

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
FINAL BILL ANALYSIS**

<b>BILL #:</b>	CS/HB 157	<b>FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:</b>	
<b>SPONSOR(S):</b>	Insurance & Banking Subcommittee; Holder	115 Y's	0 N's
<b>COMPANION BILLS:</b>	(CS/SB 262)	<b>GOVERNOR'S ACTION:</b>	Approved

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**SUMMARY ANALYSIS**

CS/HB 157 passed the House on April 24, 2013, and subsequently passed the Senate on April 30, 2013. The bill addresses electronic transmission of an insurance policy. Under current law, every insurance policy must be mailed or delivered to the insured (policyholder) or any other person entitled to delivery of the policy within 60 days after the insurance takes effect. Insurance policies are typically delivered when the policy is issued and are not delivered each time the policy is renewed.

The bill allows insurers to deliver insurance policies by electronic transmission. The bill further specifies electronic transmission of an insurance policy related to commercial risks constitutes deliver of the policy to the policyholder unless the policyholder tells the insurance company in writing or in an electronic format that he or she does not agree to have their policy delivered by electronic transmission. If a policy covering commercial risks is transmitted to the policyholder electronically, then the transmission must include a notice to the policyholder indicating the policyholder has a right to receive the policy by mail instead of electronic transmission. In addition, a paper copy of the policy must be provided to the policyholder upon request.

Electronic transmission of insurance documents is governed by the Federal Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (E-SIGN) and Florida's Uniform Electronic Transaction Act (FUETA). Under E-SIGN, if a statute requires information to be provided or made available to a consumer in writing, the use of an electronic record to provide or make the information available to the consumer will satisfy the statute's requirement of writing if the consumer affirmatively consents to use of an electronic record. However, FUETA should preempt the provisions of the E-SIGN law.

FUETA specifically applies to insurance. One provision of FUETA provides if parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means and a provision of law requires a person to deliver information in writing to another person, that delivery requirement is satisfied if the information is delivered in an electronic record capable of retention by the recipient. Furthermore, whether parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means is determined from the context and surrounding circumstances, including the parties' conduct. No affirmative consent is required. In addition, another provision of FUETA provides if a Florida law other than FUETA requires a record to be sent or transmitted by a certain method, the record must be sent or transmitted by the method provided in the other law. If the bill implicates either of these two provisions, then affirmative consent of the policyholder is not required for the insurer to electronically transmit an insurance policy to the policyholder.

The bill has no fiscal impact on state or local government. Insurers emailing policies to policyholders instead of mailing them will save costs associated with printing and mailing insurance policies to policyholders. Insurers could incur computer reprogramming costs associated with emailing policies.

The bill was approved by the Governor on June 14, 2013, ch. 2013-190, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2013.

## I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

### A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Section 627.421, F.S., requires every insurance policy<sup>1</sup> to be mailed or delivered to the insured (policyholder) or any person entitled to delivery of the policy within 60 days after the insurance takes effect. Insurance policies are typically only delivered when the policy is issued and are not delivered each time the policy is renewed.

The bill allows insurers to deliver insurance policies by electronic transmission. The bill further specifies electronic transmission of an insurance policy related to commercial risks<sup>2</sup> constitutes delivery of the policy to the policyholder or any other person entitled to delivery of the policy unless the policyholder or other person tells the insurance company in writing or in an electronic format that they do not agree to have their policy delivered by electronic transmission. If a policy covering commercial risks is transmitted to the policyholder or other person entitled to delivery of the policy electronically, then the transmission must include a notice to the policyholder or other person indicating the policyholder has a right to receive the policy by mail instead of electronic transmission. In addition, a paper copy of the policy must be provided to the policyholder or other person upon request.

#### **Applicability of Federal and State Law Relating to Electronic Transactions**

The Federal Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (E-SIGN) applies to electronic transactions involving interstate commerce.<sup>3</sup> Insurance is specifically included in E-SIGN.<sup>4</sup> E-SIGN provides contracts formed using electronic signatures on electronic records will not be denied legal effect only because they are electronic. However, E-SIGN requires consumer disclosure and consent to electronic records in certain instances before electronic records will be given legal effect. Under E-SIGN, if a statute requires information to be provided or made available to a consumer in writing, the use of an electronic record to provide or make the information available to the consumer will satisfy the statute's requirement of writing if the consumer affirmatively consents to use of an electronic record. The consumer must also be provided with a statement notifying the consumer of the right to have the electronic information made available in a paper format and of the right to withdraw consent to electronic records, among other notifications.

E-SIGN allows state law to preempt the E-SIGN law in certain circumstances. State law addressing electronic transmission can preempt E-SIGN if the state law is an enactment of the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA) as adopted by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. Alternatively, a state law that is not an enactment of UETA but is not inconsistent with E-SIGN and does not give greater legal status or effect to a specific form of technology or signature can preempt E-SIGN.<sup>5</sup> Florida adopted the substantive provisions of UETA in 2000 and has not substantively changed the provisions since they were adopted.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the Florida adoption of UETA

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<sup>1</sup> s. 627.402, F.S., defines policy to include endorsements, riders, and clauses. Reinsurance, wet marine and transportation insurance, title insurance, and credit life or credit disability insurance policies do not have to be mailed or delivered. (see s. 627.401, F.S.)

