



Flood Insurance

The Big "I" supports a reformed National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and slowly increasing private market involvement; however, absent a viable private market alternative for policyholders, the Big "I" will continue to advocate for a robust NFIP ahead of its expiration on Sept. 30, 2017. The Big "I" supports S. 563 and H.R. 1422, "The Flood Market Parity and Modernization Act," introduced by Sens. Dean Heller (R-NV) and Jon Tester (D-MT) and Reps. Dennis Ross (R-FL) and Kathy Castor (D-FL). This legislation allows private flood insurance to satisfy NFIP continuous coverage requirements and clarifies that private insurance satisfies flood insurance mandatory purchase requirements. It also gives state insurance regulators authority to make determinations on what constitutes acceptable private flood insurance. The Big "I" opposes cuts to the NFIP Write-Your-Own program which is a public-private partnership for distribution of flood insurance. The Big "I" is working to ensure that any potential changes to the program recognize the important role of independent agents in helping consumers make informed decisions about the purchase of NFIP policies for their homes and businesses.

Health Care

In efforts to reform healthcare, it is imperative that Congress protect the employer-sponsored healthcare system for the 175 million Americans who depend on it. As a result, the Big "I" supports full repeal of the "Cadillac tax" and supports S. 58 and H.R. 173, the "Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act," by Sens. Dean Heller (R-NV) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM), and Reps. Mike Kelly (R-PA) and Joe Courtney (D-CT). This harmful tax will not only impact many Big "I" small business members and their clients starting in 2020, but over time will impact more individuals because the tax threshold is tied to a very slow measure of inflation. This snowball effect will do irreparable damage to the employee benefits marketplace. In addition, the Big "I" also opposes efforts to cap the tax exclusion for employer-sponsored health insurance, and will continue to advocate for the important role that agents and brokers play in the sale and servicing of health insurance.

Tax Reform

In any effort to enact tax reform, the Big "I" urges Congress to address individual tax rates for small business pass-through entities along with corporate rates. The majority of the Big "I" member businesses file at individual tax rates since they are organized as pass-through entities such as Subchapter S Corporations, Partnerships and Sole Proprietorships. The Big "I" believes that any tax code overhaul should provide simplification and certainty for individuals and small businesses, along with their C Corporation counterparts, to avoid an unequal playing field.

Insurance Regulatory Reform

The Big "I" remains dedicated to preserving the state-based system of insurance regulation and firmly believes that the attributes of this system dramatically outweigh any perceived inefficiencies. The Big "I" is concerned that some federal and international regulatory efforts could lead to an erosion of state-based regulation. As such, the association supports efforts to install stronger procedural "checks" for federal officials in international insurance negotiations. The Big "I" also supports significantly restricting or eliminating the Federal Insurance Office (FIO). The Big "I" agrees with the intention of the CHOICE Act to limit the powers and duties of FIO, but is concerned that restructuring the current FIO into the new Office of the Independent Insurance Advocate could lead to day-to-day federal regulation of insurance in the future. The Big "I" also strongly opposes repeal of the McCarran-Ferguson antitrust exemption for the property-casualty or life markets.

Risk Retention Act Expansion

The Big "I", insurance regulators, and many others in the insurance market oppose the expansion of the federal Liability Risk Retention Act (LRRRA) to erroneously allow risk retention groups (RRGs) to write property coverage for many non-profit organizations and educational institutions. Today, RRGs are only permitted to provide commercial liability coverage and adhere to much lower regulatory standards, which do not include many important consumer safety requirements. Expansion of the LRRRA would inappropriately preempt state insurance laws, distort the competitive marketplace to the detriment of traditional insurance carriers and their agents, and put consumers at greater risk. There is no demonstrated marketplace need for this broad expansion.

Crop Insurance

The Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) is the cornerstone of the farm safety net and is crucial to the economic security of rural America. Despite the success of this public-private partnership, the program continues to be in the bullseye for budget cuts which the Big "I" opposes. As work begins on the next Farm Bill, the Big "I" continues advocating for a strong FCIP with agents as the sole sales force of the program.

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