

Title: **More than 40 laws signed by Haley**  
 Author: Associated Press  
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# More than 40 laws signed by Haley

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — New laws signed by Gov. Nikki Haley shorten the legislative session, allow South Carolinians to carry concealed guns in Georgia, and block petroleum companies from taking people's land for a pipeline.

Those are among more than 40 bills Haley quickly signed Friday, a day after legislators sent them her way. Dozens more could become law within the week, as the Legislature passed a slew of bills in the session's final days.

While the session officially ended Thursday, legislators will return June 15 to take up Haley's vetoes.

Here's a look at some of the laws that took effect Friday:

—Future legislative sessions will end three weeks earlier, on the second Thursday in

May, unless a bad economy causes the state's revenue forecasters to reduce their estimates. South Carolina's regular legislative session is the 13th lon-

gest among states. The House, which wanted to cut even more weeks, has been trying to shorten the January-to-June session for 20 years, but prior proposals kept dying in the Senate. Proponents say shortening the session saves taxpayers money in legislators' per diems for food and lodging, plus mileage, and could encourage more people to seek the job.

—A reciprocity agreement with Georgia will make it easier for South Carolinians with concealed weapon permits to travel back and forth. The law was sought mainly by residents in Aiken County, who drive daily into Augusta, Georgia. Advocates argued not having reciprocity with the state's western neighbor is a real inconvenience. The law creates an exception to prior law barring state law enforcement from recognizing permits from states that don't have at least the same requirements to carry a concealed gun as South Carolina. Georgia doesn't require training for its permit.

—Private, for-profit companies can't acquire land for a petroleum pipeline through eminent domain. The law specifies only public utilities have the right to take property for public use, after giving the owners money. It was driven by residents' fears of losing their land to an underground pipeline planned to run from Belton to Jacksonville, Florida. The Palmetto Pipeline was cancelled earlier this year after Georgia passed a temporary moratorium on pipeline companies using eminent domain.

—Former students who didn't graduate solely because they didn't pass the high school exit exam can still petition their school board to retroactively receive a diploma. The law erases the previous deadline of Dec. 31, 2015. As of Dec. 1, 6,000 people had received such diplomas. The last exit exam was taken in 2014. Earlier that year, legislators abolished the test and replaced it with two considered more useful to students' future success, with scores that can go on work resumes or college admissions applica-

tions.

—Terminally ill patients gain access to medicines being tested in clinical trials. The so-called "Right to Try Act" allows a doctor to prescribe medication that's in the first phase of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval process. Similar laws have been passed in at least 28 other states. Access is limited to people with a terminal illness who have exhausted all options approved by the FDA and can't enroll in a trial. Available medicines must have passed basic safety testing.

—South Carolinians are encouraged to "roll up their sleeves and lend a hand to make a positive difference in our great state." The law declares the third Saturday in May as the South Carolina Day of Service.



**NIKKI  
HALEY**

Title: **S.C. military vets will get a break on state taxes**  
 Author: BY JEFF WILKINSON The (Columbia) State  
 Size: 12.24 column inches  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



## LEGISLATURE

# S.C. military vets will get a break on state taxes

BY JEFF WILKINSON  
*The (Columbia) State*

The South Carolina General Assembly has passed a bill offering state income tax deductions for military retirees.

The plan would offer military retirees with at least 20 years of service a deduction of \$17,500 a year for those under 65 or \$30,000 a year for those 65 or older.

A caveat is that the military retirees under 65 must embark on a second job in the state with an annual salary of at least \$17,500. An amendment requires the tax break to be phased in over five years. Also, the benefit would be extended to the surviving spouses of service members who have passed away.

About 58,000 military retirees live in South Carolina, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. The bill would cost the state about \$18 million a year, according to the S.C. Department of Revenue.

The bill's backers said the benefits outweigh the cost. The tax break would retain disciplined workers, according to the task force, which was appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley and chambers of commerce in the state's four military communities.

Title: **FINDING FORGIVENESS**  
 Author: By ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY sdonaghy@indexjournal.com  
 Size: 105.55 column inches  
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



# FINDING FORGIVENESS

## Author discusses book about Emanuel AME shootings

By **ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY**

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**I**n the preface of his book, retired professor J. David Gillespie writes that “people may die at the hand of someone mobilized by a perverse vision.”

