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Subject: URGENT REQUEST FOR ACTION IN HOUSE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

Attachments: rule change in house.docx

Dear Mr. Representative:

In the organizational meetings today and tomorrow, will you introduce a new House rule that requires all votes in all committees be recorded? It is an obvious foundational requirement that citizens have a right to know how their legislators are voting when they create the laws that we must live by. If you believe that recording votes is a requirement for good government, then the Greenville Tea Party earnestly and fervently pleads that you introduce a new rule that codifies the right of the people to know what is essentially their own business---namely all committee business.

There has emerged in some quarters in the legislature resistance to removing the secrecy from the lawmaking process. If a legislator cannot agree to protect the basic right of allowing for an informed citizenry, then what, if anything, worthwhile is left of our representative state government? Will you personally introduce a new rule that requires all votes in all committees to be recorded?

You have in the past, or will in the near future, swear an oath to protect our federal and state constitutions. The purpose of the constitutions is to protect the rights of the people from the government. Any legislator that refuses to make public his votes during the lawmaking process has thereby made a mockery of his sacred sworn oath to protect our constitutions. Many Americans have died on behalf of the rights therein enshrined. Will you yourself introduce a new rule to require that all votes be recorded in all committees?

Rarely has the opportunity to do something so important on behalf of the people been so easy to do. We just want you to record your votes. Is that asking too much? The concern has been expressed that a legislator, on occasion, for good reason may vote differently on a bill on the floor of the House than in committee. The concern is that his opponents may attack him for being a flip-flopper. Our response is that in such a rare occurrence, the legislator must have some faith in the voters to discern and in his own ability to communicate effectively his positions on issues. If one does not want to contend with the natural and healthy process of open dialogue with the public, then elected office is probably not his calling. Such concerns of the legislature are trite, inconsequential when compared with the right of the people to participate in their own government. The recording of committee votes is not costly in time or money and is an essential and easy first step for making South Carolinians once again a free people.

Free Americans are now under assault by their own national government. It is now left to the states to claim their own rights and sovereignty on behalf of the people by refusing to submit to outrageous federal tyranny.

To be successful against federal tyranny, South Carolina legislature must first restructure its own government. The first step is to record all votes in all committees. There must follow many more difficult votes in order to place South Carolina on the road to freedom and prosperity.

Some suggestions have been offered as means to "get around" the necessity of a new rule. None of the suggestions provide a satisfactory solution. There is only one answer to the problem: a rule that requires the recording of all votes in committees.

This letter will be sent today to every member of the House. However, our request is directed personally to each of you. Will YOU be the one that will stand up on behalf of the people's rights and personally introduce a rule that requires all votes to be recorded in all committees? If you are willing to do so, please respond by an immediate reply to this letter. The Greenville Tea Party and people of South Carolina await your decision.

Please see below or in attachment suggested language for a new rule.

J. Don Rogers
Greenville Tea Party
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4.5 All meetings of all committees shall be open to the public at all times, subject always to the power and authority of the Chairman to maintain order and decorum with the right to go into Executive Session as provided for in the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, Title 30, Chapter 4 of the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina, as amended. *Provided*, a legislative caucus as defined by Section 2-17-10 of the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina, as amended, and its meetings are not subject to the provisions of Title 30, Chapter 4 of the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina, as amended.

No committee shall file a report unless the committee has met formally at an authorized time and place with a quorum present. All standing committees[D1] , of the House shall prepare and make available for public inspection, in compliance with Section 30-4-90 of the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina, as amended, the minutes of full[D1] committee meetings. Such minutes need not be verbatim accounts of such meetings but shall include those matters required by the above mentioned Freedom of Information Act[D2] .

[D1]Including full committees, standing committees, ad hoc committees and subcommittees

[D2]A show of hands or the ayes and nays must be recorded on any matter before any committee, and each members' vote must be included in the minutes of the meeting.

[D1]all