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From : "Sen. Tom Young" tom@tomyoungforsenate.com

To : "Veldran, " KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov

Subject : Capital Punishment, DSS, and Civics -- Update from Sen. Tom Young =?UTF-8?B?4oCT?= March 24 to March 30, 2015

Capital Punishment, DSS, and Civics -- Update from Sen. Tom Young -- March 24 to March 30, 2015

The legislature is in session Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday between now and early June. I hope that you find this update helpful and informative. If I can help you with an issue, please let me know. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in the South Carolina State Senate.

State Government News

Roads Bills Advance: Last week, the majority of both the Senate Finance and the House Ways and Means Committees voted in favor of moving forward road bills pending before their respective committees. The Senate bill passed the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday night and a motion was made on Thursday to set the bill for "special order" meaning it would be given priority status for debate by the full Senate. I voted against setting it for special order. Governor Haley has said she will veto both bills as they currently are written. To learn more, go [here](#).

DSS Oversight Report Released: Last Wednesday, the DSS Oversight Subcommittee that I chair released its report as to how DSS and the General Assembly can improve child protective services in our state. To see the report, go [here](#). The Subcommittee meets again this Wednesday at 9:30 am in Columbia.

Capital Punishment and Lethal Injections: In South Carolina, an inmate on death row can choose to die from the electric chair or by lethal injection. The last execution in our state was in 2011 and there are 44 people on death row in South Carolina. The state uses pentobarbital as one of three drugs administered in lethal injection. Recently, the Dept of Corrections (DOC) announced that it no longer can get pentobarbital due to the manufacturer's concern of public back lash for supplying the state with the drug. The DOC proposed that South Carolina do like other states with a similar issue: Pass legislation to protect the identity of the manufacturer just like the identities of others on the execution team are not released. Last Thursday, the Senate Corrections and Penology Committee deadlocked at 7-7 on whether to advance the bill. I voted in favor of advancing the bill as I view it as a possible solution to a problem that is preventing our state from carrying out sentences for death. I expect this issue to come back up again later this spring. It is important that we develop a solution so that the sentences can be carried out.

Body Cameras for Law Enforcement: Last week, I sat on a Senate subcommittee taking testimony on a bill that will require all law enforcement agents to wear a body camera while performing many of their daily tasks in dealing with the public. There will be more testimony on this bill over the next few months. I do not expect any movement on this bill this session. Currently, some law enforcement agencies, like North Augusta, have decided to implement the use of body cameras. Others are weighing the costs to their agencies. I am not for mandating that all law enforcement agencies must use body cameras and prefer leaving the decision up to the agency especially since the costs will be borne by the law enforcement agency.

Mailer for Senate Bill 277 -- Local Phone Lines: Many people in our senate district received a mailer requesting that I support Senate Bill 277. The mailer says that if the bill is passed, then it may lower landline phone bills. The mailer did not specify by how much. I am studying this bill. My understanding is that if the bill is passed, then landline phone bills may go down around 25 cents a month while cell phone bills will go up about 25 cents a month. The bill involves the state universal

service fund which exists to ensure the availability of landline phone service throughout the state.

First established by state law in 1996, the state universal service fund establishes a system by which customers pay a surcharge on the land line phone bill to support local telephone companies. I am studying various aspects of this legislation and have not yet decided how I will vote on the Senate floor as I am still trying to understand all of the issues involved with it.

Wild Turkey Hunting Season Changes: Aiken County is home to many turkey hunters. Last week, the full Senate gave final approval to legislation which changes the turkey hunting season statewide for hunting male turkeys to March 20 - May 5 and sets a uniform statewide season bag limit per hunter for male turkeys at 3. The bill also provides for a statewide youth weekend for adults to take a child turkey hunting in mid March. Currently, the turkey season for all game zones in the state is April 1 through May 1 except for Game Zone 6 which starts March 15. The changes begin next year in the 2016 season.