Gillespie, who moved to Charleston in 2006, said that is what happened when a pastor and parishioners, nine in total, died, after Dylann Roof began shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston June 17 of last year.

Instead of inciting a race war, Gillespie said Roof’s actions galvanized a state, bringing people together, instead of dividing by race, faith or politics.

Not long after the tragedy, Gillespie said he was approached by a publisher to write a book about it, “Race, Murder, Christian Forgiveness and Revolutionary Change in Charleston, South Carolina: A Seminal Moment in American History.”

Gillespie spoke Thursday at the Piedmont Technical College Library, for an event commemorating the loss of life, describing Roof as the “primary villain” of an “absolutely horrible” happening that took the lives of churchgoers.

However, in the midst of tragedy and loss, Gillespie said heroes emerged, including a woman who spotted Roof in North Carolina and enabled law enforcement to apprehend him, and communities of mourners of all stripes, who came together to show support and solidarity, in days following the shootings.

He also mentioned Gov. Nikki Haley and

legislators who worked together to get the Confederate flag removed from atop the Statehouse in Columbia.

“Number one among heroes are families of the victims,” Gillespie said, noting many have expressed forgiveness for Roof. “That set the tone in South Carolina. That is what brought us together as one people. Dylan Roof’s legacy is to make South Carolina more united than it has been before, especially along racial lines. ... Every South Carolinian owes a debt of gratitude to the Mother Emanuel people, for their response to this.”

After his talk, Gillespie, the Dana Professor of Political Science, emeritus, at Presbyterian College, took questions from the audience and signed copies of his book.

The book, citing numerous secondary sources, examines the mass killings, Southern history and South Carolina’s place in it, politics and more.

“The amazing grace that families of the victims showed to all of us is what stands out in my mind the most,” Gillespie said, after his talk. “We became one community. I think it began when those families began to say, ‘I forgive you.’”

At the dawn of the Civil War, in 1860, Gillespie said census figures showed 57 percent of South Carolina’s whole population was slaves and 46 percent of all South Carolina free families owned at least one slave.

“Juxtaposing that to the Confederate flag and all the symbolism makes you understand why the flag was such a volatile issue,”

Gillespie said. “State Sen. Paul Thurmond, son of the late U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond, gave a tremendous speech about the the Confederate flag just six days after the massacre at Emanuel AME.”

A transcript of the speech is in an appendix in Gillespie’s book. Gillespie said Thurmond’s words were poignant in light of the fact that his father once ran on States’ Rights ticket for president, in 1948.

An excerpt from that transcript reads, “And for the life of me, I will never understand how anyone could fight the Civil War based in part on the desire to continue the practice of slavery.”

“I feel remarkably good about the state in which this awful act took place,” Gillespie said, referencing the mass shootings and how far South Carolina has come regarding race relations.

LaShaun Singletary, 28, a criminal justice student at Piedmont Technical College, and mother to five children, was among those in attendance at Gillespie’s talk.

“The Sunday following the shootings, a number of of us at my church, Morris Chapel, got together to pray, and continued to do so,” Singletary said. “I know people who went to memorial services and have visited the church in Charleston. ... Dylan Roof didn’t get what he wanted. He thought he was going to start a war, but everybody came together. It symbolized we cannot be broken.”

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Author: By ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY sdonaghy@indexjournal.com  
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Author and retired professor J. David Gillespie said one of the most moving things included in his book is a poem by South Carolina Poet Laureate Marjory Wentworth, written in dedication to the Emanuel AME shooting victims in Charleston. Gillespie said the story of murderous violence has shown him that love must surpass hate.



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PHOTOS BY ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY | INDEX-JOURNAL

Author and retired professor J. David Gillespie signs a copy of his book about the nine shooting deaths at Emanuel AME Church for LaShaun Singletary Thursday at Piedmont Technical College.

Title: **Law protects people with allergies**  
 Author: CASEY PHILLIPS  
 Size: 25.26 column inches  
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## Law protects people with allergies

**CASEY PHILLIPS**

**E**very three minutes, an allergic reaction sends someone to the emergency room.

Food and sting allergies are the number one cause of anaphylaxis – a severe allergic reaction that can be fatal within minutes, either through swelling that shuts off airways or through a significant drop in blood pressure.

