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I'm sending this in 5 minutes or so. Just got approval (late in day). Please let me know if there are any other major changes. After talking with leadership, we're on the same page on the two items we discussed earlier. We're not sure what the solution will be yet, so the language in the release is vague.

## **House Moves to Re-Write Senate Ethics Bill**

COLUMBIA – The House of Representatives sent its strong, comprehensive Ethics Reform Act to a special expanded Judiciary Constitutional Laws subcommittee today to consolidate an important piece of legislation watered down by the state Senate.

"We need a workable bill that we can send to a conference committee so our conferees have a place to start. The bill we received back from the Senate – nearly a year after sent it to them – had 12 new sections and was more than double the length. And, as is common with Senate bills that are written after they were approved by the body, it is laden with inartfully drawn provisions that pose far more questions for the Caucus than answers."

The House-approved version included a strong, joint House-Senate ethics panel to fairly adjudicate ethics matters, extended lobbying provisions to the local level, required detailed income disclosure by public officials, and prohibits campaign funds from being used to pay ethics fines.

"Last year, we approved a tough new ethics bill with the support of Governor Haley. The Senate watered down several sections that are important to us – such as striking the provision for a strong new ethics committee. At the same time, the Senators did add a few good new ideas – such as imposing further restrictions on the use of campaign funds," Bannister said.

While the Ethics Reform Act is in committee, several smaller, more focused ethics bills have made it to the House floor to clean up the ethics act in case the state Senate can't agree on the tough new restrictions proposed by the House.

Judiciary Chairman Greg Delleney appointed four new people to the Constitutional Laws Subcommittee to increase the size to 10 members. The first meeting will be next week.

"Sending the bill to committee to speed up its passage might seem counter-intuitive, but this way we can thoughtfully amend the bill to a form we would like so our House conferees will have a firm direction. Reforming our two-decades-old Ethics Act is very serious business and demands more than a perfunctory 'non-concur' vote," Chairman Delleney said. "The House is committed to passing a strong ethics reform law, and we will work on the issue tirelessly until it reaches Governor Haley's desk."