

VETO 31

POOL for RICHLAND COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

VETO 31 – This proviso reduces the local-state match last year – vetoed and overridden – to contribute state funds to a pool for the Richland County Recreation Commission.



Richland Council tightens grip on Recreation Commission funding



Fifth Lawsuit Filed Against Richland County Recreation Commission

Richland County Director of Recreation Arrested



Lawmakers speak out on possible removal of Richland County Recreation Commission members

BY TARA PETTIT / senior correspondent

Background:

- Last year, the Governor vetoed a proviso giving the Richland County Recreation Commission at 2:1 local-to-state match to provide funds for a new pool, which was overridden—this proviso reduces that match to 1:1 local-to-state funds.
- The RCRC currently has four pools (Eastover, Hopkins, Trenholm, and St. Andrews) that are open each summer, June 4th to August 13th.
- The seven members of the RCRC are appointed by the Richland County Delegation.

Argument to Sustain the Veto:

- This proviso should be easy to sustain, because it throws more money at the debunked Richland County Recreation Commission.
- **Last year, we overrode the Governor's veto of a similar proviso that gave the RCRC a 2:1 local-to-state match—this proviso attempts to water-down that match to 1:1.**
- Over the past few months, we've all seen the news articles where RCRC is the subject of five lawsuits, all of which have been filed since March by current or former employees.
- We've read that the complaints allege corruption, bribery, mismanagement, nepotism, employment discrimination, and sexual harassment against either Commission members or the director.
- We've read that the RCRC is currently under a FBI and SLED investigation.
- **The Richland County Delegation has gotten involved—calling for that investigation and meeting to discuss what our options are to suspend members or take further action.**
- To date, we've also seen the Director, James Anthony Brown, arrested and charged with multiple drug trafficking and possession offenses, including crimes allegedly committed near a school.
- **This is an entity that receives more than \$13 million in taxpayer dollars from Richland County, and this proviso would pile on more statewide taxpayer dollars to this sinking ship.**
- The RCRC already has four pools open for the summer to serve the families of Richland County, and while this organization is under a cloud of suspicion, we should not reward them with statewide funds.
- **What's most telling is that Richland County Council has even suspended the majority of RCRC's funding – which it has been funding at three times the required amount – for next year until an audit can be performed.**
- We should join the efforts of County Council to freeze any additional funds to the RCRC until these problems can be fixed and ask that you sustain this veto.