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Subject: Guns & Gov't Reform Win Approval

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Guns & Gov't Reform Win Approval

Dear Friends:

The second week of this year's legislative session was marked by the passage of two significant bills.

Restaurant Gun Carry Passes

For more than a year the legislature has debated and amended the restaurant carry bill.

The legislation allows individuals who possess a concealed weapons permit (CWP) to carry their gun into restaurants and other businesses that serve alcohol as long as the patron does not consume alcohol. On a vote of 90 to 18, the House concurred with Senate amendments and sent the bill to Governor Haley to be signed into law.

I was the primary sponsor of the House version of the restaurant carry bill ([H. 3053](#)) that has 37 co-sponsors. The Senate moved forward quickly on its bill, so [S.308](#) became the focus of debate.

Restaurants are not required to participate; the bill allows businesses to decide not to allow firearms on their property by posting signs. Beyond the restaurant carry provision, the bill modified the state's concealed weapons law making it easier for retired military and law enforcement members to get concealed permits by showing proof of their training.

In my view, this legislation makes us all safer because the 'bad guys' often take advantage of gun free zones. Soon, the 'bad guys' will have to wonder how many 'good guys and gals' -- those with CWP's -- are dining in those restaurants.

Government Reorganization Wins Approval

This reform has been nearly ten years in the making. Both the House and Senate voted to finalize the reorganization of state government, eliminating the antiquated Budget & Control Board and transferring most of its functions to the newly created Department of Administration (DOA) reporting to the Governor's office. While not perfect, this new structure shifts accountability of many state functions to the state's chief executive who is elected by the people, rather than having the Budget & Control Board in the driver's seat.

In her State of the State address Wednesday, Governor Nikki Haley praised the General Assembly for passing the government restructuring bill, "Carroll Campbell, the father of restructuring in our state, is smiling down on South Carolina." She added, "The passage of the Department of Administration, the biggest and most important piece of government reform South Carolina has seen in two decades, was well worth the wait."

The State of the State

In her fourth annual State of the State address, Governor Haley continued her administration's focus on economic development touting the state's lowest unemployment rate in five years and the creation of thousands of jobs in nearly every county in the state.

Governor Haley again called on the legislature to pass a bill strengthening the state's ethics laws. She also asked legislators to invest more in road and bridge construction, while reiterating her promise to veto any proposal that increases the gas tax. The governor also advocated for her education initiative that focuses on spending more on poor, rural students, targeting to improve reading skills in the early grades and increasing technology to and within schools. ([Aiken Standard: Local legislators mostly pleased with Haley's stance](#))

One portion of her address particularly resonated with me. Governor Haley criticized the federal government, saying, "It is my firm belief that the federal government causes far more harm to South Carolina than good."

I Agree with Governor Haley

Our out-of-control federal government is harming the lives of South Carolinians and all Americans with its reckless spending resulting in more than \$17 trillion in debt that grows by billions of dollars a day. A recent [Gallup Poll](#) reports 72% of American's say big government is the greatest threat to the U.S.

State legislatures have the Constitutional authority to join together to fix what's broken in Washington DC. That's why I sponsored legislation ([H.4372](#)) calling for an Article V Convention of States (COS) for the express and sole purpose of limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, imposing term limits on Congress and creating a balanced budget Amendment. Six other states have joined SC in filing Application legislation.

Alabama, supporters have created this clever video explaining how the COS operates.

Convention of States - Alabama

Potato Farm/Edisto River Update

On Wednesday, I met at the Statehouse with concerned Aiken County residents and conservationists to discuss proposed changes to the SC's River Act. The goal is to ensure the protection of the Edisto and all rivers around the state from huge water withdrawals for agricultural purposes. Thursday, Sen.

Chip Campsen, R-Charleston, introduced legislation ([S.970](#)) aimed at restricting mega-farms from siphoning large amounts of water from rivers. He called it a "stop-gap measure".

Meanwhile, Walther Farms has offered to sharply reduce the amount of water it will pull from the Edisto River. The potato farm will cut its withdrawals in half from one section of the South Fork and abandon plans to take water from another part of the river several miles downstream. ([Related story in Aiken Standard - Potato farm CEO: We plan to be good environmental steward](#))

Statehouse Notes...

Teacher Pay Raises: A bill was introduced in the senate to raise SC teacher pay to the national average phasing it in over five years. Average teacher pay for our public-school teachers is about \$48,000; the national average for public-school teacher salaries is about \$57,000 annually.

Proposed Hike in Minimum Wage : Six Democrat state senators filed a bill calling for SC employers to pay workers at least \$1 an hour more than the federal minimum wage and adjust the minimum wage based on inflation. Ironically, the chief Democrat sponsor cited rising health costs as a chief reason for the increase.

DSS on the Hot Seat: The SC Department of Social Services is under scrutiny by a Senate sub-committee for its handling of foster care cases in which children have died. Aiken Sen. Tom Young chairs the special panel.

SC Ranks 46th:

The Humane Society of the US has released its latest ranking of state animal protection laws. South Carolina ties Alabama at 46th for states having the weakest animal protection laws in the nation. ([View Rankings](#)) Regretfully, I have run into legislative resistance in pressing forward with my legislation ([H. 3392](#)) to strengthen SC's animal cruelty laws.

In your Service,

Bill Taylor

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Photo of the Week

On behalf of the folks I represent in House District 86, I accepted the 'Business Advocate Award' from the SC Chamber of Commerce. 100% pro-business, pro-jobs for my voting in the House. Three consecutive years!

The award was presented by Mike Brenan, President, BB&T SC, and Pamela Lackey, President, of AT&T SC.

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