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To: Veldran, KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov
Date: 6/7/2016 4:53:44 PM
Subject: Graduations, Georgia CWP Reciprocity, Military Retirement, and Much More -- Update from Sen. Tom Young – May 31 to June 6, 2016

Graduations, Georgia CWP Reciprocity, Military Retirement, and Much More – Update from May 31 to June 6, 2016

Good afternoon! One of my goals as your state senator is that you find this legislative update informative, and I appreciate any feedback. If I can help you with an issue, please let me know. We have been very busy in recent weeks assisting many constituents with a variety of issues. Thank you for allowing me to serve our District!

State Government News

Georgia CWP Reciprocity – Enacted: The Governor signed this bill last Friday after it received final passage in the Senate on Wednesday night. Sponsored by Rep. Bill Hixon of North Augusta and co-sponsored by other members of the Aiken County legislative delegation, the legislation requires South Carolina to recognize Georgia concealed carry permitholders. Because South Carolina passed the legislation to recognize Georgia and the Governor signed it, there is now reciprocity between the two states because Georgia law already says Georgia will recognize permits for residents of any state that also recognizes Georgia. Like other states with whom our state has concealed carry reciprocity, Georgia concealed carry permitholders must abide by South Carolina concealed carry laws while in South Carolina.

Military Retirement Pension and State Income Tax: On Thursday, the General Assembly gave final approval to this legislation which will phase in over the next five years. At the end of the five years, military retirement pensions of up to \$30,000 annually will be exempt from state income tax for someone 65 and older. Military pensions for those under age 65 will be exempt up to \$17,500.00. Current law allows an exemption of up to \$15,000 for those 65 and older. The bill is also important to the state's Military Base Task Force which is working now to position our state as strong as it can be when the next Base Realignment Commission convenes on the

federal level.

Roads: Last Tuesday night, the Senate adopted an amendment to the roads legislation changing how highway commissioners will be selected. Currently, there is one highway commissioner for each Congressional district on the SCDOT Commission with one at large appointment. All commissioners except one on the SCDOT Commission are selected by the respective congressional district legislative delegation. The Governor has the at large appointment. The Senate amendment last Tuesday night allows the Governor to nominate a highway commissioner but the legislative delegation from the congressional district for the highway commission slot (the commissioners are by congressional district) has to approve of the nomination. If the congressional district legislative delegation does nothing, then the nomination fails after 45 days. I voted against because I did not view this change as giving the Governor more control over the selection of the SCDOT Commission which is one important aspect of necessary SCDOT reform about which I have heard from constituents for quite some time. This also was a departure from what the Senate approved 30-15 in early March whereby the Governor would appoint all members of the SCDOT Commission with confirmation by the Senate. On Wednesday, the House adopted the Senate's newly amended version and the bill now is up for the Governor's consideration. As of the time of this email, the Governor has not signed it. There are other aspects to the bill that are good including a large roads funding component without a gas tax increase. To see an editorial in today's *State* newspaper explaining further this issue as to why I did not vote for the amended version last Tuesday night, go [here](#).

Ethics -- Income Source Disclosure and Independent Investigations : There are two ethics reform bills that are in a legislative Conference Committee. The ethics income source disclosure requirement appears to be in good shape to be enacted this year. However, there is a disagreement on a portion of the independent investigation part between some senators and the House of Representatives version. The disagreement is over the "probable cause" determination AFTER an investigation by the State Ethics Commission. The Senate version provides that the final determination of probable cause lies with the legislative ethics committees. The House version provides that the State Ethics Commission makes the final probable cause determination. I will support the House of Representatives version if that is presented to the Senate out of the Ethics legislation Conference Committee.

Eminent Domain -- Palmetto Pipeline : Last week, the House passed the bill and the Governor signed it into law on Friday. This bill clarifies that state law does not allow a private, for profit, unregulated company to take land by eminent domain. The bill includes a moratorium for up to 3 years while a Committee reviews under what circumstances, if any, petroleum pipeline companies are allowed to use eminent domain in other states. In March, Kinder Morgan announced that it suspended further work on the proposed Palmetto Pipeline project between Belton, S.C. and Jacksonville, Florida including portions of Aiken and Edgefield counties. In its announcement, Kinder Morgan cited significant legislative opposition in Georgia. Similar to South Carolina, Georgia enacted a moratorium and has commissioned a study committee to review its current laws in this area.

