

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

LEGISLATIVE DAILY BRIEF



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FROM OCTOBER 23, 2003

FUNDING FOR SCRIPPS FLORIDA

The day began with some optimism that it would end with Scripps Florida a done deal and the Legislature adjourned sine die. Instead, it looks like the session will continue on to Friday, following a last-minute amendment by the House to SB 6E, the Senate's Scripps package. The House amendment provided funding for a grab bag of projects, perhaps in response to the Senate's earlier addition to the bill of funding for the University of South Florida's Bioengineering & Life Science Research Park and the Mag Lab at Florida State University.

The bill returned to the Senate later in the evening. The Senate amended it once again, and sent it back to the House for further consideration. Then the Senate adjourned to be reconvened at the call of the President. Final approval in the House is expected Friday.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

As was reported yesterday, the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee took action on SB 14E by Senator Burt Saunders (R-Naples) and SB 16E by Senator Anna Cowin (R-Leesburg).

Today, the full Senate took up the combined SB 14E & 16E and quickly voted 38 to 0 to approve the measure; it also received unanimous approval in the House. The legislation allows contractors to change the organizational structure of their business in order to take advantage of the exemption from workers' comp coverage without putting their ability to continue operations at jeopardy if the Department of Business and Professional Regulation is unable to process the change in status quickly enough.

CORPORATE SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDITS

On a unanimous vote, the Senate enacted SB 22E, sponsored by Senators Michael Bennett (R-Bradenton) and Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach), which took approximately \$38 million in unspent funds from the state's corporate voucher program, and dedicated them to public schools. The voucher program allows corporations to take a dollar-for-dollar credit on their corporate income tax payments for any contributions they make to a state-approved organizations that provide scholarship money for low-income children.

In the 2003 session, Senator Tom Lee (R-Bradenton) sponsored a bill that raised the cumulative total of allowable tax credits in any one year from \$50 million to \$88 million. A shortfall in the program's funding has followed upon the heels of a number of controversies surrounding participants in the scholarship program. SB 22E implements a one-year reduction of \$38 million in allowable corporate scholarship tax credits and transfers that money to the education budget.

Although the bill was outside the call and it had no House counterpart, the House took it up and approved it on a 100 to 0 vote.

Please send your comments or suggestions to us at aif@aif.com or call the Governmental Affairs department at (850)224-7173.

- For more information on all of the important legislative information concerning the business community, go to our “members only” Florida Business Network web site at <http://fbnnet.com>
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