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Subject: School Safety Task Force, Restriction on Drones, Major Government Reform - Bill Hixon
Legislative Update

Representative Bill Hixon, District 83 - Newsletter

Legislative Update - January 27, 2014

Dear Friends,

On Tuesday, January 14, 2014, the General Assembly returned to Columbia for the second half of our two-year term. Although a typically slow first week on the floor, we made significant progress on a notable Republican Caucus agenda item.

I hope that you find this update helpful and informative. If I can help you with an issue, please let me know. Thank you for reading and allowing me to serve you.

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Major Government Reform:

After more than a decade of effort by the House Republican majority, the House passed the biggest streamlining of state government in nearly three decades. We have approved this legislation five times in the past seven years, and other versions of it have been in the legislative pipeline since 2000.

A House-Senate Conference Committee signed off on a "Department of Administration" bill last week that moves the vast majority of the administrative functions of state government -- human resources, information technology, state vehicles, and "general services"-- under the control of the Governor for the first time. The bill also effectively eliminates the old Budget and Control Board.

The House leadership under two Speakers, four House Majority Leaders has

worked with Governors Sanford and Haley to make this legislation a reality.

Other notable highlights of the compromise legislation:

- We prohibited any state agency from running a deficit unless it receives the explicit approval of the General Assembly. We whole-heartedly oppose any state agency running a deficit, but this window needs to stay cracked in case of the major state emergencies, natural disasters, or other unforeseen calamities.
- We protected the state's AAA credit rating by creating two small, independent agencies (with a total of fewer than 200 employees) with broad decision making structures to ensure secure management of the state's fiduciary responsibilities. This includes bonding authority and the state auditor.
- The Office of the State Budget and the Board of Economic Advisors will be completely independent from the Governor's Office and the General Assembly. This will ensure politics does not play a role in effective budgeting.
- The General Assembly is required to review every state agency and every program on a five-year basis. While this is not the true "sunset panel" we have advocated for more than a decade, it is a step in the right direction for holding state bureaucrats accountable to the public.

This bill joins two other major pieces of government reform legislation pending in the state Senate that would give state voters the option of letting the Governor appoint the Adjutant General and the Superintendent of Education. The House approved both of those bills last year.

Much of the week was reserved for the House Ways and Means subcommittees to begin work on writing the 2014-2015 state budget. January is always a busy time for the House members on that committee as they work on crafting the balanced budget that we have approved every year since voters gave Republicans control of the State House in 1994.

School Safety Task Force:

The House of Representatives amended, approved, and sent to the Senate [H. 3365](#), a bill creating a School Safety Task Force. The task force will:

- examine the various funding streams for school based mental health services
- determine how the streams may be best utilized in order to provide for more accessible and efficient delivery of mental health programs
- examine school mental health staffing ratios
- provide suggestions regarding delivery of services and effective school-community partnerships
- develop standards for district-level policies to promote effective school discipline and mental health intervention
- examine how to best support multi-tiered systems of support

The legislation establishes the membership of the task force, providing for

appointments by the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, the chairmen of the Senate Education Committee and the House Education and Public Works Committee, the Chief of the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED), the SC Department of Mental Health and certain statewide professional associations in the fields of education and therapy. Task force members shall not receive compensation, mileage, or per diem. A deadline is established for the task force to make a report of its recommendations to the General Assembly after which time it is dissolved. Any recommendations made by the task force must be revenue neutral.

Law Enforcement Officer Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:

The House approved and sent to the Senate [H.3147](#), a bill establishing provisions for awarding workers' compensation to a law enforcement officer who sustains post-traumatic stress disorder from the use of deadly force in the line of duty. This legislation addresses a recent SC Supreme Court ruling that a police officer's post-traumatic stress disorder after a job-related fatal shooting of a suspect did not arise from extraordinary and unusual conditions of employment, as required for an award of workers' compensation payments for mental injuries. This legislation exempts a law enforcement officer seeking workers' compensation for personal injury caused by stress, mental injury or mental illness from meeting this extraordinary and usual conditions standard when the impairment causing the stress, mental injury, or mental illness arises from the law enforcement officer's direct involvement in, or subjection to, the use of deadly force in the line of duty.

SC Military Service Integrity and Preservation Act:

The House approved and sent to the Senate [H.4259](#), the "South Carolina Military Service Integrity and Preservation Act". The legislation establishes a criminal penalty for someone who, with the intent of securing a tangible benefit, knowingly and falsely represents himself through a written or oral communication, including a resume, to have served in the Armed Forces of the United States or to have been awarded a decoration, medal, ribbon, or other device authorized by Congress or pursuant to federal law for the Armed Forces of the United States. A violation is a misdemeanor subject to a fine of up to \$500 and/or imprisonment for up to 30 days.

Restrictions on Drones:

The House amended, approved, and sent to the Senate [H.3514](#), a bill establishing restrictions on the operation of public unmanned aircraft systems (drones) and the disclosure of personal information acquired through their use. With limited exceptions, this legislation provides that drones may be operated and personal information from the operation disclosed in order to collect personal information only pursuant to a police investigation and a criminal warrant issued by a court of competent jurisdiction. The legislation includes provisions for obtaining the warrant as well as provisions for reporting to the General Assembly and others information about these warrants. It is a misdemeanor offense to disclose, without authorization, information about a search warrant or personal information obtained as a result of the search warrant. Personal information and evidence obtained or collected in violation of these provisions is not admissible as evidence in any trial, hearing, or other proceeding. The legislation requires state agencies and local law enforcement to obtain approval before procuring a drone and requires all operations of a drone or disclosure of personal information about a person acquired

through the operation of a drone to be conducted in a manner that minimizes the collection and disclosure of personal information not authorized. The legislation allows the operation of drones by public institutions of higher learning for research or academic purposes. The legislation also makes it unlawful to operate a drone, in whole or in part, as a weapon, or to deliver a weapon against a person or property.

Building Code Exemption for Historic Properties:

The House approved and sent to the Senate [H.3174](#). This legislation allows the governing body of a county or municipality to exempt certain historic properties from the application or enforcement of building codes, upon the recommendations of the local historic preservation commission, when the local governing body determines that the application of the building codes would prevent or significantly hinder preservation or restoration efforts.

Please be sure to stay up to date with all that is going on in Columbia. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, I am always available.

As a reminder, you can go to my [website](#) for links to my voting record and bills that I have sponsored or co-sponsored.

Also, you can view Live Broadcasts of the South Carolina House of Representatives daily legislative sessions by clicking [Here](#).

As always you can go to my [FACEBOOK](#) page and hit the like button or visit my [Website](#) for the latest information.

Go to the new [House Roll Call Votes Page](#) to see how all the representatives have voted on all the important bills.

Congressman Joe Wilson now represents all of Aiken County. He has staff in Aiken County with office hours in Aiken and in North Augusta. His office number is (803) 608-9747.

Senator Tom Young can be reached at: tom@senatortomyoung.com or by phone at (803) 649-0000 (o) or (803) 215-3631 (cell). Senator Young also does weekly newsletters and you can subscribe by emailing him.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you in Columbia. If I can ever be of assistance to you, or if you have ideas on issues you want me to share with the rest of the General Assembly, please don't hesitate to contact me at Home at 803-278-0892 or at work 803-279-8855.

Sincerely,
Bill Hixon

For more information, please visit my website...

www.billhixon.com

Check out my FACEBOOK page...

[Bill on FACEBOOK](#)

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