Restructuring -- Shortened Legislative Session : Last week, the General Assembly passed legislation (S.267) that I sponsored to shorten the legislative session. Currently, the General Assembly meets three days per week from the second Tuesday in January to the first Thursday in June. The legislation requires the regular legislative session to end on the second Thursday in May which shortens the session by 3 or 4 weeks depending on how the second Thursday in May falls in relation to the first Thursday in June. The Governor signed the bill on Friday.

Roll Back Taxes : The Governor signed this bill last week too which includes an amendment that Senator Campsen and I offered to change state law to allow a new owner to appeal a rollback tax bill and prevail if the rollback tax was issued solely because a new owner fails to make written application for an agricultural assessment and the use of the property remains agricultural. In the past, I heard from constituents who inherited agricultural property but they did not know to file for the agricultural exemption on the property. After finding out late, they owed the County five (5) years of back property taxes even though the use of the property had not changed. I viewed this as unfair but state law apparently did not provide a remedy. With this change, there is now a fix.

Ice Storm Reimbursement: After the ice storm in February 2014, local governments in 22 counties including Aiken along with the S.C. Department of Transportation incurred expenses in cleaning up public roadways. Pursuant to an emergency assistance agreement, the federal government reimbursed the counties and municipalities about 80% of their expenses. The unreimbursed portion is called the "non-federal state/local share." Last year, the General Assembly appropriated \$4.1 Million as the state's allocation share to reimburse the local governments in the 22 counties for about 25% of their non-federal reimbursed expenses. This year, an appropriation to reimburse the remaining 75% of the non-federal reimbursed expenses failed to survive in the Budget Conference Committee. I am optimistic that the money will be appropriated in 2017. If so, Aiken County will receive the largest portion of these funds with other local governments including the City of Aiken, City of North Augusta, and Town of Jackson also receiving funds.

Budget Conference Report -- Other Local Items : In spite of the ice storm reimbursement not surviving in the Conference Committee, other significant parts of the budget to mention for Aiken County are as follows:

- USC Aiken - \$400,000 increase in recurring dollars (+5.5%)
- Aiken Tech - \$784,216 in training equipment
- Aiken Tech - \$7 million for the Life Science Building
- \$126,000 in additional Parks & Recreation funding
- \$1.795 million in additional funds for road repaving directed to the County Transportation Committee
- \$305,500 additional from the non-recurring Local Government Fund

Budget to Governor : Governor Haley now has the budget and any vetoes that she issues will be considered by the House and the Senate on June 15 and June 16.

Patent Trolling : "Patent trolling" is the process of filing a claim of patent

infringement against an entity, despite the fact that the claimant does not manufacture or supply the product or service in question. Patent trolls often file claims in bad faith, hoping that the company being sued decides to settle in order to avoid expensive litigation costs. While patent law is traditionally a federal issue, in May 2013, Vermont became the first state to pass legislation to attempt to halt patent trolling. For the past three years, legislation has moved through the General Assembly and received final passage last week where South Carolina will join Vermont and nearly 20 other states passing similar anti-patent trolling legislation.

FOIA Bill : The FOIA provision is now in a Conference Committee with the law enforcement dashcam video bill. They are on the same legislation. The Senate passed the dash cam bill and the House amended the bill to address the FOIA provision. As reported in Sunday's *Aiken Standard*, the Conference Committee is at a stalemate on whether to include the FOIA provision with the dashcam language as part of the Conference report to the Senate and the House. I support the FOIA bill and encourage the Senate conferees to do so. A lot of local residents are interested in the FOIA bill. We should know more by June 16.

S.C. State University -- Loan Relief : In the past 24 months, S.C. State has received loans of over \$18 Million from the State to help the school address its budget deficits. Last year, the General Assembly terminated the entire Board of Trustees and approved a new Board. With the new leadership, S.C. State has made improvements and kept its university accreditation. Last week, the Senate passed legislation that would forgive \$12 Million in loans that were made to the school. I voted against the bill.

Moped Law Enacted : Last week, the House and the Senate approved legislation requiring moped drivers to be licensed and making it unlawful for a person operating a moped to drive while under the influence of alcohol.

Local Farm Produce : The S.C. Department of Agriculture has a website that will provide information as to where to buy local produce. To see that, go [here](#).

