

by *dBusinessNews*

Only 48 Percent of NFIB Member Respondents Say They Offer Health Insurance to Employees

The National Federation of Independent Business, Georgia's leading small-business advocacy group, today announced increasing access to affordable health insurance and enacting tax reform headline its 2007 agenda in Atlanta. NFIB surveys its membership on key issues before charting a course on their behalf. In the most recent survey, only 48 percent of NFIB/Georgia member respondents said they provide health-insurance coverage for full-time employees.

"The health-care picture for Georgia's small-business owners and their employees is bleaker than we thought," NFIB/Georgia State Director David Raynor said. "We've known our members across the country have been struggling to find reasonable health insurance for themselves and their employees, but were startled by our survey results in Georgia. NFIB will aggressively pursue commonsense solutions to help small business remain competitive with big business and unions and to ensure free enterprise continues to flourish in Georgia."

Raynor said NFIB will be looking closely at various solutions over the course of session. Not surprisingly, Georgia entrepreneurs prefer market-based options, noting NFIB/Georgia is planning a more comprehensive health-care survey as solutions are proposed. Raynor said NFIB members in recent years have favored solutions like consumer-based initiatives that emphasize more personal responsibility, as well as ensuring markets are as competitive as possible.

In other survey results, 95 percent said the state should not mandate every employer to provide health-insurance coverage to full-time employees, while 91 percent said Georgia should not require employers to pay into a state system to cover their uninsured workers.

In addition, 66 percent said the Legislature should enact a tax-system overhaul whereby a higher single-rate tax on the sale of goods and services at the retail level would be levied in exchange for the repeal of the state income tax on individuals and corporations; 17 percent differed, while another 17 percent were undecided. Raynor said the results show small business supports this type of reform, but noted the significant percentage of undecided responses shows small business would like more information and debate before reforms are adopted. NFIB members overwhelmingly continue to support repeal of Georgia's harmful inventory tax. Of note, NFIB will be working with agency department heads and other officials to ensure provisions of Gov. Perdue's recent executive order establishing regulatory flexibility for small business are followed. Georgia's session is scheduled to begin Monday, Jan. 8.

NFIB is the nation's leading small-business advocacy association, with offices in Washington, D.C. and all 50 state capitals. Founded in 1943 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, NFIB gives small- and independent-business owners a voice in shaping the public policy issues that affect their business. NFIB's powerful network of grassroots activists send their views directly to state and federal lawmakers through our unique member-only ballot, thus playing a critical role in supporting America's free enterprise system. NFIB's mission is to promote and protect the right of our members to own, operate and grow their businesses. More information about NFIB is available online at www.NFIB.com/newsroom.

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