Fortunately, a new law will make it easier for South Carolinians to get prompt treatment for anaphylaxis in an emergency.

Gov. Nikki Haley recently signed the Emergency Anaphylaxis Treatment Act.

The law greatly improves public access to emergency epinephrine – the first-line medication to treat anaphylaxis. Epinephrine slows down the effects of an allergic reaction, buying critical time — minutes that can mean the difference between life and death.

The Emergency Anaphylaxis Treatment Act fills a critical gap for South Carolinians living with allergies by allowing places such as restaurants, recreation camps, youth sports leagues, theme parks, resorts and sports arenas to obtain an epinephrine prescription from a physician and store the drug for use during emergencies.

While epinephrine auto-injectors have traditionally been widely available for personal use, people with known allergies don't always have an auto-injector with them, and

those with undiagnosed allergies definitely don't have epinephrine on-hand. In fact, many onset allergic reactions happen to people who had no idea they even had a food or sting allergy.

Restaurants, theme parks and camps are prime places for severe allergic reactions to occur. These are places where adults or children could eat new foods for the first time, eat something that has come in contact with an allergen, or get stung by a bee. Even trace amounts of an allergen can cause a reaction, and it's possible to have anaphylaxis without any visible skin symptoms.

Now, thankfully, these businesses and public places can treat such allergic reactions in an emergency.

It's important to note that the Emergency Anaphylaxis Treatment Act does not in any way require South Carolina businesses to obtain epinephrine. I hope business owners – especially those who operate restaurants, theme parks and summer camps – will take advantage of the new law and obtain a prescription for emergency epinephrine.

More than 15 million Americans live with allergies. This potentially deadly disease affects one in every 13 children in the U.S.

Life-threatening allergies are a common problem for adults and children alike, but with a law like the Emergency Anaphylaxis Treatment Act, life-saving medical help can be available when we need it most.

Title: **DSS settles suit over children's care, vows improvements**  
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press  
 Size: 45.26 column inches  
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## SOUTH CAROLINA

# DSS settles suit over children's care, vows improvements

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA

The S.C. Department of Social Services has agreed

to lower social workers' caseloads of abused and neglected children, put fewer children in institutions and do a better job investigating abuse allegations, according to a set-

tlement filed in federal court Friday.

The agreement potentially ends a lawsuit that accused the agency of endangering the nearly 3,400 children in its care. A federal judge in Charleston must approve it.

The proposed, "life-changing" improvements

mean a brighter future for the state's most vulnerable children, said Sue Berkowitz, director of Applesseed Legal Justice Center, which filed the lawsuit in January 2015 along with the New York-based watchdog group Children's Rights.

"We'd heard so many

horrifying life events happen to children, we felt the lawsuit was critical," Berkowitz said.

Under the settlement, the agency promises to offer more face-to-face visits between casework-

**SEE DSS, 4A**

## FROM PAGE 3A

# DSS

ers and children; keep siblings together unless that would be unsafe; provide better health care; and lessen the times children are moved from one foster home to another. Investigations must start within 24 hours of abuse being reported, must include meeting the victim in-person and must be completed within three months - most of them sooner.

The agency must stop placing children in hotels and office buildings for overnight stays. It can no longer keep kids in juvenile jail beyond their sentence just because the agency has nowhere to put them. And children under 7 can't be placed in institutional group homes or shelters.

The issues addressed by the settlement have been scrutinized by state legislators since January 2014.

The agency's previous

director, Lillian Koller, resigned later that year on the eve of a no-confidence vote in the Senate, following hearings that focused on children's deaths and high caseloads that exceeded 100 children for some social workers.

Director Susan Alford, who took the helm in February 2015, said signing the settlement represents the next step in the agency's ongoing reforms.

"This plan will guide the department's efforts to continue to improve services for children, and we are grateful to our partners across the state who will work in tandem with us to achieve the outcomes our children deserve," she said in a prepared statement.

The budget that legislators passed in June 2015 provided DSS money to add 177 caseworkers and 67 caseworker assistants.

Responding to the set-

tlement, the agency said that between January 2015 and March 2016 it reduced by nearly half the number of caseworkers responsible for 50 or more children, and fewer employees quit.

