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**Subject:** Last Week of Regular Session -- Update from Sen. Tom Young -- May 27 to June 2, 2014

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## **Last Week of Regular Session -- Update from Sen. Tom Young -- May 27 to June 2, 2014**

The State Senate ends regular session this Thursday, June 5 at 5:00 pm. The Senate will meet on June 17 to address any budget vetoes. One of my goals as your state senator is that you find this update helpful and informative. Your feedback is meaningful and appreciated. If I can help you with an issue, please let me know. Thank you for reading and for allowing me to serve our District!

**Congratulations to Graduating High School Seniors!:** Graduations for local high schools started this past weekend and continue through this coming weekend. All of the graduating seniors are congratulated on their accomplishment and wished the best of luck in the future!

**D-Day -- 70th Anniversary:** This coming Friday is the 70th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. As we continue to think of our veterans after Memorial Day, take a moment this week to reflect on D-Day and our service men and women who have given so much of themselves not only during World War II but in other wars, military conflicts, and peace time since World War II to protect our nation and our way of life so that we can enjoy the freedom and the blessings we have in the United States. To learn more about South Carolinians returning to the D-Day beaches this week, go [here](#).

### **State Senate News**

**State Budget:** Negotiations continue between Senate Finance and House Ways and Means leadership on the budget. A final budget between the House and the Senate will be presented to the legislature this week for an up or down vote. The budget will then go to the Governor for her consideration. The General Assembly will return on June 17 to consider any gubernatorial vetoes.

**Ethics:** A conference committee composed of 3 House members and 3 Senators

will meet this week to work out differences in the ethics reform legislation. It is critical for the General Assembly to pass meaningful ethics reform which includes independent oversight of the General Assembly. I am strongly considering voting against any final ethics bill that does not include independent oversight. Doing so may mean that we will not get an ethics reform bill passed this year. While that would be disappointing, if the bill passes without independent oversight, then it will be unlikely that the legislature will be able to enact that reform for several more years. If I vote against the final ethics bill because it does not include independent oversight, then constituents should know that I am not against a stronger ethics law. Rather, I support independent oversight as a critical component of the ethics reform legislation. To me, not including independent oversight as part of the bill this year is worth not passing the ethics bill and instead starting anew in January when the legislature returns. Otherwise, the opportunity to enact independent oversight may be lost for years to come. To read more on this, go [here](#). I welcome your feedback on this or any other issue.

**Texting and Driving** : I support a statewide ban on texting and driving. South Carolina is the only state other than Montana without some level of statewide restriction on this. A conference committee is meeting on this legislation too. I am hopeful that a statewide ban can be enacted this session. To see a list of the laws in other states, go [here](#).

**Roads and Bridges** : Legislation is pending in priority status on the Senate calendar that redirects the remaining remaining half of the revenue from the sales tax on motor vehicles and move those funds from the General Fund to the fund for roads and bridges. This move will result in an increase of approximately \$41 Million in annual funding for road and bridge infrastructure. I support this legislation as it is currently written.

**State Income Tax Reduction** : Legislation that would phase down the state income tax by 1.4% over 5 years until it is gone is likely dead for the year. I am a co-sponsor and will work to enact state income tax reduction legislation again in 2015.

**Penny Sales Tax Option** : A House and Senate conference committee will meet this week to work out differences in legislation that would give more counties including Aiken County an additional option for voters to consider by way of referendum to pay for school buildings and renovations. As to Aiken County, the legislation does the following:

- requires that at least 10% of the revenue collected from a penny sales tax be applied annually to reduce the debt millage for property tax that goes to the Aiken County School District for capital and maintenance needs (not operations). This will reduce the "school bond debt" portion of the property tax on 4% properties (owner occupied residential) properties; 6% properties (commercial); and motor vehicles.
- the sales tax cannot be collected on groceries; gasoline; prescription drugs; and other items exempt from state and local sales tax;
- requires that the voting public within the Aiken County School District vote on



- any proposed referendum for the penny sales tax at the time of a general election (not at a special election on a low turnout day);
- requires the School District to present what will be done with all collected money in a written proposal before the voter referendum;
- forbids the School District from bonding more than 90% of the money remaining after any portion that goes to property tax relief. This is a safety net measure to ensure a revenue stream will exist from the penny to pay for any bond issued by the School District;
- limits the number of local sales taxes that can be collected for any purpose at one time within Aiken County to two pennies -- not three as reported in today's *Aiken Standard*. This means that with the capital projects sales tax penny currently being collected in Aiken County, if the school penny is also approved by voters, then there could not be any more local pennies collected in Aiken County under any other applicable law. Other counties allow up to 3 local pennies.

