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Date: 4/21/2014 9:25:06 AM
Subject: Legislative Update for the Week of 4/15/14-4/17/14

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Legislative Update for Week of 4/15/14-4/17/14

Here are the highlights from the last week's action in the Senate—

GENERAL ASSEMBLY EASTER WORK SCHEDULE – The Senate had a short week last week, in session only Tuesday and Wednesday. Neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives will be in session this week. Since the Senate will not be in session this week, I probably will not send an update next week.

COUNTY ELECTION OFFICES – Each county used to have an election commission and a separate voter registration board. Over the last few decades, nearly every county has combined those offices under a single commission that oversees local elections. Unfortunately all those changes were accomplished by “local legislation,” legislation focused on a single county. The Supreme Court has ruled repeatedly that the state constitution prohibits local legislation, and last year a court determined the local legislation that merged the offices in Richland County was unconstitutional. Recently a suit was filed challenging all the merged offices, potentially jeopardizing the counties’ ability to hold elections.

Last week the Senate passed **H. 3124**, a bill that would require all county election commissions and voter registration boards to merge and operate under the control of a single board. The board would be appointed by the legislative delegation with the authority to hire and oversee the director of the office. This change will have little impact in our district, as each of the counties in our district already have merged offices. It would be a small change in Aiken and Edgefield, though, where the legislative delegation currently hires and oversees the director of the election office; this bill would give that authority to the county election commission.

DSS OVERSIGHT – A Senate subcommittee has been conducting oversight hearings of the Department of Social Services for the past several weeks. So far the hearings have focused on fatalities of children in foster care, the caseload of county caseworkers, and the overall management of the agency. Although I am not on that subcommittee, I attended a 3-hour hearing last week where the Director of DSS testified. I expect there will be 1 or 2 additional hearings before the Senate adjourns in June. If you have questions or experience with DSS that you’d like to share, please let me know.

COMMON CORE – When the Senate returns on April 29, the focus will turn to Common Core State Standards. The education standards, initiated by the National Governor’s Association, are designed to make K-12 students across the country more competitive in the global marketplace. However, the standards have met with significant opposition in South Carolina and many other states. I expect the discussion to last more than a week, which means it will likely be interrupted by the budget debate that is scheduled to begin the week of May 6.

Last Week’s Meetings

On Tuesday morning, I attended a press conference to recognize April as Organ Donor Registration Month. If you are interested in being an organ or tissue donor, please visit [Donate Life SC](#).

On Wednesday I participated in the “Real Men Read” program at Gloverville Elementary School. The effort was a huge success as many men volunteered time to read to elementary school

students. I read the Little Critter book Just Me and My Dad to a very engaging 4K class. I encourage you to volunteer and/or mentor at your local school; it is a great experience.

On Thursday night, I attended a reception at USC-Aiken to honor Rep. Roland Smith. Rep. Smith is retiring this year after 25 years in the House of Representatives and more than 40 years of service.

Constituent Interests

REPAIRS TO I-20 IN AIKEN COUNTY – I have received several emails about the poor condition of the westbound section of I-20 in Aiken County. SCDOT has approved a contract to resurface the westbound lanes from mile marker 22.7 to mile marker 13. Satterfield Construction from Greenwood will perform the work beginning on April 21. The work should be completed in late July.

AIKEN, EDGEFIELD, SALUDA ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL EMERGENCY AID - Last week President Obama designated 21 SC Counties as National Disaster areas following the recent ice and snow storms. That designation makes those counties eligible for federal emergency assistance. Aiken, Edgefield, and Saluda counties are included in the list of eligible counties. You can learn more about the declaration [here](#).

CREDIT MONITORING –The State has contracted with CSIdentify Corporation (CSID) for the purpose of continuing credit monitoring/ID protection services to South Carolinians and businesses affected by the October 2012 security breach at the Department of Revenue. CSID's services provided under the contract are available to eligible individual taxpayers (including minors and adult dependents) and eligible business taxpayers through October 31, 2014 (although it will almost certainly be extended).

You can sign up with CSID for the offered service by doing one of the following:

1. Go to www.scidprotection.com and follow the steps to enroll

or

2. Call (855)-880-2743 to enroll.

The State will pay \$8.5 Million for the first year of the CSID contract with the option to renew for four additional one year periods at the state's sole discretion. You do not have to pay anything to sign up. The Experian contract for the past year was a \$12 Million contract.

If you choose to purchase your own protection service, you can deduct a portion of that cost from your state income taxes. Talk with your accountant/tax preparer for more information.

OUR SENATE DISTRICT – Senate district 25 consists of all of Edgefield County and parts of Aiken, Lexington, McCormick, and Saluda Counties. If you'd like to see the district map, go [here](#)

VOTING RECORD – If you'd like to see how I voted last week, go [here](#). You can always check to see how I vote by going to my website, www.senatormassey.com, and clicking on the "Voting Record" tab.

SPEAKING WITH GROUPS – Several groups, clubs, and classes around our Senate district have invited me to attend their meetings and provide legislative updates. If you would like for me to come speak with your group, please let me know.

EMAIL UPDATES – If you know of people in or around District 25 who do not receive my updates but would like to get them, please email their names and email addresses to me. You can also forward this email to them and encourage them to sign up for the updates at www.senatormassey.com.

Sincerely,

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