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Champions for Business

What is a *Champion for Business* award? Simply put, it symbolizes our gratitude for extraordinary efforts by legislators on behalf of the business community.

For more than three decades, Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) published *Voting Records*, an analysis of every vote cast by every legislator on major business issues. The votes each legislator actually casts provides tangible evidence of whether or not that legislator upholds the ability of Florida companies to operate free of overly burdensome state regulation and taxation. It is a valuable tool used by AIF and the business community to determine which legislators running for re-election deserve our support. Yet, voting records only tell part of the story.

AIF also helps its member companies detect what bills and amendments are filed by whom, and who is taking part in behind-the-scene efforts and debates on behalf of the business community. These intangible forms of support through non-voting actions are also of vital importance and merit recognition.

AIF instituted the *Champion for Business* award to acknowledge law-makers who do more than vote for business and provide leadership on key legislation. A *Champion for Business* is a legislator who takes risks for their belief in the free-enterprise system, who defies the status quo when it is harmful to our state's competitive climate, and who faces down the opponents to the growing prosperity of Florida's citizens.

The *Champion for Business* is evidence that, in our efforts to let our members and their legislators know who has been good for business and who has been bad, we leave no stone unturned.

This year, the AIF Legislative Team selected those legislators who we deem are strong and forceful advocates for the business community. In our collective wisdom, these fifteen legislators are the epitome of what a *Champion for Business* should be. Whether they proposed an important bill, authored a key amendment, or toiled behind-the-scenes, these legislators are the ones who made a difference this session.

Throughout the 60-plus days of lawmaking, these were the senators and representatives we turned to when we needed someone on whom we could depend. They all deserve to be singled out for their dedication to our free-market economy.

Maybe they are the exception, rather than the rule. But that's why we want to recognize them, because we need more of them in the Florida government.

Throughout the 60-plus days of lawmaking, these were the leaders we turned to when we needed someone on whom we could depend.

Representative Trey Traviesa



(R-Tampa) is receiving his second Champion for Business Award for following through on a promise to open up the

cable television market to real competition. This was perhaps one of the most lobbied bills this session, with advocates representing the incumbent cable TV providers; the telecommunication companies that want to offer video service; and representatives from local government who are affected by many of the provisions in the bill. Rep. Traviesa was able to bring all players to the table in order to work out a compromise that would be in the best interest of Florida's citizens and businesses. The enactment of this legislation will ensure more competition, better customer service, and most importantly it will save Floridians and employers money in the form of lower cable TV prices. AIF is proud to once again designate Rep. Traviesa as a Champion for Business.

Representative Charlie Dean



(R-Inverness) has been a steadfast supporter for thousands of small business owners in Florida. His attention to the needs

of employers makes him an easy choice as a Champion for Business. He has worked hard to ensure billions

of dollars in tax cuts and insurance-rate relief, as well as to provide staunch support for tort reform. As Chairman of the House Safety and Security Council, Rep. Dean thwarted attempts by the trial bar to undermine the repeal of Joint & Several Liability, a move that would have resulted in businesses and people paying more than their fair share in legal proceedings. In addition, Rep. Dean sponsored and passed legislation this year which helped businesses and contractors comply with the Jessica Lunsford Act. By establishing uniform guidelines and procedures while doing away with multiple and costly background screening requirements, these changes were achieved while keeping the integrity of the original law. AIF is proud to salute Rep. Dean's commitment to free market principles and his dedication to improve the quality of life for all Floridians.

Representative Alan Hays



(R-Umatilla), in only his second term as a legislator, has already proven that he is a true supporter of Florida's employers.

Rep. Hays filed legislation this year that brought attention to the expansion of Citizens Insurance Co., a concept that is not supported by AIF and the business community. The bill would have created the Citizens Property Insurance Mission Review Task Force, whose role would have been to figure out a way to reduce the number of policies covered by this government-created insurance

company. Florida businesses are now liable for 41% of Citizens' deficits as a result of legislation passing during the 2007 Special Session on Property Insurance Reform. Even though the bill was not passed, AIF applauds Rep. Hays' efforts to curb the expansion of Citizens, and we are proud to recognize him as Champion for Business Award recipient.

Representative Rich Glorioso



(R-Plant City) is receiving his Champion for Business Award for the leadership he displayed in filing and successfully passing one

of the most talked about transportation bills in recent history. The bill contains several provisions absolutely critical to preserving Florida's economic vitality and addressing the threat of transportation gridlock, which affects our employers' bottom-line. Rep. Glorioso fought to include language which tackles the developing crisis with the availability of aggregate materials used in the production of concrete and asphalt necessary for road building projects. The bill places restrictions on a local government's ability to implement aggregate mining moratoriums and provides for the development of expedited permitting processes for mining operations. Failure to enact such provisions could have brought road building across the state to a complete halt, thus affecting every aspect of Florida's economy. It is this forward thinking by Rep. Glorioso that warrants his Champion for Business Award.

Honorable Mention

The following legislators have also made significant contributions that further the business agenda in Florida. Their efforts and dedication to issues important to employers should be highlighted. We applaud these five legislators for their continued support of AIF and its member companies.



Representative Stan Mayfield
(R-Vero Beach)

For the second year in a row, AIF and the business community battled the NRA and other gun-rights supporters for the right to allow business owners to establish or maintain policies against allowing employees to bring guns onto the workplace. Legislation was filed again this year that would prohibit business owners from establishing, maintaining or enforcing a policy or rule that would not allow an employee or "invitee" to possess a firearm that is locked in or locked to a motor vehicle that is parked in the employers' parking lot. Representatives from the business community were united in opposition to this bill and the bad precedent it would set. Passage of this bill would weaken Florida's status as an "employment at will" state.

