

Rep Associations Pass Florida Commission Protection

Hello to all:

Following in the footsteps of his brother, George W., who signed a similar bill in Texas when he was governor, Governor Jeb Bush signed HB 679 into law on May 21, 2004. You can see the text of the bill by visiting the web site below:

http://www.myfloridahouse.com/bills_detail.aspx?Id=13760&iSessionSelectedInd

HB 679 has been chaptered as 2004-90 and will appear in the Florida statutes the next time they are updated; however, the law is effective immediately.

HB 679 revises Florida Statute Ann.Sec686.201, which was passed in 1984 but later found to be unconstitutional. HB 679 deleted language that exempted principals in Florida from the law, which was the reason the original act was struck down. The new bill also increases the penalty to principals who fail to comply from double to treble damages and exempts real estate agents from coverage. Honest principals are protected from frivolous lawsuits by the statute as well.

This bill was passed through the efforts of MANA, AIM/R and NEMRA, all of which committed resources to the project. Manufacturers' agents in all professions will benefit from this law, and it is hoped that other rep trade associations will contribute to the next such project which MANA, as project manager, has targeted as the state of Connecticut in 2005.

The three associations also cooperated on passage of a similar law in North Carolina in 2003.

HB 679 is another example of why all professional field sales companies should belong to both MANA and their industry-specific rep association. Those that do not are getting a free ride on these lobbying efforts and should be sold by their peers on the "strength in numbers" concept of trade association membership.

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