for their work on this bill that includes measures to improve the current state of the insurance marketplace. As this bill heads to the Senate, we hope lawmakers will continue to incorporate opportunities for even more cost savings for Florida consumers."

TAXATION

HB 21 & SB 76-Relating to Limitations on Property Tax Assessments

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 21, by Representative Colleen Burton (R-Lakeland) was substituted for its Senate companion bill, SB 76, by Senator Tom Lee (R-Brandon), read for a third time on the Senate floor and passed by a unanimous vote of 35 yeas to 0 nays.

In 2008, Florida voters approved Amendment 1 which, among other things, created a 10% cap on the annual increase of property taxes for all non-homestead properties. However, this amendment included a sunset provision that goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2019. HB 21 proposes a constitutional amendment be added to the ballot during the 2018 General Election to let the voters decide in making this cap 10% tax cap permanent.

HB 21 will now go to the desk of the Governor.

AIF SUPPORTS a permanent 10% property tax cap on second homes and commercial property.

AGRICULTURE

HB 1231-Relating to Agricultural Practices

On Wednesday, April 26th, HB 1231, by Representative Jake Raburn (R-Valrico), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 116 yeas to 0 nays.

This bill clarifies that livestock, poultry, and aquaculture medical supplies are exempt from sales tax. The bill repeals a supplemental pesticide registration fee which was added to bi-annual

pesticide registrations. The bill also expands the travel radius limitations on the state restricted agricultural tag from "150" miles to statewide.

HB 1231 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS the various provisions of this bill which help our agricultural industry remain competitive and continue to be a driving force in Florida's economy.

HEALTH CARE

SB 182-Relating to Consumer Protection from Nonmedical Changes to Prescription Drug Formularies

On Thursday, April 27th, SB 182, by Senator Debbie Mayfield (R-Melbourne), was read for a third time on the Senate floor and passed with a vote of 37 yeas to 0 nays.

This bill addresses the ability to move or shift prescription drugs within drug formularies by health plans. Currently, health plans have the authority to move prescription drugs to different tiers within the drug formulary, or add/remove certain drugs all together. Health plans use this system if, for instance, a drug has been found to be unsafe for patients or a more cost-efficient alternative has become available. Removing this ability from health plans would not only cause the cost of healthcare to rise but could put patients at risk of taking potentially harmful medications.

SB 182 will now go to the House floor for consideration.

AIF OPPOSES taking away the leverage that health plans have to add, remove, or shift drugs within the formulary system as it will increase the cost of health care and pharmaceuticals for Florida's employer community.