DHEC -- Zika Virus : With the summer fast approaching, more media coverage has focused on the Zika virus in the United States. South Carolina DHEC has a Zika virus information page on its website. As of May 27, 2016, there is one confirmed travel case of Zika virus in South Carolina. To learn more at the DHEC information page, go [here](#). To see the toolkit and outreach materials from DHEC, go [here](#).

High School and College Graduations

Congratulations Graduates! : Congratulations to the hundreds of high school and college graduates in Aiken County in recent weeks! We are proud of them! Best wishes as they go to work or continue their education!

Great Advice for Graduates : Last year, Dr. Tim McClendon of Aiken's St. John's United Methodist Church delivered the commencement address at Mead Hall School in Aiken. He provided great advice and I received several requests to include it again in this year's weekly update at graduation time. To read it, go [here](#).

More Great Advice : During the past four years when students are headed to college, I posted an article about advice that Coach Jay Mills, Head Football Coach at Charleston Southern University in Charleston, S.C., provided to his son as he went off to college. Many parents and grandparents thanked me for sharing it and asked that I post it at graduation time too. To see the article, go [here](#).

Local District News

Japanese Plutonium : Today's paper reports that Japanese plutonium has arrived at SRS. Representatives from the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) appeared at the April 2016 Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council Meeting. The NNSA representatives provided an update within security limitations on the Japanese plutonium. They said there are 331 kg (about 1/3 of a metric ton) of plutonium coming to SRS to be downblended and then shipped to New Mexico for long term storage. That plutonium is a portion of the six (6) metric tons that the Department of Energy (DOE) has confirmed will be downblended and removed from SRS.

Absentee Voting - June 14 primaries : For this month's June 14th primaries, in person absentee voting will continue this week at the Aiken County Voter Registration and Elections Office in the County Administration Building from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday. To learn more about absentee voting by mail or in person, go [here](#). If you have questions, call [642-2028](tel:642-2028).

Silver Bluff Head Coach Al Lown Recognized : Last Thursday, long time Silver Bluff Head Football Coach and Athletic Director Al Lown was recognized by the General Assembly for his contributions during his 35 year career at Silver Bluff and North Augusta high schools.

Congratulations to Sgt. Mary Frantz! : Locally, Sgt. Mary Frantz was named South Carolina's sheriff's deputy of the year by the South Carolina Sheriff's Association. To learn more, go [here](#).

Aiken County Veterans Affairs Officer : Major Dwight Bradham is the Aiken County Veterans Affairs Officer. He can be reached at [642-1545](tel:642-1545) by phone and at dbradham@aikencountysc.gov by email. If you have any veteran-related issue, please call the office for assistance. You can follow that office on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/AikenVA and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/VA_Aiken.

Silver Bluff Audubon Center and Sanctuary : This 3,250 acre property is located 5 miles Northwest of Jackson in Aiken County along the Savannah River. The property includes numerous Carolina bays, walking trails, and a wide variety of wildlife including 217 bird species such as Bald Eagles, Wood Storks, Cooper's Hawks, and Red-headed Woodpeckers. In addition, a 120 acre area is on the National Register of Historic Sites as the location of George Galphin's Trading post operated from 1750 until the end of the Revolutionary War. To learn more and how to visit, go [here](#).

S.C. Business Week: The S.C. Chamber of Commerce sponsors South Carolina Business Week which prepares high school students for higher education and

careers in business by introducing them to the principles of leadership, teamwork, and the American free enterprise system. This year it takes place July 24-29 at Presbyterian College in Clinton. To learn more and to apply, go [here](#).

Grass Cutting in the SCDOT Right of Way : Grass is growing in right of ways around our district. In Aiken County, DOT contractors have started cutting the grass on the interstates and on secondary roads. If you are aware of an area where high grass is obstructing vision for drivers as they enter or exit certain roads in our County, please call the SCDOT at [641-7665](#) or let me know and I will pass on the information.

Groundwater Study -- Aiken County : The USGS is currently performing an extensive groundwater study in Aiken County to develop a groundwater-flow model that can be used by Aiken County water managers to manage current and projected reported and unreported demands on groundwater resource and to ensure the highest quality of groundwater. To learn more, go [here](#).

Congressman Wilson's Local Office -- Veteran Assistance : Congressman Wilson can also assist veterans. The local number to the Aiken County office is [\(803\) 642-6416](#).