In February, senators were told that 73 caseworkers still had caseloads of more than 50 children. The goal of having one social worker for every 24 children, set in 2014, had been met in only seven of the state's 46 counties. A DSS spokeswoman did not immediately provide an update Friday.

The budget that legislators sent Gov. Nikki Haley this week provides DSS the additional \$5.6 million Alford requested for more caseworkers.

"There is nothing more important than the safety of our children and our most vulnerable citizens, particularly those under the care of DSS. ... We

remain focused on strengthening DSS," said Haley, who for months had refused legislators' calls to fire Koller.

Koller had repeatedly told legislators DSS didn't need any additional money, despite deep cuts amid the recession, and insisted that caseworkers were responsible on average for only six cases.

The settlement appoints two people to monitor whether DSS is meeting improvement goals and issue reports.

Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, said the

Senate's DSS oversight panel, which she sits on, will also continue its role.

"What we have to make sure of is that they're not afraid to ask for what they need," she said. "We're going to be the ones to make sure they have the money, and that they're using the money we allocate to them wisely."



Title: **Lawsuit forces better treatment for SC's abused, neglected kids**  
 Author: JOHN MONK THE STATE  
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# Lawsuit forces better treatment for SC's abused, neglected kids

JOHN MONK

THE STATE

**COLUMBIA** — A negotiated settlement that parties said will better the lives of South Carolina's vulnerable children was filed Friday in federal court.

The settlement comes almost 18 months after Children's Rights, a national child safety watchdog group, and the Columbia-based Appleseed Legal Justice Center filed a lawsuit on behalf of 11 children, alleging massive long-running failures by the S.C. Department of Social Services that have repeatedly endangered children in the agency's care.

Defendants in the lawsuit were Gov. Nikki Haley and Susan Alford, the DSS director. Attorney Matthew Richardson of Columbia filed the lawsuit on behalf of the 11 plaintiffs, identified as children ages 2-17 who were at that time in the care of the state's social services system.

It is the second major South Carolina legal settlement announced this week where advocates for vulnerable populations had to sue state officials to stop helpless people from being killed and injured due to oversight failures by state agencies. Earlier this week, the state agreed some \$9 million to upgrade treatment of and facilities for mentally ill inmates at state prisons.

The prisoner lawsuit had taken 11 years to reach a settlement. Child care advocates on Friday gave Haley credit for

taking the initiative to reach a speedy resolution to the DSS lawsuit in only some 18 months. The settlement still must be approved by U.S. Judge Richard Gergel of Charleston.

"We commend Gov. Haley and her administration for recognizing the need for change and doing the right thing for kids," said Ira Lustbader, litigation director for Children's Rights.

Unlike the prison agreement, the settlement reached Friday does not require specific money to be spent.

However, it commits the state to:

- » Develop and implement new caseload standards for child social workers. Many workers are still responsible for monitoring 50 children or more.

- » Upgrading the ways DSS monitors, investigates and takes action when children are abused by their caregiver.

- » Reducing the number of kids in institutions and placing more in family housing.

- » Making sure that an effective program is in place for giving children in DSS care regular medical and dental checkups and treatment, as well as given them access to mental health screening and treatment.

As part of the settlement, two recognized child welfare experts will be appointed independent co-monitors. They will issue periodic, public reports on the state's progress in meeting

benchmarks agreed to in the settlement.

Sue Berkowitz, director of the Appleseed Legal Justice Center, said that although the agreement doesn't set specific financial targets, it's reasonable to assume if more resources are needed, state officials will work for them in the Legislature.

In any case, Berkowitz said, by coming to an agreement in a relatively short time, the state avoided spending huge amounts of money on legal fees.

"It also is a win for the children of our state, who will not be left in limbo while litigation drags on for years," Berkowitz said. "Both DSS and foster care have been woefully underfunded for a long time, and we feel confident the governor and the agency are committed to getting the resources that will be needed."

The action was brought on behalf of 3,400 abused and neglected children under DSS's case and followed a string of news reports that documented numerous cases of children under DSS care who were killed or injured as a result of various kinds of mismanagement and underfunding.

