Georgia recently passed a bill making it illegal to run directory listings with false or misleading local contact information. The bill takes effect Jan. 1, 2011.

Despite setbacks and previous failed attempts, SAF members in the Peach State pushed hard for the bill that revises the state’s Fair Business Practices Act of 1975 to include deceptive advertising. Gov. Sonny Perdue (R) signed the bill on May 20, putting his state among the 26 that already have bills outlawing deceptive listings.

The success of the bill is a lesson in state-industry cooperation. Sen. Bill Jackson (R) sponsored the bill after Len Collins, president of the Georgia State Floral Distributors in Augusta, Ga., presented the issue to the lawmaker. “Sen. Jackson should really be applauded for his efforts to pass this bill,” Collins said. “As a fellow business owner, he recognized these dishonest practices when he saw them.”

Collins gave Jackson copies of bills passed in other states, and the Georgia bill was eventually framed after legislation that had passed in Virginia in 1996.

“(We need to show customers) that if they talk to a brick-and-mortar shop, they're going to be happier, get a better deal and get fresher flowers,” Collins said.

To find out more about how deceptive advertising laws get passed, check out this article, or e-mail bgamberini@safnow.org.

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