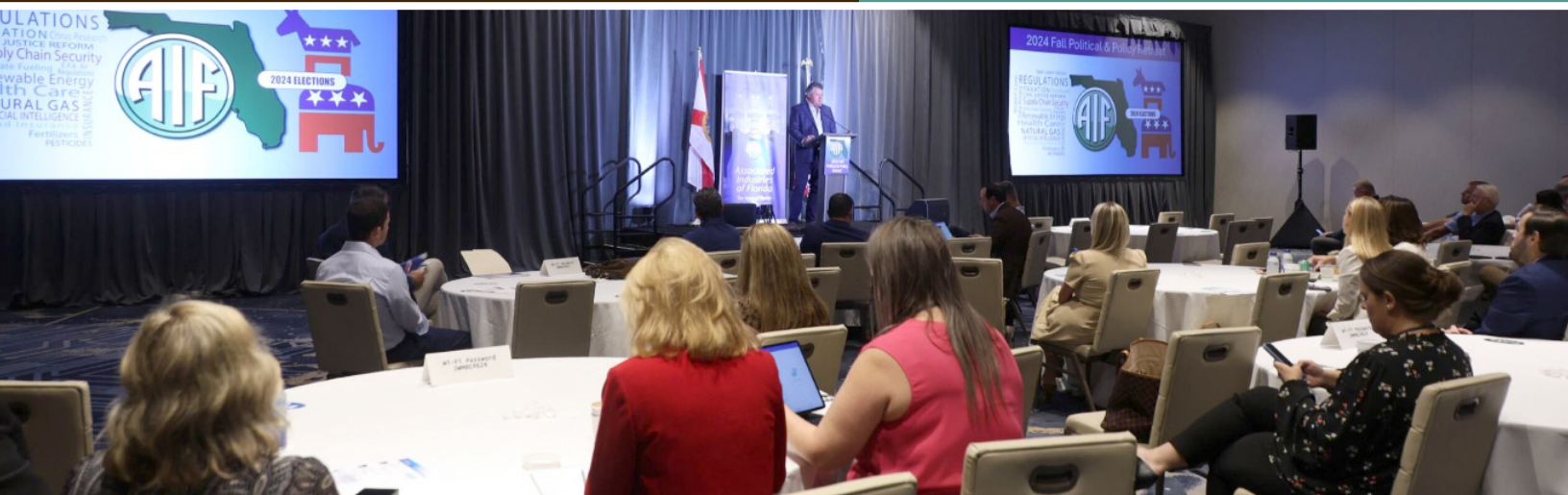




# Fall Political & Policy Retreat Summary

October 1-3, 2024



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Since 1920.*

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# AIF Fall Political & Policy Retreat

Day 1: October 1st



Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) hosted its **Fall Political & Policy Retreat** in Orlando, Florida, at the JW Marriott Orlando Bonnet Creek resort Oct. 1-3. The event provided AIF members, legislators, and candidates with updates on legislative races and the upcoming presidential election. Additionally, eight AIF Policy Councils and the newly founded AI Coalition for the Future of Artificial Intelligence met to finalize AIF's 2025 *Session Priorities*.

AIF's President and CEO Brewster Bevis welcomes all attendees and VIP guests to a casual networking reception.





*Where political strategy  
meets political action  
for business.*



The first day of the Retreat started with a networking breakfast, followed by a general session with several speakers. AIF's **VP of Political Operations, Jeremy Sheftel**, reviewed the impact that The Center has had in key primary races with several impressive victories for pro-business candidates running for office in Florida this cycle. Sheftel reported on The Center's successful engagement in all facets of the election process including statewide and strategic district polling, focus groups, candidate interviews, candidate recruiting, media monitoring, and aggressive marketing through direct mail and digital ads. He noted that members of The Center were privy to frequent data and analysis updates on the impacts of voter registration and strategic closed-door meetings with future Senate and House leaders. Sheftel concluded with an outline of The Center's goals for the remainder of the 2024 election cycle and the plan to further improve the political landscape for the business community.

**The Center has already tallied several impressive victories  
for pro-business candidates running for office in  
Florida this election cycle.**



# McLaughlin & Associates



**The next speaker was nationally renowned pollster Jim McLaughlin, President of McLaughlin & Associates.**

As part of his presentation, McLaughlin provided an overview of statewide polling trends in Florida, how they compare to national polling, and how top-of-the-ticket races and the latest polling on marijuana and abortion will impact legislative races.