<sup>2</sup> Commercial risks specified in the bill are: workers' compensation and employers liability, commercial automobile liability, commercial automobile physical damage, commercial lines residential property, commercial nonresidential property, farm owners insurance, and commercial risks listed in s. 627.062(3)(d), F.S. which do not file rates with the OIR for approval for use.

<sup>3</sup> Section 101, Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act, Pub. L. no. 106-229, 114 Stat 464 (2000). Many of the provisions of E-SIGN took effective October 1, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> 15 USC 7002

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.uniformlaws.org/Act.aspx?title=Electronic Transactions Act](http://www.uniformlaws.org/Act.aspx?title=Electronic%20Transactions%20Act) (last viewed March 15, 2013), <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/telecom/uniform-electronic-transactions-acts.aspx> (last viewed March 17, 2013), and Final Staff Analysis for CS/CS/SB 1334 prepared by the House of Representatives Committee on Utilities & Communications, available at [http://archive.flsenate.gov/session/index.cfm?BI\\_Mode=ViewBillInfo&Mode=Bills&ElementID=JumpToBox&SubMenu=1&Year=2000&billnum=1334](http://archive.flsenate.gov/session/index.cfm?BI_Mode=ViewBillInfo&Mode=Bills&ElementID=JumpToBox&SubMenu=1&Year=2000&billnum=1334) (last viewed March 17, 2013) indicating on page 10 that "the bill is identical to the act recommended by the National Commissioners for Uniform State Laws except for provisions that were added to conform to Florida law and provisions added to subsection (11) requiring a first time notary to complete certain training requirements." Although Florida's adoption of the UETA has been amended five times since adoption in 2000, none of the amendments were substantive.

should preempt E-SIGN. Section 668.50, F.S., Florida's Uniform Electronic Transaction Act (FUETA), is Florida's adoption of UETA.

Although UETA and E-SIGN overlap in some areas, they differ on some consumer protection issues. E-SIGN focuses on regulating the manner of consent to deal electronically, while UETA focuses on how the parties are to comply with state consumer protections laws.<sup>7</sup> By adopting the official version of UETA, states can modify, limit, or supersede some E-SIGN provisions, including its consumer protection issues, which includes E-SIGN's requirement of consumer disclosure and affirmative consent for electronic records.<sup>8</sup>

FUETA specifically applies to insurance. One provision provides if parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means and a provision of law requires a person to deliver information in writing to another person, that delivery requirement is satisfied if the information is delivered in an electronic record capable of retention by the recipient.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, whether parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means is determined from the context and surrounding circumstances, including the parties' conduct.<sup>10</sup>

Emailing an insurance policy to the policyholder could fall under this provision of FUETA, in part, because in order to email a policy, the policyholder must provide an email address to the insurer which could be construed to mean the parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means. If this is the case, then current law requiring delivery of an insurance policy by mail or other delivery may be satisfied by emailing the policy. The consent of the policyholder to receive the policy by email would not be required in this case because under FUETA, consent is not required when the parties agree to conduct a transaction electronically. Additionally, the bill requires the insurer to notify the policyholder when the insurance policy is emailed that the policyholder can elect to receive the policy by mail in lieu of email. Once this notice is given, a policyholder's action to not elect to receive the policy by mail may be construed to mean the parties have agreed to conduct a transaction by electronic means and thus, under FUETA, consent is not required for electronic delivery of the policy to the policyholder.

In addition, another provision of FUETA provides if a Florida law other than FUETA requires a record to be sent or transmitted by a certain method, the record must be sent or transmitted by the method provided in the other law.<sup>11</sup> This provision may allow an insurance policy to be emailed to a policyholder if the current law requiring delivery of an insurance policy to the policyholder is amended to allow electronic delivery, as the bill proposes, because the amended law allowing electronic delivery of a policy may control over FUETA.

## II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

### A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

#### 1. Revenues:

None.

#### 2. Expenditures:

None.

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<sup>7</sup> Fry, Patricia Bumfield, *A Preliminary Analysis of Federal and State Electronic Commerce Laws*, available at <http://uniformlaws.org/Narrative.aspx?title=UETA%20and%20Preemption%20Article> (last viewed March 14, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/telecom/uniform-electronic-transactions-acts.aspx> (last viewed March 17, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> s. 668.50(8)(a), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> s. 668.50(5)(b), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> s. 668.50(8)(b), F.S.

**B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

**C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:**

Insurers emailing policies to policyholders instead of mailing them will save costs associated with printing and mailing insurance policies to policyholders. The exact amount of savings cannot be calculated as it is unknown how many insurers will opt to email rather than by mail. However, any savings realized by insurers should be passed through to policyholders.

If insurers incur computer reprogramming costs associated with emailing policies, any increased costs will be passed through to policyholders.

**D. FISCAL COMMENTS:**

None.