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Subject: Ethics, Education, Hacking & Guns

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Ethics, Education, Hacking & Guns

Dear Friends:

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the preparations for the Christmas season. It's hard to believe that 2012 is coming to an end and the New Year will soon begin. For your S.C. House of Representatives, the 'New Year' arrived this week.

The 120th Legislative Session Begins

The S.C. House met this week for it's biennial reorganization in which we elect leadership, determine committee assignments and select our new seats in the House Chambers. Seat selection is an amusing tradition of drawing names from a bowl. Fortunately, I secured my old, comfortable desk, but I have a new desk mate (see picture of the week at the end of this newsletter).

Ethics Reform is #1

Our first substantive vote this week dealt with Ethics Reform. Republicans and Democrats came together in a bi-partisan approach and voted to expand the six member House Ethics Committee to ten members equally divided between both parties. Historically, the majority party dominated this committee. This was only the first salvo in ethics reform, and not the end of the job. Four different independent panels are working on a comprehensive package of reforms that we expect to receive in January. Since the House elects the members to the Ethics Committee during the organizational session, it was imperative that this step be taken during the first week.

Mace of the House of Representatives

My Education Focus - My New Role

During this week's organizational session I was elected 1st Vice Chairman of the House Education Committee. Schools are the largest expense to state government. Improving education in S.C. is imperative for the continued success of our children and our economy. Citizens deserve a better outcome as a return on their investment of tax dollars. Working with legislators, school administrators and teachers who are closest to the classroom challenges, I will help lead education reforms aimed at transforming the lives of our children through the advantage of a solid education.

Hacking Investigation Launched

In the wake of S.C.'s biggest and most serious cyber theft of private data, the House has launched an

official Legislative Investigation to find answers. A bi-partisan House committee was formed this week and charged with finding answers and proposing solutions. Gov. Haley moved swiftly in addressing the immediate fallout of this security breach, but an independent outside investigation is needed to answer many of the questions moving forward. Every South Carolinian is entitled to answers and assurances that a strong security solution will be put in place.

'Restaurant Carry' for CWP Holders

Next Tuesday is the first day to pre-file legislation. One of the bills I am pre-filing calls for those who possess a Concealed Weapons Permit (CWP) to be able to carry into a restaurant that serves alcohol as long as they don't consume alcohol. Some refer to this as the 'Applebee's Law'. Statistics prove that the presence of more concealed weapons by law-abiding citizens reduces crime. I walked the bill around the House floor Wednesday and quickly gained 30 sponsors, including most of House leadership. After Tuesday many more House members will have to opportunity to co-sponsor this bill.

It's Free!

Just a reminder - there are many holiday events and Christmas celebrations around Aiken County between now and Christmas - parades, concerts, displays, light shows and more. Most of it is FREE. I hope you will take advantage of the activities our communities offer.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you in Columbia. If I can ever be of assistance to you, or if you have ideas on issues you want me to share with the rest of the General Assembly, please don't hesitate to contact me.

In your Service,

Bill Taylor

803-270-2012

Representative
South Carolina General
Assembly

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Photo of the Week

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taxpayer funds.
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A big welcome to my new desk mate, Rep. Don Wells,
(R-Aiken), on the first day of the legislative session.

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