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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SB 1264 and SB 2434 Unanimously Passes Senate Transportation Committee

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (April 6, 2005) – Yesterday, the Senate Transportation Committee unanimously passed Senate Bills (SB) 1264 and 2434. SB 1264 and SB 2434 create funding for Florida's trauma centers through the creation of increased penalties for certain dangerous driving infractions such as red light violations (SB 1264), driving under the influence (DUI) (SB 2434) and driving without insurance (SB 2434). SB 1264 is a similar bill to House Bill (HB) 497 and SB 2434 is similar to HB 1455, which passed out of the House Fiscal Council and the House Transportation Committee at the end of March.

"These bills are vital to the continued operation of Florida's trauma centers," said Amy Maguire, director of the Alliance to Save Florida's Trauma Care. "I would like to thank Senator Saunders (sponsor of SB 1264) and Senator Sebesta (sponsor of SB 2434) for their guidance and for championing the trauma centers cause. With their leadership, we hope to secure the funding needed to enable Florida's trauma centers to continue providing the life-saving care that Floridians and visitors to our state deserve."

The Alliance will continue to work with legislators to secure a legislative mandated funding stream to help alleviate the funding crisis facing Florida's 21 trauma centers.

"Florida is fortunate to have a comprehensive trauma system in place, but we must find a way to support our trauma centers to ensure that their life saving services will be available for those that need them." said Senator Burt Saunders(R – Naples). "We are all working to save this vital health care service."

Rising readiness costs and the increasing amount of uncompensated and/or under-compensated care provided by trauma centers has caused this funding crisis. Many of Florida's trauma centers may be forced to close their doors or stop providing specialized trauma services if support is not provided.

The Alliance to Save Florida's Trauma Care consists of trauma centers, advocacy organizations, patients, medical personnel, providers and concerned citizens. Our goal is to inform and educate Floridians and our legislators about the impending crisis and to help find solutions for this problem.

For additional information, access www.SaveFloridaTrauma.org or call (888) 536-7806.

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