

By Representative Bainter

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to health insurance; providing  
3           a short title; providing legislative findings;  
4           creating the Premium Assistance Program within  
5           the Agency for Health Care Administration to  
6           assist small businesses in purchasing health  
7           insurance coverage for employees; providing  
8           eligibility requirements; providing  
9           applicability to specified health benefit  
10          plans; specifying the subsidies that a small  
11          business may receive under the program;  
12          requiring that specified moneys be used to fund  
13          the Premium Assistance Program; providing for  
14          distribution of funds; providing an  
15          appropriation; providing an effective date.

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17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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19           Section 1. (1) This section may be cited as the  
20 "Premium Assistance Program."

21           (2) The Legislature recognizes that 212,000 of the  
22 over 310,000 small businesses in this state have four or fewer  
23 employees, that health care for uninsured employees of these  
24 small businesses represents a significant portion of the  
25 uncompensated costs of health care providers, and that these  
26 employees have impaired access to health care services and a  
27 correspondingly lower health status. The Legislature finds  
28 that the most difficult obstacle for a small business to  
29 overcome is the initial expense of instituting the benefit of  
30 health coverage for its employees because the premium expense  
31 represents a substantial increase in overhead expense for the

1 business. Once accustomed to this expense, a small business is  
2 more likely to be able to tolerate modest year-to-year  
3 increases in premium costs.

4 (3) The Premium Assistance Program is created within  
5 the Agency for Health Care Administration to assist small  
6 businesses in purchasing health insurance coverage for their  
7 employees.

8 (4)(a) To be eligible for the Premium Assistance  
9 Program, a small business must have four or fewer employees  
10 and must not have offered health insurance coverage to its  
11 employees or paid the health insurance premiums of its  
12 employees for the previous 6 months or longer. A small  
13 business is ineligible for the Premium Assistance Program if  
14 the business discontinues health insurance coverage for its  
15 employees in an attempt to qualify for the program.

16 (b) The premium subsidy authorized by this section  
17 must be provided for standard and basic health benefit plans,  
18 as defined in section 627.6699, Florida Statutes.

19 (c) The small business shall receive the following  
20 subsidies for single-parent or two-parent family contract  
21 coverage:

22 1. Seventy-five percent of the cost of health  
23 insurance premiums for the first year.

24 2. Fifty percent of the cost of health insurance  
25 premiums for the second year.

26 3. Twenty-five percent of the cost of health insurance  
27 premiums for the third year.

28 (5) Moneys that the state receives in the settlement  
29 of the court action that was filed in the Fifteenth Judicial  
30 Circuit, Palm Beach County, and styled "The State of Florida,  
31 et al., v. The American Tobacco Company, et al.," must be used

