



DAILY BRIEF

Legislative Session



FROM MARCH 14, 2023

CIVIL JUSTICE

SB 236 - Relating to Civil Remedies

On Tuesday, March 14th, [SB 236](#) by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast) was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee and was reported favorable with a party line vote of 8 yeas and 4 nays with Republican Senators Jay Trumbull (R-Panama City) and Nick DiCeglie (R-St. Petersburg) joining the Democrats in opposition to the bill. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

SB 236 seeks to eliminate the cottage industry of trial lawyers and frivolous legal artists undermining the integrity of our civil justice system in Florida. Both bills address current loopholes in our laws and court procedures that keep their cottage industry alive by addressing 7 main issue areas.

- It will institute true transparency in damages so that juries base damages awards on the true cost of medical treatment instead of inflated bills.
- For third-party bad faith claims, it will allow a 60-day notice and right to cure, affirm that mere negligence does not amount to bad faith as well as require plaintiffs and their representatives to cooperate in good faith.
- It will change Florida's comparative negligence system so that a party who is more than 50 percent at fault for their own injuries may not recover damages.
- It will limit the use of a contingency fee multiplier for attorney fee awards so they may only be used in rare and exceptional circumstances.
- It will repeal Florida's one-way attorney fees.
- It will reduce the statute of limitations for negligence cases from four to two years.
- It will provide premises liability protection when someone is injured on a property owner's premises by a third party conducting a criminal act.

SB 236 will now go to the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee for consideration.

AIF supports legislation that will help eliminate unnecessary legal costs and provide much needed stability for Florida businesses and consumers. Florida has been labeled a "judicial hellhole" for far too long. Comprehensive 'tort reform' is needed to spur future investment and alleviate the concerns of those who fear the cost of doing business in Florida due to frivolous litigation.

HB 541- Relating to Post-loss Benefit Assignments Under Motor Vehicle Insurance Policies.

On Tuesday, March 14, [HB 541](#) by Representative Griff Griffiths (R-Panama City) was heard by the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee and was reported favorably with 15 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

HB 541 provides that a motor vehicle repair shop may not offer a customer a rebate, gift, gift card, cash, coupon, or other item of value in exchange for making an insurance claim for motor vehicle glass replacement or repair. The bill also prohibits the assignment of benefits for auto glass repairs.

AIF supports efforts by the legislature to bring more transparency and fairness in the auto repair market between insurance providers and policy holders. Litigation should not be auctioned off frivolously when the alternative is better for the policy holder in the long run.

ENERGY

SB 322 – Relating to Natural Gas Fuel Taxes

On Tuesday, March 14th, [SB 322](#) by Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) was heard by the Senate Transportation Committee and was reported favorably with 6 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

In 2014 the Florida legislature passed a measure that provided for a sales tax exemption for natural gas fuels until January 1st, 2024. HB 529 would extend this tax exemption until January 1st, 2026. Many logistical and industrial operators in Florida use natural gas fleets to service their customers. This relief has allowed Florida businesses to keep operating costs low, which trickles down to lower costs for consumers. In addition to the economic pros of HB 529, the environmental impacts are very substantial. These cost-cutting measures keep Florida's

business market competitive against other states, improve our energy independence, and retain jobs in the sunshine state.

SB 322 will now go to the Senate Finance and Tax Committee for consideration.

AIF supports legislation that reduces the state sales tax on natural gas.

SB 844 – Relating to Sales Tax Exemption for Renewable Natural Gas Machinery and Equipment.

On Tuesday, March 14th, [SB 844](#) by Senator Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) was heard by the Senate Finance and Tax Committee and was reported favorably with 9 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

SB 844 seeks to exempt machinery and equipment used at a fixed location that produce, store, transport, compress, or blend renewable natural gas from the Florida standard ‘sales and use’ tax rate.

SB 844 will now go the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration.

AIF supports energy policies that allow for the research, development, and distribution of alternative energy fuels.

TRANSPORTATION

SB 908- Unmanned Aircraft Systems Act of 2023

On Tuesday, March 14th, [SB 908](#) by Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez was heard by the Senate Transportation Committee and was reported favorably with 6 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill amends the definition of “critical infrastructure facility” to include a deepwater port or a railroad switching yard.

SB 908 will now go to the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee for consideration.

AIF supports adding greater protection for Florida’s deepwater ports and railyards by including them and their facilities as critical infrastructure in Florida law.