As Chairman of the House Environment & Natural Resources Council, Rep. Mayfield presided over the decisive vote on this bad bill for the business community. Rep. Mayfield allowed both sides of the debate to present their case fairly, and in the end, voted against the bill. AIF appreciates Rep. Mayfield's leadership and courage for standing with the business community on this important issue to the employers of our state.



Representative Don Brown
(R-Defuniak Springs)



Representative Dennis Ross
(R-Lakeland)

These two unique legislators deserve recognition for their outstanding courage demonstrated during the 2007 Special Session A on Property Insurance Reform. Despite tremendous political pressure from the public, the media, and state political leaders, Rep. Brown and Rep. Ross were the only two legislators out of 160 members of the House and Senate that voted against HB 1A, which places not only the State of Florida in potential financial peril, but also the business community.

AIF did not support some of the provisions in HB 1A because of the high level of financial risk it creates to the state and to the entire business community. However, despite our efforts, the act was passed by the Legislature to substantially increase the amount of hurricane losses covered by the state administered Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund (Cat Fund) and to allow the state administered Citizens Property Insurance Company to compete with the private insurance market at inadequate rates and expanded coverages.

When other members of the Legislature voted for this act because of the intense political pressures, Representatives Brown and Ross voted against the bill because they felt it was truly not in the best interests of the State of Florida and the business community.



Senator Jeremy Ring
(D-Margate)



Representative Michael Grant
(R-Punta Gorda)

One of the major economic development bills passed this session was championed by Sen. Ring and Rep. Grant. HB 83 seeks to attract more venture capital investment to Florida. The bill appropriates a total of \$35 million for venture capital investments and creates the Florida Capital Formation Act, which is designed to increase the amount of venture capital investment in Florida. Investments must be made in Florida-based businesses involved in life sciences, information technology, advanced manufacturing processes, aviation and aerospace, and homeland security and defense. This idea was part of a broader initiative championed by Sen. Ring called the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program, which encompasses many different aspects of economic development including workforce development and the conversion of goods and services developed at our public universities into consumer products available to the mass market.

AIF would like to recognize these two legislators for their tireless efforts to advance economic development in the state of Florida. Although the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program was not passed in its entirety, we expect both of them to return next session to work on the parts of the program that did not make it this year.

Council Awards

Associated Industries of Florida is made up of a diverse group of businesses and associations that represent a wide array of economic sectors. Over the last year and a half, AIF has organized a number of Councils in order to best represent groups of employers that share a common subject area or expertise. AIF's council system has already produced excellent results, both legislatively and politically.

Governmental Outsourcing Council:

To help balance the needs of government and the private sector, and in response to the growth of the outsourcing industry and its importance to Florida's government and taxpayer communities, AIF has created the Governmental Outsourcing Council (GOC) for both for-profit and non-profit outsourcing entities.

"Legislator of the Year" Award



Representative Aaron Bean

(R-Fernandina Beach) has long been a supporter of business interests in Florida; this year

was no exception. What was extraordinary was that he filed HB 495, a bill designed to help human service outsourcing providers interact more efficiently and with more accountability with state government, for the GOC. Against extreme odds, Rep. Bean persisted until the bill was heard in the House Safety and Security Council over the objections of several legislators who felt that there was no need for this critical piece of legislation.

His persistence and direct action has resulted in interim meetings with the Department of Financial Services and other executive branch agencies to review and correct the unstable business environment created by

agency action, which negatively impacts services provided to Florida citizens.

AIF applauds his diligence and dedication in seeking to create a fair and equitable atmosphere for businesses contracting to provide much needed human services to the state.

Information Technology Council:

The ITC is an organization of leading information technology and telecommunications companies representing all aspects of the technology industry. The Council includes IT systems integrators, hardware and software companies, consultants, service and support providers, resellers and more.

"Legislator of the Year" Award



Representative Will Weatherford

(R-Zephyrhills) had the confidence to sponsor the Enterprise Information Technology bill that

resulted from a Senate Governmental Operations Committee interim project on the governance of state information technology. He studied the legislation and made excellent presentations before the committees it was referred to, as well as on the floor of the House. Rep. Weatherford also wants to continue to be involved in future IT legislation and expressed support on

AIF's ITC recommendations. Even as a freshman, Rep. Weatherford did not shy away from the complexity of this issue. For this and many other reasons, the AIF Information Technology Council is proud to designate Rep. Weatherford as the "House IT Legislator of the Year."

"Legislator of the Year" Award



Senator Al Lawson

(D-Tallahassee), as Chairman of the Senate Governmental Operations Committee, sponsored the Information

Technology Council's "must pass bill" of the session, SB 1974 relating to IT Governance. He also sponsored an amendment supported by the Information Technology Council, requiring state government to consider refreshing IT equipment on a regularly scheduled basis. Without Senator Lawson's leadership on the IT Governance bill, the Council's other issues would not have made it into the final enrolled bill that was recently signed by the Governor. Since this bill will guide all enterprise information technology projects in the future, it was a very critical bill for the IT Council. Congratulations, Sen. Lawson, for being selected as the "Senate IT Legislator of the Year" by AIF's Information Technology Council.