Civics Education Passes Senate: Currently, South Carolina's high school students are required to take a course in United States government. Last week, the Senate passed legislation that will require students in those U.S. government classes and those pursuing a GED certificate to take the 100 question test that is given to applicants for U.S. citizenship. Students who pass may be recognized by the school district if the district so chooses and the percentage of students from each school who pass must be reported to the S.C. Education Oversight Committee. The requirement goes in place for students entering the ninth grade in the 2016-2017 school year. The bill now heads to the House.

Mental Health Court Diversion Program: Last week, the Senate passed legislation expanding mental health court programs in the judicial circuits. The concept is to allow individuals who have committed non-violent offenses because of a mental illness to be diverted from the criminal justice system and into a mental health treatment program. To learn more, go [here](#).

Research Charities: Charitable donors may research organizations registered in South Carolina by visiting the Secretary of State's website [here](#). You may learn a charity's total revenue, program expenses, total expenses, net assets, and fundraiser costs. You can also call the Division of Public Charities at 1-888-CHARITI (242-7484) for more information.

State Government Resources: Several online resources are available to you for learning more about our State Government. These resources include the following websites which can be accessed as follows: General Assembly's website -- go [here](#); Executive Budget Office -- go [here](#); State Library -- go [here](#); Legislative Audit Council -- go [here](#); Governor's Office -- go [here](#); and State Fiscal Transparency information, go [here](#).

Health Rankings: The 2015 County health rankings across the nation recently were released by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. To see Aiken's ranking, go [here](#).

Local News

Congressman Joe Wilson's Veterans Fair: Congressman Joe Wilson's annual Veterans Fair will be tomorrow (Tuesday March 31) beginning at 10:00 AM and running through 2:00 PM. The fair is being held this year at USC Aiken. To learn more, call 642-6416.

Silver Bluff Road Widening Update: Per SCDOT, the current status of this project on Aiken's south side is as follows:

- Environmental Document approved/No Permit required
- Right-of-Way Phase currently underway (40% complete)
- Utility Coordination currently underway
- Construction Letting tentatively scheduled for Fall 2015
- Construction begins in Winter 2015/2016
- Completion estimated for 2017

Aiken County Legislative Delegation Meeting: On Monday, April 13, the Aiken County Legislative Delegation will meet at Wagener Town Hall at 5:30 pm. To learn more, call 642-1694 or email me at tom@senatortomyoung.com.

Email Volume: I have received a very large volume of email this month. I am doing my best to get through them and have gotten to many of them. Thank you for your patience.

SRS Heritage Foundation: To see the latest newsletter for the SRS Heritage Foundation, go [here](#). Many residents in Senate District 24 are current or former employees of companies located at SRS.

City of Aiken – Earth Day: The City of Aiken's Energy and Environment Committee will hold an updated Earth Day celebration on Saturday, April 18 from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. For more information, go [here](#).

Nonprofits and Raffles: Nonprofits may legally conduct raffles in South Carolina to raise funds for their charitable purposes starting this Saturday on April 4. For the new law, the Secretary of State created a frequently asked questions list which can be seen [here](#). If you have more questions, please call the Charities Division of the Secretary of State at (803) 734-1790.

Honor Flight South Carolina: Honor Flight takes World War II and Korean War veterans to Washington, DC so that they can see and experience the war memorials. The veterans do not pay for the one day trip. They are looking for WWII and Korean War veterans to go on the next flight which is set for May 13. To learn more and to see the application, go [here](#).

Aiken County Legislative Delegation: The local legislative delegation office is staffed by the delegation secretary Jeannie Cadden in the Aiken County Government Building on University Parkway. Ms. Cadden works on both Aiken County and Edgefield County legislative and constituent matters. One of the services provided by our local delegation office is the processing of paperwork associated with becoming a notary public. If you need help with this or other matters, let me know by responding to this email or call Jeannie in the delegation office at 642-1694.

SC BBQ Trail: According to the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, our state is the birthplace of barbecue in the United States and is the only state that offers all four official barbecue sauces. To see the official map with more than 200 restaurant listings, go [here](#).