Under state law DSS is charged with protecting children under the age of 18 from abuse and neglect. It has caseworkers who visit families with children who are suspected of

**See ABUSED, Page 4A**



Title: **Lawsuit forces better treatment for SC's abused, neglected kids**  
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## Abused

Continued from Page 3A

being abused and may even be in danger of dying. Many children are placed in foster or group homes, and DSS is supposed to have workers who specifically oversee their safety and well-being.

The lawsuit specifically targeted three areas: the shortage of foster homes, excessive caseworker caseloads and inadequate health care for children.

Last year, in response to continuing reports of deaths, the lawsuit and other public criticism, Haley and the Legislature began to take steps to better fund the agency and give it more resources.

And last September, the lawsuit prompted Haley and Alford to reach an interim agreement with the plaintiffs.

In that that "consent immediate interim relief" agreement agree, Haley and Alford agreed to:

» Complete a study spelling out how many children each DSS caseworker can manage, and

adopt workload limits within 180 days. A considerable number of DSS caseworkers are said to have far more children assigned to them than they can manage.

» Draw up a plan within 60 days to prevent children age 6 and under from being placed in non-family group homes. DSS will have another 60 days to implement that plan.

» Phase out the use of hotels, motels and DSS offices as overnight resting places for children in DSS care within 60 days.

The Legislature also increased DSS's funding for the fiscal year that begins July 1. The agency will get \$715 million next year, up from \$694 million this year.

A press release by Children's Rights when the suit was filed said that DSS had the highest rate in the country for placing children 12 and under in institutions, including detention centers with prisoners, instead of in homes. South Carolina children under DSS care were also repeatedly

shuffled around, placed far from relatives and siblings were broken up and denied visits with each other, advocacy groups said.

The lawsuit also said that DSS had so few caseworkers – people who visit the children in foster homes – that maltreatment in foster care often goes uninvestigated, meaning there is a much higher rate of abuse and neglect that the state actually reports to the federal government.

Although DSS has for many years been the subject of criticism for being underfunded and mishandling children in its care, that criticism has escalated in recent years as more cases of child deaths became known, and more people began speaking out.

In late 2014, a Legislative Audit Council report concluded that DSS relied heavily on unreliable data but has failed to ask for extra money and ignores growing problems. The audit also found that caseloads in the child welfare

agency are excessive and that the agency doesn't do enough to ensure children in its care are placed in safe homes.

The report also said DSS keeps unreliable data and, consequently, no one can say with certainty exactly how many children were dying on the agency's watch.

In a statement Friday, Haley said, "There is nothing more important than the safety of our children and our most vulnerable citizens, particularly those under the care of DSS. Whether it's increasing the number of caseworkers or working with partners across state government and in our communities, we remain focused on strengthening DSS."

Haley continued, "This settlement agreement represents yet another step in this process, and I applaud the work Director Alford and her team do everyday."

Lawyers negotiating for the state included Becky Lafitte and Butch Bowers of Columbia.

Title: **Law would put brakes on developers' march to ocean**  
 Author: BY SAMMY FRETWELL sfretwell@thestate.com  
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## LEGISLATURE

# Law would put brakes on developers' march to ocean

BY SAMMY FRETWELL

sfretwell@thestate.com

### COLUMBIA

After years of debate, South Carolina took steps Wednesday to stop developers from building high-rise hotels, condominium buildings and other major projects close to the ocean after taxpayers spend money to renourish public beaches.

The S.C. House passed a bill that will close a loophole in state law that has allowed new construction closer to the ocean when renourishment projects temporarily widen the seashore.

### FROM PAGE 3A

## OCEAN

contained a loophole that allowed new seaside development even closer to the ocean after renourishment projects temporarily widened beaches. That occurred in parts of Hilton Head Island and at Cherry Grove, a section of North Myrtle Beach with a history of flooding. Taxpayers, at one point, had spent \$60 million widening beaches before regulators allowed new development to move toward the sea.

Critics have said it's a

While the legislation gives a short-term reprieve to developers at Kiawah Island and other places, the lower chamber's action is considered a significant, long-term step to prevent construction farther out on the beach at a time of rising sea levels.

The Senate already has passed the bill, meaning the measure now goes to Gov. Nikki Haley for final approval following a routine final vote in the House. The new restrictions are to take effect in 2018. The House vote was

unanimous Wednesday.

