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Subject: Spending YOUR Money

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Spending *Your* Money

Dear Friends:

This was 'Budget Week' in the S.C. House of Representatives. We devoted this week to debating and voting on the General Fund budget that totals \$6.9 billion. It took more than 225 votes and Tuesday's session ran 13 hours.

Budget Highlights

Unlike the federal government, your state budget is balanced - we don't spend more than we collect. This proposed budget comes in under the House's self-imposed spending cap which limits spending increases to a formula of "inflation plus population growth". Most importantly, we fully fund the Reserve Fund to 7% of annual state revenue which is \$450 million.

Last fall the budget process calculated about \$400 million in "new" (tax) money but there was more than \$1 billion in agency requests. Needless to say, our conservative budget writers worked to separate the wheat from the chaff in those requests. It's impractical to list all the key items in the proposed budget, so I invite you to check out the attached summary.

[Click Here for the State Budget Summary](#)

Education Budget Lauded

Governor Nikki Haley applauded the House of Representatives' passage of her K-12 Education Reform Initiative. The budget includes every major component of Gov. Haley's initiative announced earlier this year - a simpler and more equitable funding formula, \$30 million to hire reading coaches in every S.C. elementary school, and \$29 million to improve technology and internet capabilities in schools - the tools and supports students need in order to succeed. Watch Gov. Haley's summary of the [Education Reform Initiative](#).

MOX & the Future of SRS

This week the Aiken Legislative Delegation met in the Governor's office with state and federal leaders. It was productive in exploring the multitude of

Gov. Nikki Haley Applauds House Passage Of Education Reform: This Is Historic

issues surrounding the de-funding of the MOX project as proposed in President Obama's budget. We primarily focused on exploring the immediate paths our federal legislative delegation may take to maintain continued funding of MOX construction which is 61% complete.

The meeting also looked into opportunities aimed at future job creation locally, particularly those jobs tied to the nuclear industry and SRS. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt pledged himself and his team to work closely with Aiken area economic development experts, as well as federal and state legislators, in developing a plan to recruit more business and industry to our area. The meeting was a good first step. ([Aiken Standard story](#))

Meanwhile, members of SC's congressional delegation have requested Gov. Haley work with the state's attorney general to take legal action to continue construction of the MOX facility at SRS.

Hooray!

Hats off to all those who work so hard to bring economic development and jobs to our area. Aiken County has been recognized by Southern Business and Development Magazine the [Top 10 Exceptional Southern Markets](#) to locate an industry. We're also mentioned in the Top 10 Stories in the American South under *Small Town South is the Tire Capital of the World*. Bridgestone got us on that list.

Article V Convention of States Making Progress!

Georgia: *Became the first state in American history to pass the Convention of States application to limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government.* The Georgia House voted to approve the Senate's version of the resolution 107-58. Its application to Congress does not require the Governor's approval.

Alaska: The Alaska House of Representatives passed its COS application this week by a vote of 24-13. It moves to the Senate.

Arizona: Also this week the Arizona House of Representatives passed the Convention of States application. The vote was 32-25. Now, it's up to the Arizona Senate to concur.

Alabama: The COS application passed in the Alabama House and heads to the Senate.

South Carolina: There's GOOD NEWS in S.C., too! Thanks to the urging of many grassroots activists, the House Judiciary sub-committee has scheduled two hearings on [H.4372](#), our Article V Convention of States application. The hearings will be April 3rd and April 10th at 9:00 a.m.

In the State Senate

Debate Common Core: A Senate Committee decided not to repeal the Common Core education standards in S.C. Some Senators believe it would disrupt school districts that have been transitioning for about four years to using the standards. Those controversial standards outline what students should know at each grade level. The intent of the original legislation ([S.300](#)) was to repeal Common Core in S.C. The bill is headed to the full Senate for debate.

Legalizing Hemp: The Senate passed a measure ([S.389](#)) that would legalize industrial hemp which could benefit S.C. farmers, especially with the decline of one of the state's cash crops, tobacco.

Alligator Farms: A Senate Committee approved a bill that would allow alligator farms to start up in South Carolina. The alligators would be farmed for their meat and skin. Environmentalists won concessions to protect wild alligators.

Governor Signing

Military Homeowner Protect Act

Governor Haley signed a bill ([H.3027](#)) providing property tax relief to active duty military men and women in S.C. Currently, active duty soldiers are eligible for a 4% property tax assessment while they are stationed in our state, but if required to move to fulfill orders, they incur a 50% tax increase (4% to 6%) as their residence in this state is viewed as a second home. This legislation allows military members, as long as they remain on active duty, to retain the 4% assessment even if they rent the property. This will decrease the burden on active duty soldiers by allowing them to pay their mortgages and keep their homes while they are on the market, greatly reducing the risk of foreclosures.

As always, it is a privilege to serve you in the South Carolina House. If you ever need help with state government, or have any thoughts or concerns about what we are doing, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In your Service,

Bill Taylor

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Photo of the Week

This morning I started my 2014 'State House to the School House' tour. I visited with all the 3rd graders at Oakwood-Windsor Elementary and explained state government, how laws are made and answered their many questions.

The curiosity and excitement of the children make these visits a delight!

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