Other News of Interest

Faith Magazine article: A recent issue of *Faith Magazine* has an article about my public service and faith which can be seen [here](#).

Volunteer in Local Schools: If you would like to help with educating our children, consider volunteering in our local schools. To learn more, go [here](#). Thank you to the Aiken Downtown Rotary Club for putting together this list of opportunities.

Special Needs Children – Help for Parents and Caregivers: Recently, the SC Bar developed a handbook for parents of special needs children. An online version of the handbook is available [here](#).

Teens and Texting: Texting while driving amongst younger drivers remains a problem. The State of South Carolina's anti-texting law went into effect on December 7. There is an anti-texting app which parents can use to keep their teen from texting while driving. To learn more, go [here](#).

Constituent Information

Legislative Email Updates: Locally, three members of the House of Representatives, who represent portions of Aiken County within Senate District 24, send regular email updates. Their respective contact information to get on their email lists to receive their email updates are as follows:

- Rep. Bill Hixon (Dist. 83): bill@billhixon.com
- Rep. Bill Taylor (Dist. 86): bill@taylorschouse.com
- Rep. Don Wells (Dist. 81): dwells29801@gmail.com

Congressman Joe Wilson Contact Information: Congressman Wilson represents all of Aiken County. He has staff in Aiken County with office hours in Aiken and in North Augusta. His office number is 642-6416.

Speaking with Groups Around the District: If you are involved with a local group that would like for me to attend a meeting to provide a legislative update, please let me know.

Report Waste, Fraud and Abuse in State Government: To report waste, fraud and abuse in state government, you can call: 1-855-SC-FRAUD.

Facebook: I have a Facebook page for Senator Tom Young. Please “like” the page to receive updates during the week from me on Facebook.

Tom Young’s Website: My website can be reached at <http://www.senatoratomyoung.com>. There are links to a variety of constituent services; the status of sponsored bills; and roll call votes. Please

add my web site as a bookmark on your computer.

Small Business Help – SC Dept. of Commerce: The South Carolina Department of Commerce has helpful information for small business owners and employees. To learn more, go [here](#).

Save for College - Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan: South Carolina's 529 College Savings Plan Future Scholar offers special tax benefits for South Carolina residents. To learn more or to enroll, go [here](#).

Donate Life: You can register as an organ, eye, and tissue donor through the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles or [here](#).

Child Passenger Safety: To learn more about ways to keep your children or grandchildren safe in your car, go [here](#). The information at this link is provided in part by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety.

Request a Flag: If you would like to request a state or U.S. flag flown over the State Capitol in Columbia, please let me know at tom@senatortomyoung.com. Flags vary in cost according to their size and their material from which they are made.

State House Tours: Tours are available for the S.C. State House by calling (803) 734-2430 or by going [here](#). If you set a tour between January and June and it is on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, please let me know so I can do my best to see you. The State House is open on Saturdays for guided and unguided tours from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

South Carolina Tourism: To learn more about tourist attractions and tourism opportunities in South Carolina, go [here](#).

Thoroughbred Country-- South Carolina Regional Tourism Organization: To learn more about tourism in the four county region of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, and Barnwell, go [here](#).

Aiken County Tourism: To learn more about tourism options in Aiken County, go [here](#).

Email Updates: If you know of people in or around District 24 who do not receive my updates but they would like to get them, please email their names and email addresses to me.

Road Issues: If you see a road problem such as a pothole needing repair, call the SCDOT at 641-7665 or Aiken County at 642-1532 to report the problem. If you do not get a prompt response, please let me know at tom@senatortomyoung.com or call me. Generally, most paved roads in the County are maintained by SCDOT and are identified on the road sign poles by a small black and white sign listing the road number, such as S-2-1669. Most unpaved roads in the County are maintained by the County.

Thank you for the opportunity and the honor to represent you. Please let me know if I can help you in any way or if you have questions about these or other issues. Your feedback is meaningful and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tom Young
649-0000 (o)
215-3631 (cell)

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