This spring found him in Savannah, Georgia attending the American Legislative Exchange Council’s Spring Task Force Summit and in the capitol cities of Hartford, Connecticut and Trenton, New Jersey meeting with lawmakers.

**ALEC Meeting**

April 28-30, ALEC hosted its Spring Task Force Summit in Savannah, where nearly 400 state legislators and public-policy professionals participated in the conference to learn more about state-legislative issues related to civil justice reform, health care and small business. ALEC is the nation’s largest bipartisan individual membership association dedicated to promoting the Jeffersonian principles of free markets, individual liberty and limited government.

**Business Issues and Networking**

ALEC launched the meeting with an opening reception attended by nearly all attendees. This event gave IFA the opportunity to mingle with state legislators from many important states. IFA also co-hosted a dinner with several key legislators. The Commerce Insurance and Economic Development Task Force, which has issued policy positions in opposition to franchise relationship legislation, the minimum wage, employer paid health mandates and supports local living wage preemption, establishes ALEC business and labor policy positions. Much of this spring’s meeting focused on an issue critical to businesses in many different sectors of our economy—the protection of personal consumer data from identity theft and how state governments are regulating this process.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor made a presentation concerning making organized labor more accountable for how it uses its members’ mandatory membership dues
(Continued from page 51) by requiring those expenditures to be more fully disclosed and in more detail. The next task force meeting will be next month during ALEC’s annual meeting and among possible agenda items is an update on the state of health care legislation requiring employers to pay for health insurance.

Lathrop Named to CIED Executive Committee
Earlier this spring, Lathrop was named to ALEC’s CIED Task Force’s Executive Committee, which helps set the agenda for meetings and projects. This is the first rung of the ALEC leadership ladder. Task force chairs are State Rep. Jim Newport (R-Okla.) and Michael Harrold from the Property Casualty Insurance Association of America.

Connecticut and New Jersey
On May 18 and 19, Lathrop traveled to Hartford and Trenton for a series of meetings with legislators and IFA members and other business allies to brief them about the economic benefits to their states of franchising. In Connecticut, Lathrop attended the legislative reception for the Connecticut Retail Merchant’s Association and discussed IFA’s opposition to SB 1147 with legislators, legislation that would require employers to pay for employee health care. At press time, this bill applied to all companies with 1,000 or more Connecticut employees, but specifically required franchisors to count franchisee workers toward this total.

SB 1147 resulted from a study published by the Connecticut Office of Legislative Research that suggested that large employers are not paying their fair share for health insurance in the state and that their employees are disproportionately enrolled in state-sponsored health programs. Among employers with the most employees using the state program were franchised businesses. The study, however, failed to distinguish between employees working for franchisors in the state from those working for independent franchisees, which distorted its results.

In New Jersey, Lathrop met with business allies to discuss franchising in the state and briefed them on the Economic Impact of Franchised Businesses study. He also discussed with them a strategy for presenting this good news story to members of the New Jersey legislature to make them franchising champions focused on public policy goals that will enhance the ability of small businesses to flourish in the state.

New Jersey has already raised the minimum wage this legislative session and is considering a host of other business unfriendly bills. There have been rumors that the legislature will consider health-care legislation similar to that under consideration in Connecticut.

Summer Meetings
During the summer, Lathrop will attend the ALEC annual meeting in Dallas where 1,500 legislators and policymakers are expected to gather and will also attend the National Conference of State Legislatures meeting in Seattle. Both of these meetings provide great opportunities to discuss its state legislative priorities with state legislators and staff.

For more information about IFA’s State Relations program, contact Matt Lathrop, International Franchise Association director of government relations at 202-662-0792 or mattl@franchise.org.

Find it at franchise.org

No question about it. The all-new franchise.org is the most comprehensive, objective resource for franchising on the planet. It’s timely, easy to use and filled with all the information you need to succeed. Just what you’d expect from the official website of the IFA, The Voice of Franchising. Find it today.