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## **Not SOOOO Fast!**

Dear Friends:

The 10th week of this year's legislative session was again dominated by road talk. The top issue for the last couple of years has been how to effectively pay more for road and bridge improvements while ensuring your tax dollars aren't wasted.

### **ROADS: Finally, the Senate Decides**

After nearly a year, the Senate returned to us the House legislation designed to reform SCDOT and provide additional funding (beyond the gas tax) to fix roads. Senators couldn't buck a filibuster so their proposed 12-cent a gallon gas tax hike didn't get included. Instead, they proposed to dip into the General Fund budget to the tune of \$400 million each year. They also voted to make the Department of Transportation (DOT) a cabinet agency reporting to the Governor with the hope that will bring efficiency.

### **ROADS: Governor Presses for Quick Agreement**

Tuesday, the very day the Senate returned the roads bill to the House, Gov. Nikki Haley met with Republican House members and insisted we concur with the Senate's approach immediately. The Senate took nearly a year to decide on their approach and we were pressed to agree within two days.

### **ROADS: Bombshell to be Dropped**

Within the next two weeks the Legislative Audit Council (LAC) will release the findings of its investigation into DOT. LAC has been probing DOT for a year and a half at our direction. It is their most extensive audit of any state agency. It will provide insights into any issues such as evidence of gross mismanagement and/or waste. We must review their findings and include their knowledge in the decision making process for roads. We must not let this opportunity for real reform of DOT to slip by for political expediency. It's essential we await the findings and seize the opportunity to attempt to permanently fix this agency and create real accountability. That way we have improved chances that additional monies sent to DOT will be maximized to fix roads and not wasted. We'll be busy in April and May sorting this out.

## Budget Week in the House

Next week the House focuses on one issue - approving its version of the state budget for 2016-2017 before sending it to the Senate. The state's General Fund budget has staggered back from the 'Great Recession' and we're in a lot better shape financially because business is booming in SC.

Allow me to provide a little historic perspective:

- The last General Fund budget before the 'Great Recession' totaled \$6.7 Billion (FY 2007-2008)
- The General Fund spending was slashed 23% during the recovery and bottomed out at \$5.1 Billion (FY 2010-2011) with many critical state services severely hampered.
- The current General Fund budget (2015-2016) totals \$7 Billion. That's 4.3% more than the previous high of \$6.7 Billion.
- The budget proposed for next year is \$8 Billion. Factor in only inflation (and not population growth) to the pre-recession budget and this year's proposed budget represents a 5% real increase.

Want to know more? Review this [summary presentation](#) of the proposed General Fund budget.

## STATEHOUSE NEWS IN BRIEF

The **Tucker Hipps Transparency Act** ([H.4521](#)) won House approval. The legislation requires the state's public universities and colleges maintain online for all to see a report detailing student misconduct investigations related to fraternity and sorority organizations formally affiliated with the institution. The bill was named in memory of the Clemson University student who died during a fraternity activity in 2014.

The House passed **The Anti-Money Laundering Act** ([H.4554](#)) rectifying South Carolina's current status as the only U.S. state with no regulatory authority over money transfers of smaller amounts which has made the state a center for money laundering. Such activities facilitate organized criminal enterprises and terrorist activities.

Most Representatives think it's a good idea that high school students are taught the founding principles that shaped the United States. The House passed **The SC Founding Principles Act** ([H.3848](#)) requiring the study of the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, the structure of government and the role of the separation of powers and the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to the Constitution.

Save a life by moving over! The House approved a bill designating April every year as **'Move Over Awareness Month'** ([H.4562](#)) that emphasizes the importance of drivers moving over into an adjacent lane whenever possible when approaching or passing through a highway work zone, an emergency scene, or any other traffic incident.

Another way to save a life. The House again showed its support for training high school students CPR. We amended [H.3265](#) and returned it to the Senate. I'm hopeful differences can be worked out so at least one time during high school each student will receive instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

The House approved and sent to the Senate [H.4718](#), a bill creating a **SC Retired Educator Certificate**. A retired educator certificate does not require completion of professional learning or renewal credit.

The House approved a bill authorizing **Home Detention for Certain Non-Violent Drug Offenses** ([H.3130](#)) so long as individuals are monitored by a GPS tracking device and bear the cost of the monitoring program.

The **Emergency Anaphylaxis Treatment Act** ([H.3706](#)) won House approval. It authorizes institutions, organizations, and businesses, such as colleges and universities, daycare facilities, places of worship,

restaurants, places of employment, recreation camps, youth sports leagues, amusement parks, and sports arenas, to keep supplies of EpiPens, in stock to administer this potentially life-saving medication to those who are experiencing severe allergic reactions.

## Aiken County News

### Centennial Aiken Horse Show

It was an honor to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the Aiken Horse Show with the presentation of Concurrent Resolutions from the SC House of Representatives and Senate. Sen. Tom Young and I presented the Resolutions to the Horse Show officials yesterday and honored and commended the organizers for promoting the love of the sport. The Centennial Horse Show will be held April 1-3 in Hitchcock Woods.

### DUTY CALLS!

Firefighters have their priorities in order. New Holland Volunteer firefighters quickly abandoned yesterday's ceremony celebrating the purchase of their new headquarters when they were dispatched to the scene of a murder-suicide. That left a couple of us to stage our own 'photo op' to mark the occasion. The former school district area 4 office will make a great headquarters for the FD which plans to add a building to house fire trucks and equipment. It will also serve as a major gathering place for the New Holland community.

### Election Time!

Wednesday was the first day for filing to run in the June Republican Primary Election in SC. My paperwork was submitted at the Aiken County Election Commission. I'm honored and humbled to serve the constituents of House District 86 and ask for your continued prayers and support.

### I'm Available and AT YOUR SERVICE

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,

**Bill Taylor**

**803-270-2012**

Representative  
South Carolina General  
Assembly

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### Photos of the Week

Great turnout for the Friends of the NRA banquet & auction held Friday evening at the USCA Convocation Center. Good food and conversation, as well as raising money in support of the shooting sports

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