Elections - Poll Managers Needed for June Primary and November General Election: Aiken County Voter Registration and Elections needs additional poll managers for the June and November elections. Basic requirements include being able to work a 14 hour day on election day; experience in using a Windows operating system on a personal computer; internet access for training and communications with County Elections office; and reliable transportation. If you are interested or need more information, call [642-2030](#) to let the Elections office know of your interest or to answer questions.

SRS Heritage Foundation : To see the latest newsletter for the SRS Heritage Foundation, go [here](#). Many residents in Senate District 24 are current or former employees of companies located at SRS.

Volunteer in Local Schools: If you would like to help with educating our children, consider volunteering in our local schools. To learn more, go [here](#). Thank you to the Aiken Downtown Rotary Club for putting together this list of opportunities.

SC Help -- Primary Residence Foreclosure Avoidance Assistance : Several Aiken County residents have received assistance under a federal program instituted in 2011 in several states including South Carolina providing one time assistance to homeowners who risk foreclosure. The program loans up to \$36,000 in one time aid to homeowners who have fallen behind on mortgage payments for a variety of reasons. Acceptable causes include: unemployment, underemployment, a sharp reduction in self-employment income, a divorce, death of a spouse, unexpected medical bills from a catastrophic illness or injury, or damages stemming from the October 2015 floods. The home involved must be the applicant's primary residence and there is a cap on the size of the original mortgage loan amount. The money is collected back from the homeowner after the homeowner is back on his or her feet.

To learn more or to apply, go online [here](#) or call [1-855-435-7472](tel:1-855-435-7472).

Foster Parent Recruitment : In March, Governor Haley, DSS officials, and foster parents launched a new statewide effort to find more families willing to foster parents for children in need. To learn more, go [here](#).

Aiken County Legislative Delegation Office : The local legislative delegation office is staffed by the delegation secretary Jeannie Cadden in the Aiken County Government Building on University Parkway. Ms. Cadden works on both Aiken County and Edgefield County legislative and constituent matters. One of the services provided by our local delegation office is the processing of paperwork associated with becoming a notary public. If you need help with this or other matters, let me know by responding to this email or call Jeannie in the delegation office at [642-1694](tel:642-1694).

Campaign Information

Donate to Tom Young for Senate : If you have not done so and would like to donate to my Senate campaign fund, please go [here](#). Donations can be accepted in any amount up to \$1,000.00 per donor per election cycle. Thank you!

Facebook : If you are on Facebook, I have a Facebook page for Senator Tom Young. During the week, I post information from the Senate or elsewhere around the District, State, and County. If you are interested, please “like” the page to receive updates during the week from me on Facebook.

Other Topics of Interest

Faith Magazine article : A *Faith* Magazine article about my public service and faith can be seen [here](#).

SRS Retiree Association – Retiree Resource Center Help : The SRS Retiree Association has established a SRS Retiree Resource Center in Aiken. To learn more about what services this office can provide, go [here](#).

SRS Deer Hunts : To apply to participate in annual SRS Deer Hunt program at the Savannah River Site, go [here](#).

Research Charities in South Carolina : Charitable donors may research organizations registered in South Carolina by visiting the Secretary of State’s website [here](#). You may learn a charity’s total revenue, program expenses, total expenses, net assets, and fundraiser costs. You can also call the Division of Public Charities at [1-888-CHARITI \(242-7484\)](tel:1-888-CHARITI) for more information.

Unclaimed Property -- Money for You? : The State Treasurer’s Office maintains a link for residents to search for unclaimed property. Examples of unclaimed property include dormant bank accounts, uncashed checks (including paychecks), unclaimed insurance proceeds, forgotten utility deposits, uncashed dividend checks and unexchanged shares of stock. Some local residents have recently found unclaimed money belonging to them on this website. To learn more, go [here](#).

Medication Assistance Program : The LSCOG (Lower Savannah Council of Governments) partnering with local physicians and the United Way, has an ongoing free program to assist lower income Aiken County residents with obtaining medications. Participation is generally limited to those families with no prescription insurance and total household income of less than 150% of Federal Poverty Guidelines. To learn more, call [1-866-845-1550](tel:1-866-845-1550), ext. 6 or go [here](#) and scroll down to Medication Assistance Program.

Nonprofits and Raffles : Since last April, nonprofits may legally conduct raffles in South Carolina to raise funds for their charitable purposes. For the new law, the Secretary of State created a frequently asked questions list which can be seen [here](#). If you have more questions, please call the Charities Division of the Secretary of State at [\(803\) 734-1790](tel:803-734-1790).

