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Subject: Status Update for S.293

Monday:

- Sent out veto messages for S.293 and S.813 to all members.
- Answered questions from members about the messages.
- Spoke with Atwater and Goldfinch to discuss the message and plan for Wednesday.

Tuesday :

- Made calls to representatives and worked the phones all day to get the veto message across, to request support, and to ask representatives to speak on the veto as well as facilitate debate on the floor by asking questions.
- Atwater, Quinn, Daning, Henderson, Hamilton, Willis, Ballentine, and Norman said they would be willing to speak in response to debate or ask questions from their desks.
- Goldfinch stated that he would work the floor to get votes and answer any questions.
- Many representatives stated they would be in support of the veto for S.293, but not for S.813 because they have been inundated with calls from their local librarians. There has also been a strong campaign to override the veto for S.293, but some stated they will consider voting to sustain because they agree with the message that a referendum should have been included and that this bill sets a bad precedent for other districts.
- Several representatives commented that they were not sure at this time whether they would vote on the issue because there is a widespread "if I stay out of your district, you will stay out of mine" mentality.
- Sent out an email to members that included talking points, points to consider and pose as questions, as well as background information about the bill. I have provided the talking points below:

Why vote to sustain this veto?

- **In essence, this bill is a 40% tax increase for fire protection.**
- **This bill allows for an increase of the tax rate by 40% on the property owners in the Murrell's Inlet-Garden City Fire District by increasing the millage from 10 mills to 14 mills.**
- This sets a horrible precedent. We are, in effect, raising taxes on a small group that 99% of us in this body don't represent.
- Did you know that this fire district's board that is asking for this increase isn't accountable to the voters? The Board of Fire Control is not an elected body.
- The bill denies the people of this area the right to be heard through a referendum and gives an unelected board the authority to raise taxes.
- The point will be made that those affected want their taxes raised. If that is the case then instead of asking the House of Representatives ask the affected taxpayers in the form of a referendum. Had this bill included a referendum, the Governor would have signed this bill into law.

Points to consider:

- Who in this room will be affected by this tax increase?
- Shouldn't we allow those that are affected by this tax increase decide?
- Will this open the door to other requests of a similar nature?
- 81 members were recorded as "not voting" on S.293. A vote to sustain this veto makes it clear for each district that these types of tax increases should be approved by the voters by a referendum and it is important that each member take a vote on this issue.

Background:

- S.293 - Authorizes Horry and Georgetown counties to raise taxes by increasing millage from 10 mills to 14 mills for the Murrell's Inlet-Garden City Fire District.
- The fire district is composed of two counties: 40% Georgetown County, 60% Horry County.
- The fire district covers 48 square miles.

Wednesday:

- Continuing to make calls, send texts, and emails to representatives throughout the day.

Legislator Comments:

- Hixon stated Vida Miller has been actively working against Goldfinch on the S.293 issue and has been contacting others for support. She is a former House member and is running for Goldfinch's seat. She is using the fire district as a platform issue.
- Several representatives commented that on Tuesday alone they received over 30 emails and had even more calls and emails over the last 2 weeks from hundreds of constituents as well as firefighter and public safety groups in Horry and Georgetown counties to override the vetoes.
- Speaker Harrell has been actively working for Hardwick to override the vetoes.
- Goldfinch has been taking hits from the press and constituents in his district in regards to his position on S.293. He asks that any support from our office in regards to his efforts would be very much appreciated.
- Goldfinch has been working with other representatives to gain momentum to sustain the vetoes. He has stated that he will not take the well on the vote to sustain the veto but will encourage others to do so. He has been feeling pressure from Hardwick because of his position to sustain the vetoes.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this information.

Thank you,
Haley

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