

# INTERIM UPDATE



**FROM FEBRUARY 15, 2021**

## **AIF PARTICIPATES IN HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE WORKSHOP**

On Monday, a panel discussion was held by the House Ways and Means Committee to discuss remote commerce. Chairman Bobby Payne (R-Palatka) told members that the purpose of the meeting was to have a thorough discussion of the items related to legislation like the bills being advanced by Representative Chuck Clemons (R-Jonesville) and Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) which would require out of state businesses without a physical presence in Florida to begin collecting a sales tax on taxable items when those sales occur in Florida. The Chair noted the discussion would prepare the members when they face policy decisions on this issue.

The panel consisted of AIF member Badcock Home Furnishings represented by Clara Arrington; Steve DelBianco, NetChoice.org; Debbie Harvey, Ron Jon Surf Shop; Tim Nungesser, Florida National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB); Mike Shutley, Amazon; and Lary Sinewitz, BrandsMart USA. Ms. Arrington shared that customers visit their stores and are assisted by their employees. Yet, the customer then purchases the product online. This “showrooming” concept has had a negative effect on businesses and employees across the state. Another issue is that Florida businesses must collect sales tax and remit them to other states while we do not require the same of other states. When asked, Mr. Sinewitz estimated that “showrooming” costs Brandsmart between 7-10% of any product they sell.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **SB 88 – Relating to Farming Operations**

On Monday, February 15, [SB 88](#) by Senator Jason Brodeur (R-Sanford) was heard by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and was reported favorable with 4 yeas and 1 nay. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill amends and strengthens the Florida Right to Farm Act, which is intended to protect reasonable agricultural activities conducted on farmland from nuisance lawsuits. The bill provides

stronger liability protections to farms that comply with best management practices and environmental regulations, and:

- Adds Agritourism to the list of practices protected by the Right to Farm Act;
- Institutes caps on attorney fees for punitive and compensatory damages; and
- Limits eligibility to file a lawsuit to individuals located within one half mile of the activity.

SB 88 will now go to the Senate Rules Committee.

**AIF supports legislation that protects Florida's farmers and helps to eradicate bad faith litigation which drives up the cost of doing business, insurance rates, and negatively affects those providing food and resources to the state.**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **SB 704 – Relating to Entertainment Industry**

On Monday, February 15, [SB 704](#) by Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) was heard by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was reported favorable with 9 yeas and 2 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill creates the Film, Television, and Digital Media Targeted Rebate Program within the Department of Economic Opportunity to broaden the entertainment industry's impact on the state, enhance tourism, and encourage more family-friendly productions to be produced in Florida. The program gives rebates on qualified expenditures to film, television, and digital media production projects that employ a crew of which at least 60% are Florida residents and spend at least 70% of their production days in Florida. A certified project may only receive a grant after it has completed production and the Office of Film and Entertainment have verified its expenditures.

SB 704 will now go to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development.

**AIF supports the Entertainment Tax Credit Program due to the jobs a more robust film industry would produce in the state of Florida.**

## **SB 778 – Relating to Florida Tourism Marketing**

On Monday, February 15, [SB 778](#) by Senator Ed Hooper (R-Palm Harbor) was heard by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was reported favorable with 10 yeas and 1 nay. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

VISIT FLORIDA is the name for the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation, a non-profit that serves as Florida’s statewide destination marketing organization and represents the state’s tourism industry. This bill permits VISIT FLORIDA to carry forward any unexpended state appropriations into succeeding fiscal years. The bill also removes the scheduled repeal date of October 1, 2023, for both VISIT FLORIDA and the Division of Tourism Marketing within Enterprise Florida.

**SB 778 will now go to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development.**

**AIF supports investment in building a world-class marketing engine with top talent, analytics, and funding that develops and executes data-driven branding strategies to bolster tourism and further the economic growth of Florida.**

## **TAXATION**

### **SB 598 – Relating to Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday**

On Monday, February 15, [SB 598](#) by Senator Keith Perry (R-Gainesville) was heard by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was reported favorable with 11 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill establishes a 10-day “back-to-school” sales tax holiday from Friday, July 30 to Sunday, August 8, 2021, for certain clothing, school supplies, personal computers, and personal computer-related accessories.

SB 598 will now go to the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

**AIF supports legislative actions that reduce taxes on consumers and allows further growth and employment opportunities for Florida businesses.**

## **SB 734 – Relating to Sales Tax Holiday for Disaster Preparedness Supplies**

On Monday, February 15, [SB 734](#) by Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) was heard by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was reported favorable with 11 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill establishes a 17-day “disaster preparedness” sales tax holiday, from Friday, May 28, to Sunday, June 13, 2021, for certain disaster preparedness supplies such as radios, tarps, and other disaster supplies.

SB 734 will now go to the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

**AIF supports legislation that reduces taxes and provides Floridians with a preparedness tax exemption encouraging them to protect their assets against potential destruction.**