**Penny Sales Tax Option Referendum Legislation -- Perspective:** Unlike Aiken County, twenty other counties in the state -- including our neighboring counties Lexington and Edgefield -- currently have the option to consider a penny sales tax for school capital needs versus a traditional property tax increase. (This morning's *Aiken Standard* incorrectly reports that only two counties currently have this option under current state law. That is not accurate -- 20 do.) This legislation allows Aiken County to have that option. Property owners in some school districts in counties that do not have the penny option are paying from 41% to 144% more in taxes on school bond debt than property owners in Aiken County are. If voters approve a School District proposal under this option later this year or years from now, this legislation ensures that property owners will get some tax relief while all taxpayers in the county and visitors to the county will pay for any new school buildings and renovations specified in a proposed referendum rather than those improvements being paid for only by property owners within the county.

**Session Ends Thursday :** Because the regular session ends this Thursday, June 5 at 5:00 pm, all legislation that is pending will die unless the legislation is referenced in the *sine die* resolution.

**Palmetto Fallen Soldiers Ceremony :** Last week, I participated with other state officials in a luncheon honoring South Carolinians killed in action in the military during the past year. Specialist Ember Alt from Beech Island was remembered and her family was recognized. Also, Lance Corporal Kyle Carpenter from Lexington County was recognized. He will be the first South Carolinian since the Vietnam War to receive the Medal of Honor when he is presented the award by the President on June 19 in Washington. To see the full story about last week's event, go [here](#).

### **Other State Government News**

**DSS Director Resigns :** Yesterday, DSS Director Lillian Koller resigned. She was scheduled to testify again this Wednesday morning before the DSS Oversight Subcommittee that I chair. The subcommittee is charged with making

recommendations to the General Assembly on how best to improve child protective services and foster care services in our state. The subcommittee meets again tomorrow at 9 am. We will continue meeting into the Fall and have a report and recommendations by early January.

### **News of Local Interest**

**Savannah River Site Heritage Foundation** : The May 2014 newsletter for this organization can be seen [here](#).

**Aiken County Public Library Summer Reading Program:** The annual summer reading program for children through the 5th grade has started at the Aiken County Public Library, the Nancy Carson Library in North Augusta, and other Aiken County library branches. The Program runs through early August. Children who read the required number of books will receive a medal and a certificate of completion. Reading is essential to doing well in school. Please encourage as many young people as you can to read this summer. For more information, call the Aiken County Public Library at 642- 2020 or go [here](#).

**Palmetto Amateur Tournament in Aiken:** The 2014 Palmetto Amateur golf tournament will be in Aiken at the Palmetto Golf Club this week from June 4 to 7. The event is one of the top amateur golf events in the United States. To learn more about the event, 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](mailto:bill@billhixon.com)
- Rep. Bill Taylor (Dist. 86): [bill@taylorscheuse.com](mailto:bill@taylorscheuse.com)
- Rep. Don Wells (Dist. 81): [dwells29801@gmail.com](mailto: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 [608-9747](tel:608-9747).

**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](tel: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.senatortomyoung.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 to <http://sccommerce.com/south-carolina-business-network>.

**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 to <http://www.FutureScholar.com/parents>.

**Donate Life** : You can register as an organ, eye, and tissue donor through the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles or at [DonateLifeSC.org](http://DonateLifeSC.org).

**Child Passenger Safety** : To learn more about ways to keep your children or grandchildren safe in your car, go to <http://www.bucklebuddiessc.org/>. 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](mailto: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. 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.

**Thoroughbred Country-- South Carolina Regional Tourism Organization** : To learn more about tourism in the four county region of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, and Barnwell, visit <http://www.tbredcountry.org>.

**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](mailto: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)

Paid for by Tom Young for Senate

This message was sent to katherineveldran@gov.sc.gov from:

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