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April 13, 2018
Representative Chip Huggins
District 85
Serving Irmo and Chapin

The House of Representatives amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.4182**, the “**STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION EFFICIENCY ACT**”. The legislation establishes a process that allows South Carolina’s public universities and colleges to exercise greater authority and bypass state regulatory oversight, including approvals by the Commission on Higher Education and the Joint Bond Review Committee, when undertaking capital projects and making investments utilizing funds that are not derived from state appropriations or undergraduate tuition in auxiliary activities related to research, housing, food services, stores, and athletics. The legislation makes provisions for annual reports on the financial activities of higher education auxiliary divisions and audit requirements to insure that their financial arrangements and borrowing is not secured by the state. An institution of higher learning may adopt a procurement policy for an auxiliary division’s purchasing and contracting, which, upon approval of the policy by the State Fiscal Accountability Authority, exempts the division from the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code. The Commission on Higher Education retains its oversight authority over core functions, such as the approval of new academic programs. Purchases, borrowing, and financial transactions using state funds remain subject to state regulatory protocols through such oversight bodies as the Joint Bond Review Committee and the State Fiscal Accountability Authority. The legislation applies to the Citadel, Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Francis Marion University, Lander University, the Medical University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University, Winthrop University, and the University of South Carolina’s main campus in Columbia and its Aiken, Beaufort, and Upstate campuses.

H.4421, a bill facilitating the more expansive use of **SOLAR POWER AND OTHER DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES** by customers of investor-owned electric utilities, was rejected at third reading, having failed to receive the two-thirds affirmative vote that Article X, Section 3 of the South Carolina Constitution requires for the approval of a property tax exemption.

The House approved **S.1101** and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation **EXTENDS PROVISIONS DISALLOWING THE USE OF EMINENT DOMAIN POWERS BY PRIVATE, FOR PROFIT PIPELINE COMPANIES**, including publicly traded for profit companies, that are not defined as a public utility so that these provisions are set to expire on November 30, 2020, rather than the original sunset date of June 30, 2019. The extension affords additional time for the temporary Petroleum Pipeline Study Committee to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

The House approved **S.340**, revising the **APPOINTMENT OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S POET LAUREATE** by the Governor, and enrolled the legislation for ratification. In making an appointment, the Governor is required to select from a list of qualified candidates recommended by the South Carolina Arts Commission. A four-year term is established for a poet laureate who may be reappointed to serve one additional term. The poet laureate shall respond to requests of the Governor and participate in other relevant public programming.

The House approved **S.796** and enrolled the joint resolution for ratification. The legislation creates a **SOUTH CAROLINA AMERICAN REVOLUTION SESTERCENTENNIAL COMMISSION** to plan and execute a proper observance of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War and South Carolina's role in attaining American independence.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.4799**, a bill providing authorization for South Carolina to join the multi-state **PHYSICAL THERAPY LICENSURE COMPACT** to facilitate interstate practice of physical therapy with the goal of improving public access to physical therapy services.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3684**, a bill authorizing the Department of Revenue to implement **INTERNET FILING AND INDEXING OF TAX LIENS** for public inspection online. Replacing the existing system of filing tax liens with county clerks of court, the legislation allows the Department of Revenue to implement a centralized system of filing and indexing liens which is accessible to the public over the Internet or through other means.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.5145**, a bill facilitating the issuance of **DRIVER'S LICENSES THAT ALLOW DEPLOYED MILITARY PERSONNEL TO OPERATE MOTORCYCLES** while stationed abroad. The legislation directs the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles to contract with the United States Department of Defense to administer Class M driver's license examinations for active duty military members assigned outside of the contiguous United States.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.5231**, a bill restoring revenue generated from the sale of recreational and commercial marine fishing licenses, permits, and tags to the **MARINE RESOURCES FUND**. The legislation discontinues the practice, adopted during the revenue shortfalls experienced during the recession, of diverting a portion of the funding to support law enforcement activities at the Department of Natural Resources.

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