He also discussed the Center's Q4 poll. The survey showed former President Donald J. Trump leading Vice President Kamala Harris by 5 points (51-46%) and Senator Rick Scott leading former Congresswoman Debbie Mucarsel-Powell by 7 points (51-44%). Additionally, the poll surveyed Florida voters about the most important issues they are facing day-to-day, which included:

- 1. Inflation (23%)**
- 2. Property Insurance (23%)**
- 3. Housing Costs (12%)**
- 4. Illegal Immigration (10%)**

# Keynote Speaker

AIF was honored to have **Florida's Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Wilton Simpson**, as a keynote speaker to conclude the morning session. Commissioner Simpson has been a friend to AIF and the business community dating back to his time as a state senator, Senate President, and now as Commissioner of Agriculture.

Commissioner Simpson discussed the Florida Department of Agriculture's response to Hurricane Helene and what the department can do to assist the agricultural industries affected by the storm. He also briefly discussed his experience working with AIF on Florida's agriculture issues.



**AIF is grateful to Commissioner Simpson for his steadfast efforts on behalf of Florida farmers and is committed to continuing to work alongside Commissioner Simpson to continue to grow Florida agriculture.**



# Policy Councils



**After a brief lunch, AIF Policy Council sessions began.** Attendees included AIF staff, AIF members, legislators, and candidates. The councils meeting included the Florida Energy Council, Florida Financial Services Council, Florida Transportation & Maritime Council, and the IT Council, along with the newly formed AI Coalition.

The goal of each council was to formulate the final changes to the 2025 *AIF Session Priorities* publication that will be released later this year. In the meetings, industry experts, legislators, and candidates discussed ways to craft the best language, so legislators know AIF's priorities and the position of AIF on a variety of issues.





# AIF Fall Political & Policy Retreat



The day concluded with our annual Chairman's Dinner. Republican nominee for Florida Senate District 7 and Chair of the Florida House Appropriations Committee, **Representative Tom Leek**, gave the keynote address.

Representative Leek's race garnered considerable media attention when he endured \$13 million in attack ads from his opponent in the Senate District 7 Republican primary. This assault was launched by his opponent, backed by the Florida Justice Association, representing plaintiffs' attorneys. They failed.

AIF's Center for Political Strategy, with the backing of the Florida business community, worked in conjunction with Representative Leek's campaign to help propel Representative Leek to a near 20-point margin of victory.

*"The AIF Center for Political Strategy was instrumental in helping us fight off the millions of dollars in lies that was spent against me in this campaign,"* Leek said. Representative Leek received a standing ovation following his remarks.



**Retiring Representative David Silvers (D)** gave remarks about AIF's non-partisan influence and the association's ability to reach across the aisle in support of Florida businesses.

To conclude the evening, all candidates at the dinner were asked to introduce themselves and share their personal motivations to run for public office. AIF was honored to be joined by the following candidates for the Florida legislature:



**Jon Albert**  
Candidate for HD 48



**Yvette Benarroch**  
Candidate for HD 81



**Erika Booth**  
Candidate for HD 35



**Nan Cobb**  
Candidate for HD 26



**Bill Conerly**  
Candidate for HD 72



**Jennifer Kincart Jonsson**  
Candidate for HD 49



**Chad "Cracker" Johnson**  
Candidate for HD 22



**Danny Nix**  
Candidate for HD 75





**Representative Toby Overdorf (R)** received his AIF Champion for Business Award for his outstanding commitment to Florida businesses in the 2024 Session.



AIF also honored legislators with their 100% voting record award. For 50 years, AIF has kept records of the votes taken by legislators in Tallahassee on legislation important to businesses and free enterprise in the state of Florida. Legislators at the dinner who voted with AIF 100% of the time were:



**Representative Robbie Brackett**  
**Representative Ryan Chamberlin**  
**Representative Peggy Gossett-Seidman**  
**Representative Toby Overdorf**  
**Representative Chase Tramont**

# AIF Fall Political & Policy Retreat

Day 3: October 3rd



The final day of the retreat began with a national political update from former **Trump 2020 Deputy Campaign Manager and White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Justin Clark**. Justin's presentation provided attendees with insight into the presidential race in 2024, as well as the U.S. Senate and House seats that are likely to decide control of the U.S. Congress. Justin's firm, National Public Affairs, advises dozens of congressional, senatorial, gubernatorial, and presidential races across the country.

