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Subject: Bumpy Roads Ahead

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Bumpy Roads Ahead

Dear Friends:

As you might expect, I hear a lot from constituents about the poor condition of our roads and how to pay for paving them. Everyone agrees that SC's roads need fixing, however, there is chasm in opinions on raising the gas tax. The same division has nearly paralyzed the state senate in recent months.

Senate Filibuster Ends; Roads Bill Crafted

Three weeks of filibustering by conservative Republicans who opposed a proposed 12 cents per-gallon gas tax increase was shut down ending eight weeks of impasse in the state Senate. The compromise reached by Senate Republicans would set aside more money for road and bridge work around the state without increasing the state's 16.75 cents per-gallon gas tax. That plan calls for \$400 million in additional money from the state's General Fund each year to be dedicated to roads. Historically, highway funding primarily comes from the gas tax, a user fee. The compromise plan calls for changes in how the state Department of Transportation (SCDOT) approves road projects. It also revamps the eight-member DOT commission and calls for it to be appointed by the governor instead of legislators.

Senate Nudged

The legislative week started with SC business leaders gathering at the Statehouse calling on the Senate to move forward with funding roads. They detailed the consequences of the Senate's inaction as it relates to fixing our roads. The Senate compromise plan came just seven hours after Gov. Nikki Haley called out the Senate for its failure to act on the bill and accused Senate leadership for "holding the bill hostage".

Far From a Done Deal

Senate Democrats make clear they are upset about the GOP deal, since it basically gave conservatives holding up the bill everything they wanted. However, they agreed to allow debate if Democratic senators retained the option to propose their own amendments and prolong debate. Clearly, there are many potholes and detours in the legislative road ahead for a road fix.

Speaker Critical of Senate Inaction

By way of background, the House sent the Senate a road funding bill last spring. The long delay in Senate action prompted House Speaker Jay Lucas to issue the following statement:

"For 323 days, the Senate has had every opportunity to show leadership and propose a real, long-term solution for road repair in South Carolina. The current Senate amendment simply kicks the can further down the road and frankly, into a pothole. The General Assembly has been using general fund dollars to slap a Band-Aid on roads for years with very little to show for it. I urge the Senate to give this issue the attention that it requires and rally around a proposal with a long-term solution that keeps our families safe and our economy thriving."

House Blocks Federal Gun Control Edicts

After much debate by Democrats who spoke in opposition, the SC House passed the "Second Amendment Preservation Act" prohibiting the State of South Carolina from enforcing any federal Executive Orders to confiscate or register guns. The bill also forbids the use of state funds in assisting the federal government in enforcing Executive Orders for firearms. The vote prompted news stories around the nation. [Read more.](#)

CWP Reciprocity with Georgia: CALL TO ACTION!

If you want to have Concealed Weapons (CWP) reciprocity between SC & GA then your help is needed. The House passed the CWP reciprocity bill ([H.3799](#)) last spring and now a Senate committee will take testimony next Wednesday morning. Senators Hutto, Bright, Gregory, Shealy, & B. Matthews will hear testimony. If you can't be at the Statehouse, email the Senators and tell them you want this bill passed! ([Use this link to send emails](#))

Bill Revamps Deer Tags

The House approved and sent the Senate [H.4943](#), a bill revising the deer hunting tag system that calls for hunters to tag every deer taken. DNR will issue eight doe day specific tags and three buck tags with the purchase of a South Carolina hunting license for in-state residents with the option to purchase two additional buck tags. This legislation was reviewed by hunters in public forums conducted by DNR around the state. To learn more here is a comparison between the current law and the bill passed by the House. ([Side-by-Side Comparison](#))

Kill a Coyote Bounty Program

As part of the deer legislation, DNR is directed to develop and implement a coyote bounty program to help reduce the menace of coyote's in SC. The department would tag and release no less than three coyotes in each of the four game zones and apply a \$1,000 bounty per tagged coyote.

Education Reform

House passed two more pieces of legislation as part of its education reform package addressing the Abbeville court ruling. [H.4941](#) establishes a statewide program for addressing unsound school district finances. A second bill ([H.4940](#)) sets up the Office of Transformation within the State Department of Education to provide technical assistance to under performing schools and districts.

Experimental Health Care

The House voted approval of a bill ([H.4542](#)) authorizing physicians to prescribe certain promising experimental treatments to an eligible patient who has considered all available approved treatments for an advanced illness that has been medically determined to be irreversible and, without life-sustaining measures, likely to result in death within six months.

Nixing Antiquated Laws

I've often said for every new law, five should be taken off the books. That's the approach being used by the House Judiciary Committee in advancing legislation to repeal antiquated laws. One example, in SC, it's still technically illegal to work - or let people dance - on Sundays. Juveniles can't play pinball. And it's illegal to challenge anyone to a sword or gun fight. Another law makes it illegal to sell virtually anything on Sundays, from clothing to clocks to cars. The bill goes to the full House for a vote.

Another Article V Win!

The great citizens of Indiana made their voices heard loud and clear, when the Indiana House voted this week to join the Indiana Senate in officially applying for an Article V Convention of States under our resolution. That makes Indiana the sixth state to join our movement to rein in the federal government. ([Want to know more?](#))

Kudos to Sen. Young

Congratulations to Aiken Sen. Tom Young for being recognized by the National Commander of the American Legion, Dale Barnett, for Tom's service on behalf of SC veterans. The presentation was made during a joint session of the General Assembly.

Veterans Fair Coming

Veterans seeking jobs or assistance with benefits will receive a helping hand at a Veterans Fair being held next Thursday, 10am-2pm, at the SCANG Armory in Graniteville. It is sponsored by Congressman Joe Wilson. [Read more.](#)

I'm Available

It is an honor and a privilege to serve you. If you need assistance navigating state government, or have any thoughts or concerns about what we are doing, please do not hesitate to contact me.

[Click Here](#)

In your Service,

Photos of the Week

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Students from the SC School for the Deaf & Blind, in Spartanburg, performed for the House of Representatives this week. Jacob Cooper, of Wagener, was part of the talented group. He's the son of Robbie & Nicole Pou. Jacob tells me he loves this special school and it's helping him a lot. Besides his musical endeavors, he plays basketball and soccer.

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