Tightening the law "means our beachfront is protected from ill-advised development," said Katie Zimmerman, an official with the S.C. Coastal Conservation League in Charleston. "We have communities now trying to retroactively solve problems that resulted from building too close to the ocean. Now, we have a strong policy in place that will prevent further (construction) from going forward in areas where it should not."

South Carolina has

struggled for decades with how to control oceanfront development in a state that attracts millions of visitors to its beaches every year. A 1988 state law was intended to gradually push development back from the oceanfront because of concerns about property damage and the loss of public beach when people build too close to the sea.

The law never accomplished that goal because of legal challenges and exemptions. But it also

**SEE OCEAN, 4A**

bad policy because the extra sand will eventually wash away, exposing more development to hurricanes and rising sea levels.

Sea levels are expected to rise anywhere from 1 to 5 feet along the South Atlantic coast by the end of the 21st century, threatening oceanfront beach cottages, hotels and other structures, according to a 2013 climate assessment by more than 100 scientists and researchers. The state has experienced a 1-foot rise in sea level in

the past century.

State law has allowed the Department of Health and Environmental Control to move a line that restricts development toward the ocean when beaches build up — whether naturally or artificially through renourishment projects. The agency resets the line every eight to 10 years and can also move it landward when beaches erode. The new law freezes the line from being moved seaward after Dec. 31, 2017.

Because the bill ap-

proved by the House

doesn't take effect until the end of 2017, developers along the coast have a chance to ask DHEC once more to move development lines seaward. The agency would make a determination based in part on historic erosion rates, but those decisions can be challenged. In an email to The State newspaper, the department said it expects to begin a review of whether to move the lines this year.

Title: **Vets' tax cut passes; ethics bills in peril**  
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press  
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 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



## SC LEGISLATURE

# Vets' tax cut passes; ethics bills in peril

BY SEANNA ADCOX  
 Associated Press

### COLUMBIA

Bills that give military retirees a tax cut, shorten South Carolina's legislative session by three weeks and ban ticket quotas in law enforcement are among the potential laws heading to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk.

The Legislature passed a flurry of bills Thursday in the legislative session's last hours. But ethics reform bills that legislators have called a priority for four years could be dead again.

There's still a chance they could reach consensus on measures that send complaints against legislators to independent investigators and require all officeholders to disclose who pays them.

Because they made it to panels that try to compromise on the chambers' differing versions of bills, they stay alive for the special session later this month. But legislators may take up little beyond Haley's vetoes then.

### MILITARY TAX CUT

Legislation touted as enticing working-age veterans who served 20 years

in uniform to retire in South Carolina passed with minutes to spare.

The tax benefits would phase in over five years. By 2020, military retirees younger than 65 could deduct \$17,500 of their income earned in the state. Retirees 65 or older could exempt up to \$30,000. Once fully phased in, the cuts are expected to reduce state revenues by \$18 million.

The House's initial version allowed for bigger benefits sooner, reducing revenues by an estimated \$31 million once fully implemented in three years. But with the 5 p.m. deadline looming, Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, encouraged his colleagues to accept the Senate's changes.

"At this late hour, this is the best we can do," he said. "We want people to retire and relocate here. They're at an age they can contribute to the economy."

Sen. Gerald Malloy had blocked the bill's passage, saying military retirees already have many benefits the state's poor do not. He argued it would be better to expand Medicaid eligibility.

He said he's concerned

legislators "continue to pass bills that will end up benefiting some and not others."

But he allowed a vote after senators agreed to the five-year phase-in.

### ETHICS REFORM

The House and Senate are still far apart on a bill requiring complaints against legislators to be independently investigated.

Currently, House and Senate ethics committees oversee the campaign filings and handle complaints against their colleagues, while the State Ethics Commission oversees all other public officials. Critics, including Haley, equate the arrangement to "the fox guarding the henhouse."

The legislation would revamp the State Ethics Commission and expand its duties to legislators. However, House and Senate ethics panels would still get the final say over their members. The versions differ in who decides whether a legislator likely violated the law and when allegations become public.

Under the House's latest version, the revamped commission would make that determination. A

probable cause finding would trigger documents becoming publicly available. The appropriate legislative panel would then hold a public hearing.

The Senate wants the commission to issue recommendations to the legislative panels.

House Speaker Pro Tem Tommy Pope, the bill's sponsor, said that won't boost confidence in the system.

