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AIF, FRF, NFIB & FRLA’s RESET Task Force  
Releases COVID-19 Liability Protection Recommendations  
Additional policy recommendations to be announced later this month

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Associated Industries of Florida (AIF), Florida Retail Federation (FRF), National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association (FRLA)’s RESET Task Force today released its liability protection policy recommendations aimed at protecting Florida businesses from future COVID-19-related lawsuits. These recommendations were developed by the RESET Task Force’s Legal Reform Working Group, led by co-chairs William Large, President of the Florida Justice Reform Institute, and Marc Salm, Vice President of Rick Management for Publix. The Task Force’s complete list of recommendations across all issue areas will be released later this month.

“For several months now, members of the RESET Task Force have been discussing how to address the uncertainty and concerns of businesses operating during the coronavirus pandemic. The one initiative that was repeatedly raised across all industries was liability protections,” said Brewster Bevis, AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs and co-chair of the RESET Task Force. “We applaud Governor DeSantis for ensuring this issue is a state priority. As a top priority for Florida businesses as well, the RESET Task Force is proud to release these liability protection recommendations now to help facilitate the discussion on how best to protect businesses as our state continues to safely reopen.”

The RESET Task Force’s liability protection policy recommendations include:

- Exempting essential businesses entirely from COVID-19 liability;
- A heightened culpability standard: to establish liability, the defendant must have acted with gross negligence or intentional conduct;
- A heightened evidentiary standard: clear and convincing evidence is required to establish liability, rather than a mere preponderance of the evidence;
- A shortened statute of limitations so that businesses will not face COVID-19 liability years after the pandemic has passed; and
- Protections for employers from employees’ COVID-19 related claims, including in any enforcement actions brought under state law, so long as the employer complied with applicable guidelines.

“The business community thanks Governor DeSantis for his strong support and steadfast leadership throughout the pandemic. However, as businesses begin to fully reopen, many fear the threat of being sued. Liability protection initiatives, such as those outlined by the RESET Task Force, would help protect Florida businesses while they continue getting Floridians back to work and serving their communities,” said William Large, co-chair of the RESET Task Force’s Legal Reforms Working Group.
The RESET Task Force was formed to focus on providing industry-specific policy recommendations to the Florida Legislature and bringing forth initiatives that will seek to help all of Florida’s economy rebound from the effects of COVID-19 and future economic slowdowns. The task force is comprised of 60 organizations – a complete list, in alphabetical order, is below:

Airlines for America
American Property & Casualty Insurance Association
American Resort Developers Association
Asphalt Contractors Association of Florida
Associated Builders & Contractors of Florida
Associated Industries of Florida
Community Associations Institute
Consumer Energy Alliance
Defensewerx
Film Florida
First Coast Manufacturers Associations
Florida Assisted Living Association
Florida Association of Broadcasters
Florida Association of Counties
Florida Association of Health Plans
Florida Attractions Association
Florida Bankers Association
Florida Beverage Association
Florida Carpenter’s Regional Council
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Council of 100
Florida Credit Union Association
Florida Farm Bureau
Florida Health Care Association
Florida Home Builders Association
Florida Hospital Association
Florida Independent Automobile Dealers Association
Florida Independent Petroleum Producers Association
Florida Internet & Television
Florida Institute of CPAs
Florida Justice Reform Institute
Florida League of Cities
FloridaMakes
Florida Natural Gas Association
Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association
Florida Nonprofit Alliance
Florida Petroleum Council
Florida Ports Council
Florida Propane Association
Florida Public Transportation Association
Florida Realtors
Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association
Florida Retail Federation
Florida Senior Living Association
Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Florida TaxWatch
Florida United Businesses Association
Florida Transportation Builders Association
Florida Trucking Association
GrowFL
Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida
International Council of Shopping Centers
Manufacturers Association of Florida
Manufacturing Association of Central Florida
National Federation of Independent Business
Pensacola Chamber of Commerce
Sarasota Manatee Manufacturers Association
South Florida Manufacturers Association
Step Up For Students

In addition, the RESET Employer Advisory Group is comprised of the following companies:

American Airlines
American Integrity Insurance
American Traditions Insurance Company
Anheuser-Busch
AT&T
Bealls
Charter Communications
Comcast NBCUniversal
Community Health Systems
CSX
Disney
Duke Energy
Enterprise Holdings
Fenco Farms
Florida Blue
Florida Power & Light
Florida Institute of CPAs
Florida Justice Reform Institute
Florida League of Cities
FloridaMakes
Florida Natural Gas Association
Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association
Florida Nonprofit Alliance
Florida Petroleum Council
Florida Ports Council
Florida Propane Association
Florida Public Transportation Association
Florida Realtors
Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association
Florida Retail Federation
Florida Senior Living Association
Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Florida TaxWatch
Florida United Businesses Association
Florida Transportation Builders Association
Florida Trucking Association
GrowFL
Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida
International Council of Shopping Centers
Manufacturers Association of Florida
Manufacturing Association of Central Florida
National Federation of Independent Business
Pensacola Chamber of Commerce
Sarasota Manatee Manufacturers Association
South Florida Manufacturers Association
Step Up For Students
The RESET Task Force is co-chaired by AIF Senior Vice President of State & Federal Affairs Brewster Bevis, FRF President & CEO Scott Shalley, NFIB Executive Director Bill Herrle and FRLA President & CEO Carol Dover. Dr. Ed Moore, former President of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, serves as the task force’s executive director and Craig Fugate, former FEMA Administrator, serves as a senior advisor.

About AIF
Known as “The Voice of Florida Business” in the Sunshine State, Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) has represented the principles of prosperity and free enterprise before the three branches of state government since 1920. A voluntary association of diversified businesses, AIF was created to foster an economic climate in Florida conducive to the growth, development, and welfare of industry and business and the people of the state. For more information on AIF, please visit AIF.com and follow @VoiceofFLBiz.

About FRF
The Florida Retail Federation (FRF) is the statewide trade association representing retailers -- the businesses that sell directly to consumers. Florida retailers provide one out of every five jobs in the state, pay more than $49 billion in wages annually, and collect and remit more than $20 billion in sales taxes for Florida’s government each year. For more information on FRF, please visit FRF.org.

About NFIB
The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) is the voice of small business, advocating on behalf of America’s small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven. Since our founding in 1943, NFIB has been exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses, and remains so today. For more information on NFIB, please visit NFIB.com.

About FRLA
The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) is Florida’s premier non-profit hospitality industry trade association, representing more than 10,000 members including independent hoteliers and restaurateurs, household name franchises, theme parks, and suppliers. The association’s mission is to protect, educate and promote Florida’s $111.7 billion hospitality industry, which represents 1.5 million employees. For more information on FRLA, please visit FRLA.org and follow @FRLAnews.