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Subject: Background on Special Sessions

About a Special Session:

Article IV, Section 19 of the State Constitution states: "The Governor may on extraordinary occasions convene the General Assembly into special session." A "special session" is also referred to interchangeably as an "extra session" or an "extraordinary session."

The Supreme Court of South Carolina has refused to define "extraordinary occasions," giving political deference to the governor to use her discretion as to what constitutes "extraordinary." The Court will not define the term, because the Constitution gives it no meaning. Therefore, the Court reasoned that the governor has the absolute, sole discretion to determine an "extraordinary occasion."

Since 1972, governors have called a special session 10 times.

Special Session Precedent:

1. **1972 – Governor West, Executive Order 1972-6:** To elect Senate and House leadership.
2. **1973 – Governor West, Executive Order of September 4, 1973:** To address then-pending reapportionment of the House.
3. **1976 – Governor Edwards, Executive Order 1976-33:** To address unidentified urgent legislative matters.
4. **1980 – Governor Riley, Executive Order 1980-26:** To bring both house into session following a disagreement between the two houses regarding the time of adjournment.
5. **1983 – Governor Riley, Executive Order 1983-49:** To address Senate reapportionment.
6. **1991 – Governor Campbell, Executive Order 1991-22:** To pass ethics reform and a bond bill.
7. **1996 – Governor Beasley, Executive Order 1996-11:** To pass the Rural Development Act and the African-American History Monument Bill.
8. **1999 – Governor Hodges, Executive Order 1999-32:** To address video poker.
9. **2001 – Governor Hodges, Executive Order 2001-15:** To pass an appropriations act.

10. **2002 – Governor Hodges, Executive Order 2002-34:** To address budget shortfalls.