"Their version will keep the same cloud over us," an obviously frustrated Pope told his colleagues from the podium. "I don't know where we can go, folks. We have given and given and given, but maybe they really want it to die."

Senate Judiciary Chairman Larry Martin said he's still optimistic a compromise can pass when the Legislature returns June 15. The hang-up is that some senators believe the commission would vote for probable cause just to embarrass legislators. Martin said he doubts that.

"But, unfortunately, some of the members in there have a very strong opinion about it," he said.

Another ethics bill on life support would require all elected and public officials to report the sources of their private income — but not how much they are paid. Currently, officeholders must report only public income sources, such as legislative pay, on their annual "statement of economic interest."

Title: **GOP House members ask AG to sue over bathroom directive**  
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## GOP House members ask AG to sue over bathroom directive

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — State Rep. Mike Pitts is encouraging South Carolina's attorney general to sue the federal government over the Obama administration's directive that public schools allow transgender students to use the restroom of their choice.

Pitts said Thursday his complaint is not specifically about bathrooms. The Laurens Republican says the directive is an example of the administration's assault on states' rights under the Tenth

Amendment.

In a letter, Pitts asked Attorney General Alan Wilson to join a lawsuit from Texas and 10 other states. A similar letter went to Gov. Nikki Haley. Pitts says 54 House Republicans co-signed both.

Haley has said school boards, not state or federal politicians, should make such decisions.

Wilson spokeswoman Hayley Thrift says he's working with many states on the issue, but it's inappropriate to discuss legal strategy.



Title: **Veterans' tax cut passes; ethics bills could be dead again**  
 Author: By SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press  
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## Veterans' tax cut passes; ethics bills could be dead again

By SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

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### Military tax cut

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See **BILLS**, page 4A

## BILLS

*Continued from 1a*

The tax benefits would phase in over five years. By 2020, military retirees younger than 65 could deduct \$17,500 of their income earned in the state. Retirees 65 or older could exempt up to \$30,000. Once fully phased in, the cuts are expected to reduce state revenues by \$18 million.

The House's initial version allowed for bigger benefits sooner, reducing revenues by an estimated \$31 million once fully implemented in three years. But with the 5 p.m. deadline looming, Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, encouraged his colleagues to accept the Senate's changes.

"At this late hour, this is the best we can do," he said. "We want people to retire and relocate here. They're at an age they can contribute to the economy."

Sen. Gerald Malloy had blocked the bill's passage, saying military retirees already have many benefits the state's poor do not. He

argued it would be better to expand Medicaid eligibility.

He said he's concerned legislators "continue to pass bills that will end up benefiting some and not others."

But he allowed a vote after senators agreed to the five-year phase-in.

### Ethics reform

The House and Senate are still far apart on a bill requiring complaints against legislators to be independently investigated.

Currently, House and Senate ethics committees oversee the campaign filings and handle complaints against their colleagues, while the State Ethics Commission oversees all other public officials. Critics, including Haley, equate the arrangement to "the fox guarding the henhouse."

The legislation would revamp the State Ethics Commission and expand its duties to legislators. How-

ever, House and Senate ethics panels would still get the final say over their members. The versions differ in who decides whether a legislator likely violated the law and when allegations become public.

Under the House's latest version, the revamped commission would make that determination. A probable cause finding would trigger documents becoming publicly available. The appropriate legislative panel would then hold a public hearing.

The Senate wants the commission to issue recommendations to the legislative panels.

House Speaker Pro Tem Tommy Pope, the bill's sponsor, said that won't boost confidence in the system.

"Their version will keep the same cloud over us," an obviously frustrated Pope told his colleagues from the podium. "I don't know where we can go, folks. We have

given and given and given, but maybe they really want it to die."

Senate Judiciary Chairman Larry Martin said he's still optimistic a compromise can pass when the Legislature returns June 15. The hang-up is that some senators believe the commission would vote for probable cause just to embarrass legislators. Martin said he doubts that.

"But, unfortunately, some of the members in there have a very strong opinion about it," he said.

Another ethics bill on life support would require all elected and public officials to report the sources of their private income — but not how much they are paid. Currently, officeholders must report only public income sources, such as legislative pay, on their annual "statement of economic interest."