**Senator Joe Gruters (R)** followed up with a similar presentation on the Trump campaign and the efforts the former president is making to take back the White House. During his travels with the President, Gruters noted the "energy" he is experiencing from the Trump base.

To conclude our morning session, AIF welcomed **Florida Senate District 25 candidate Kristen Arrington (D)**. Representative Arrington is a pro-business Democrat that AIF supported in her primary. She won by a resounding margin and is favored to win the general election in November. Representative Arrington spoke about working with the Center for Political Strategy and how AIF supported her primary campaign.

The retreat concluded with a final round of Policy Council meetings that included the Environmental Sustainability & Agriculture Council, Florida Health Care Council, Manufacturing, Aerospace & Defense Council, and the Taxation Council.



AIF thanks all legislators and candidates who were able to attend the conference. Legislators who attended were:

**Sen. Joe Gruters (R)**  
**Rep. Kristen Arrington (D)**  
**Rep. Doug Bankson (R)**  
**Rep. Robbie Brackett (R)**  
**Rep. Ryan Chamberlin (R)**  
**Rep. Peggy Gossett-Seidman (R)**  
**Rep. Jeff Holcomb (R)**

**Rep. Tom Leek (R)**  
**Rep. Toby Overdorf (R)**  
**Rep. David Silvers (D)**  
**Rep. David Smith (R)**  
**Rep. Chase Tramont (R)**  
**Rep. Keith Truenow (R)**  
**Rep. Taylor Yarkosky (R)**





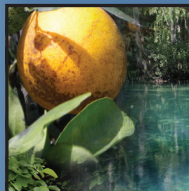
## Associated Industries of Florida Policy Councils & Coalitions

Our councils bring together unique sectors of the business community in order to develop and promote issues vital to those respective industries. These Councils are the backbone of policy making at AIF as the member companies of each Council voice their issues, concerns and ideas and help develop the policies that are presented to our Board of Directors for approval.

### Want to Participate?

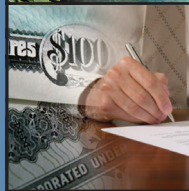
As a member, you can take a leadership role in the public policy issues that affect your company. Membership is required to participate on AIF's Councils and to receive our member communications.

To learn more about AIF membership services and/or apply for membership, please contact **Adam Basford**, Vice President of Governmental Affairs at 850.224.7173 or [abasford@aif.com](mailto:abasford@aif.com).



#### Environmental Sustainability & Agriculture Council

Addressing recycling, water quality, product stewardship, and other environmental issues important to the business community.



#### Financial Services Council

Insurance and financial industries, working in concert with other interested parties, to secure a stable fiscal climate for Florida.



#### Florida Energy Council

Developing resources to meet Florida's future energy needs—producers, suppliers, storage facilities, marketers, retailers, wholesalers and users.



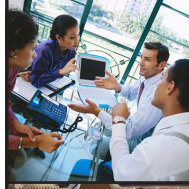
#### Florida Transportation & Maritime Council

Ensuring their continued economic prowess in a global marketplace for businesses that operate or support operations at any of Florida's 14 deep water ports.



#### Health Care Council

Working to craft a more functional and sustainable health care delivery system for Florida, incorporating the core principles of access, quality and affordability.



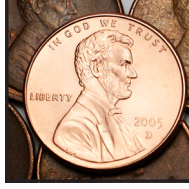
#### Information Technology Council

Promoting Florida's move to the cutting edge of technology to meet the demands of a diverse, fast-growing population, while balancing the needs of the state and private sector.



#### Manufacturing, Aerospace & Defense Council

Advancing the interests of Florida's manufacturing community to help Florida diversify its economy and provide more high-wage and high value-added jobs in the state.



#### Taxation Council

State tax revenues are necessary to fund essential state services and programs, but those needs must be balanced against the impact of taxation on Florida's businesses.



#### H2O Coalition

Supporting science-based solutions and adequate funding to address Florida's water quality and water capacity issues.

AIF Coalition for the Future of  
**Artificial Intelligence (AI)**



# 2024 Fall Political & Policy Retreat

## Associated Industries of Florida



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