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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Speaker Lucas Responds to Governor Haley's State of the State Address

(Columbia, SC) – House Speaker Jay Lucas (District 65-Darlington) issued the following statement in response to Governor Nikki Haley's sixth State of the State address.

"The people of South Carolina faced unthinkable challenges last year, but were able to persevere because of our strong and steadfast sense of community," Speaker Jay Lucas stated. **"Governor Haley's tremendous leadership during times of tragedy and disaster effectively brought our state together and helped us heal. Although our specific solutions to areas of improvement may differ, I am confident that the House will work with her on our shared objectives to move our state forward."**

Road Funding

"Finding a long-term solution to repairing our crumbling infrastructure requires much more than directives; it demands tough decision making and compromise. The House-passed plan is a responsible approach that shares all three components of Governor Haley's proposal. It accounts for fairness so that out-of-state motorists pay to fix our roads and not just South Carolina drivers. Our plan also gives money back to South Carolina taxpayers, which is equivalent to the estimated gas fee increases. The House carefully studied, debated and vetted our plan for nine months and we are confident in this approach. It is my hope that the Senate will put forth the necessary efforts to adequately address this problem so that we can work together to fix our roads," said Speaker Jay said.

Education Reform

"The House has made significant, transparent and meaningful strides to reform South Carolina's education delivery system," Speaker Lucas continued. **"Our unique Education Task Force worked diligently and created an atmosphere where school superintendents, elected officials, business leaders and representatives from struggling school districts could gather together to hold an open dialogue and discuss ideas for real reform. The Task Force's impressive suggestions will transform public education in our state and give every child the opportunity to succeed. I am encouraged that Governor Haley has chosen to join this conversation. As our education reform package makes its way through the House, I look forward to working with her so that together we can make it a reality."**

Ethics Reform

“The Members of the South Carolina House of Representatives worked tirelessly last year to pass comprehensive ethics reform. We reformed our campaign finance laws, created an independent investigation to look into alleged wrongdoing and banned political action committees. The House sent the Senate twelve individual bills and then bundled our legislation into an omnibus package to encourage Senate consideration. Unfortunately, our efforts have been ignored and our bills idly sit in the bottom of an empty Senate desk drawer. Honest South Carolinians give elected officials the opportunity to serve and restoring their trust should not be difficult,” Speaker Lucas concluded.

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