Cardiac Arrest : For a step by step instruction of how to react in a cardiac arrest situation, go to www.heartrescuenow.com.

Special Needs Children – Help for Parents and Caregivers : The South Carolina Bar developed a handbook for parents of special needs children. An online version of the handbook is available [here](#).

Teens and Texting : Texting while driving amongst younger drivers remains a problem. The State of South Carolina's anti-texting law went into effect on December 7, 2014. There is an anti-texting app which parents can use to keep their teen from texting while driving. To learn more, go [here](#).

Constituent Information

Legislative Email Updates : Locally, three members of the House of Representatives, who represent portions of Aiken County within Senate District 24, send regular email updates. Their respective contact information to get on their email lists to receive their email updates are as follows:

- Rep. Bill Hixon (Dist. 83): bill@billhixon.com
- Rep. Bill Taylor (Dist. 86): bill@taylorscheuse.com
- Rep. Don Wells (Dist. 81): dwells29801@gmail.com

Congressman Joe Wilson Contact Information : Congressman Wilson represents all of Aiken County. He has staff in Aiken County with office hours in Aiken and in North Augusta. His office number is [642-6416](tel:642-6416).

Speaking with Groups Around the District : If you are involved with a local group that would like for me to attend a meeting to provide a legislative update, please let me know.

State Government Resources : Several online resources are available to you for learning more about our State Government. These resources include the following websites which can be accessed as follows: General Assembly's website -- go [here](#); Executive Budget Office -- go [here](#); State Library -- go [here](#); Legislative Audit

Council -- go [here](#); Governor's Office -- go [here](#); and State Fiscal Transparency information, go [here](#).

Report Waste, Fraud and Abuse in State Government : To report waste, fraud and abuse in state government, you can call: [1-855-SC-FRAUD](tel:1-855-SC-FRAUD).

Tom Young's Website : My website can be reached at <http://www.senatortomyoung.com>. There are links to a variety of constituent services; the status of sponsored bills; and roll call votes. Please add my web site as a bookmark on your computer.

Small Business Help – SC Dept. of Commerce : The South Carolina Department of Commerce has helpful information for small business owners and employees. To learn more, go [here](#).

Save for College - Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan : South Carolina's 529 College Savings Plan Future Scholar offers special tax benefits for South Carolina residents. To learn more or to enroll, go [here](#).

Donate Life : You can register as an organ, eye, and tissue donor through the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles or [here](#).

Child Passenger Safety : To learn more about ways to keep your children or grandchildren safe in your car, go [here](#). The information at this link is provided in part by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety.

Request a Flag : If you would like to request a state or U.S. flag flown over the State Capitol in Columbia, please let me know at tom@senatortomyoung.com. Flags vary in cost according to their size and their material from which they are made.

State House Tours : Tours are available for the S.C. State House by calling [\(803\) 734-2430](tel:803-734-2430) or by going [here](#). If you set a tour between January and June and it is on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, please let me know so I can do my best to see you. The State House is open on Saturdays for guided and unguided tours from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

South Carolina Tourism : To learn more about tourist attractions and tourism opportunities in South Carolina, go [here](#).

Thoroughbred Country-- South Carolina Regional Tourism Organization : To learn more about tourism in the four county region of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, and Barnwell, go [here](#).

SC BBQ Trail : According to the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, our state is the birthplace of barbecue in the United States and is the only state that offers all four official barbecue sauces. To see the official map with more than 200 restaurant listings, go [here](#). Another helpful site can be seen [here](#).

Aiken County Tourism : To learn more about tourism options in Aiken County, go

[here.](#)

Email Updates : If you know of people in or around District 24 who do not receive my updates but they would like to get them, please email their names and email addresses to me.

Road Issues : If you see a road problem such as a pothole needing repair, call the SCDOT at [641-7665](tel:641-7665) or Aiken County at [642-1532](tel:642-1532) to report the problem. You may also report the repair request online [here](#). If you do not get a prompt response, please let me know at tom@senatortomyoung.com or call me. Generally, most paved roads in the County are maintained by SCDOT and are identified on the road sign poles by a small black and white sign listing the road number, such as S-2-1669. Most unpaved roads in the County are maintained by the County.

Thank you for the opportunity and the honor to represent you. Please let me know if I can help you in any way or if you have questions about these or other issues. Your feedback is meaningful and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tom Young
649-0000 (o)
215-3631 (cell)

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