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Subject: Legislative Update- First Week Of Session

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Legislative Update- First Week Of Session

I hope you had a great Christmas and a nice start to 2016. For the past few years, I have sent weekly emails during the legislative session to provide you with updates on the previous week's activities. I will continue to do that this session, as well.

The General Assembly returns Tuesday for the first week of the 2016 session. The first week will likely be a little slow, but there will be some work – mainly in committees – going on.

PASSING OF SEN. BILLY O'DELL – I was sad to hear of the unexpected death of Sen. Billy O'Dell (R–Greenwood) on Thursday. Billy was a graduate of The Citadel and served in the South Carolina National Guard and as Director of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce before being elected to the Senate in 1989. His funeral was on Monday. You can read his obituary [here](#).

SENATE ORGANIZATION – Although the Senate typically goes through reorganization – selecting seats and committee assignments – just every four years, we will have to complete that process on Tuesday because the senate membership has changed since we were last in session. In October, Sen. Margie Bright Matthews (D–Colleton) became the Senate's second female member when she was elected to succeed the late Sen. Clementa Pinckney. Also, as I mentioned above, there is now a vacancy because of the unexpected passing of Sen. Billy O'Dell.

EXPECTATIONS FOR 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION – I expect the General Assembly will deal with many issues in the next five months, but the session will likely be dominated by money: a discussion about what to do with a projected \$1.3 billion budget surplus, a continuation of the debate about how to fund infrastructure improvements, a state response for recovery from last Fall's historic floods, and how best to comply with a Supreme Court mandate to improve educational outcomes in smaller, rural areas. I would appreciate your input, so if you have thoughts, questions, or concerns about these or other issues, please let me know.

Constituent Interests

TOWN HALL MEETINGS – I have held around 120 town hall meetings throughout our district over the past 8 years, and I really appreciate the hundreds of folks who have participated. These town hall meetings give me a chance to keep you updated about what's going on in Columbia and, more importantly, allow me to hear what's on your mind. I'm already working on the next round of meetings, which I hope to schedule for February. I'll get the schedule out soon.

PUBLIC HEARING ON WIDENING OF BELVEDERE–CLEARWATER ROAD – SCDOT plans to widen Belvedere-Clearwater Road in Aiken County from Old Sudlow Lake Road to U.S. 1. As part of that process, SCDOT will hold a public hearing on the proposals on Thursday, January 28, 5:00-7:00 p.m., at Lakeside Baptist Church in Clearwater. 5:00-6:00 will be an informal viewing of plans. 6:00-7:00 SCDOT will explain the project and accept public comments/questions. If you want to comment, you must sign up at the church between 5:00 and 6:00. If you would like additional information, please contact Ms. Michelle Shepherd, SCDOT Program Manager, at 803-737-4596.

WANT TO SEE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ACTION? - The Senate meets in statewide session on Tuesdays at 12:00, Wednesdays at 2:00, and Thursdays at 11:00. Committees and subcommittees meet Tuesday afternoons, Wednesday mornings, and Thursday mornings. You can

watch live coverage of the Senate, House of Representatives, and committees [here](#).

OUR SENATE DISTRICT – Senate district 25 consists of all of Edgefield County and parts of Aiken, Lexington, McCormick, and Saluda Counties. If you'd like to see the district map, go [here](#).

VOTING RECORD – If you'd like to see how I've voted on issues, go [here](#). You can always check to see how I vote by going to my website, www.senatormassey.com, and clicking on the "Voting Record" tab.

SPEAKING WITH GROUPS – Several groups, clubs, and classes around our Senate district have invited me to attend their meetings and provide legislative updates. If you would like for me to come speak with your group, please let me know.

EMAIL UPDATES – If you know of people in or around District 25 who do not receive my updates but would like to get them, please email their names and email addresses to me. You can also forward this email to them and encourage them to sign up for the updates at www.senatormassey.com.

Sincerely,

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