2016 State Legislative Session Outcome Report

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HB 153 by Rep. David Santiago/SB 760 by Sen. Aaron Bean) – Going into the second year of this campaign, we looked forward to building on the momentum we created during the 2015 session. We were lucky to secure two very good sponsors in Sen. Aaron Bean from Duval County and Rep. David Santiago from Volusia County. We were able to introduce our bill early and work through the committee process. Our bill passed all of the committees, in addition to the full House and Senate, without a single no vote. It is currently waiting to be sent to the governor’s office.

The bill directs the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to establish a Healthy Food Financing Initiative Program to provide financial assistance for the rehabilitation or expansion of grocery retail outlets located in underserved or low-income communities. It will draw upon and coordinate the use of federal, state, and private loans or grants, federal tax credits, and other types of financial assistance. The goal of the program is to improve public health and well-being of low-income children, families, and older adults by increasing access to fresh produce and other nutritious foods at participating independent grocery outlets that will be required to allocate at least 30 percent of their retail space to the sale of perishable foods, which may include fresh or frozen dairy products, fresh produce, and fresh meats, poultry, and fish.

Result: Waiting for the governor to take action as of March 21, 2016.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Public School Recess (HB 833 by Rep. Rene Plasencia/SB 1002 by Sen. Alan Hays) – This legislation was a priority for the Florida PTA. Current law establishes minimum time requirements for physical education instruction in public schools. However, there are no similar provisions related to school recess, which some organizations consider to be an integral component of a child’s physical, social, and academic development. HB 833 would require each district school board to provide 100 minutes of supervised, safe, and unstructured free-play recess each week for students in kindergarten through grade 5 and for students in grade 6 who are enrolled in a school that contains one or more elementary grades. The recess must be provided for at least 20 consecutive minutes each day and may not be withheld for academic or punitive reasons. The bill passed the House and was not heard in the Senate committee. Advocates vowed to continue efforts to pass this legislation during the 2017 legislative session.

Result: Died in committee.
Apprenticeships (SB 1670 by Sen. Aaron Bean/HB 1343 by Rep. Janet Adkins) – The bills created the Florida Apprenticeship Grant Program within the Department of Education to provide grants to Florida College System institutions for the creation of new apprenticeship programs or the expansion of existing apprenticeship programs. The bill included language sponsored by Sen. Maria Sachs that would have allowed for substitution of the apprenticeship programs for the one credit of Fine/Performing Arts and Physical Education and Electives for high school graduation. The American Heart Association opposed the substitution language and monitored the bills with our PE Coalition partners until session ended to ensure the language was not amended to other bills.

Result: Died in committee.

TOBACCO CONTROL

Cigarette Surcharge and Tax (SB 758 by Sen Jeff Clemens/HB 335 by Rep. Richard Stark) – This legislation would have increased the tobacco surcharge tax by $1.00. Both bills were not heard in committee.

Result: Died in committee.

Regulation of Smoking (SB 1554 by Sen. Thad Altman/HB 4063 by Rep. George Moraitis) – This legislation would have removed the preemption clause in the Clean Indoor Air Act, permitting local counties and municipalities to enact local ordinances that could go further than the state law currently does. Both bills were not heard in committee.

Result: Died in committee.

BUDGET

Biomedical Research - The King and Bankhead-Coley Programs were appropriated $10 million each for Fiscal Year 2016-17, maintaining the significant investment Florida makes in the state’s two competitive peer-review research programs.

Comprehensive Statewide Tobacco Prevention and Education Program - The program is slated to receive approximately $67.8 million, with all contracts awarded through the appropriation to include performance measures and quantifiable outcomes based upon the Centers for Disease Control’s best practices.

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