

SUPPORT CFO JIMMY PATRONIS REFORMS FOR ADJUSTERS INVOLVED WITH HURRICANE CLAIMS

After a home is damaged by a hurricane, Florida insurers must rely on independent adjusters, or company adjusters, to respond to the tens or hundreds of thousands of claims that occur in the disaster. Independent adjusters are not employees of the insurance company, and are an integral part of assuring that consumers get their claims reviewed, adjusted, paid and repaired quickly.

In some instances, a consumer takes issue with the report the independent adjuster makes to an insurer, in other instances an insurance company is not satisfied with the report received by the independent adjuster. In these cases, the insurer may request that another adjuster visit the damaged house and assess the damage and report to the insurance company. Consumers can easily be frustrated not knowing if there has been a change in the adjuster, and call the insurer and their agent when these situations occur.

HB 1137 by Representative Clemons and SB 1492 by Senator Wright contains a common-sense solution being sought by CFO Jimmy Patronis. The bill would require insurance companies to notify the policyholder that they are sending a different adjuster to review the claim. The bill requires the licensed adjuster to provide their name, license number and contact information to the policyholder, as well. The bill also requires that the agent be notified of the change in adjuster, and the adjuster contact information, so that the agent can help communicate with the policyholder.

Public adjusters do not work for the insurance company, and often times delay claims and thwart the claims process. Currently a consumer has 3 days to cancel a contract with a public adjuster. These bills increase that timeframe to 7 days for claims, and 30 days for claims caused by state of emergency such as a hurricane. Consumers are in a vulnerable state after their homes are destroyed, and may not understand that an adjuster takes a percentage of the claim, which may not leave enough funds to repair a home. Lengthened times to cancel public adjuster contracts is a strong consumer protection.

NAIFA understands there are times that a new adjuster should be assigned to a claim, in many instances at the insistence of the policyholder, and supports better communication during the claim process with these consumers. NAIFA also supports giving consumers a chance to cancel a public adjuster contract as they may sign such contracts under duress.

**SUPPORT PROVISIONS IN HB 1137 AND SB 1492
TO NOTIFY AGENTS AND POLICYHOLDERS OF CHANGES IN LICENSED ADJUSTERS,
AND TO INCREASE THE TIME WITHIN WHICH POLICYHOLDERS MAY CANCEL A
PUBLIC ADJUSTER CONTRACT.**