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Subject: Legislative Update for the Week of 5/27/14-5/29/14

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## Legislative Update for Week of 5/27/14-5/29/14

There is just one more week (3 legislative days) before the legislature adjourns at 5:00 p.m. on June 5, 2014.

Here are the highlights from the last week's action in the Senate—

**ADJUTANT GENERAL APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR?** - The House of Representatives agreed with the Senate's changes to **H.3541**, a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow the Governor to appoint the Adjutant General rather than having voters elect that position. As I mentioned in last week's update, South Carolina is the only state that elects its top military leader. The proposed constitutional amendment will now be before voters this November.

**TEXTING WHILE DRIVING** – Since the House and Senate passed different versions of a ban on texting while driving, the bill has been sent to a conference committee of House and Senate members to work out those differences. I have been appointed to serve on that committee, and our first meeting is set for tomorrow. I'm confident we can get an agreement; the real issue is whether the opposition in the Senate will allow us to vote on it. Stay tuned.

**ROAD AND BRIDGE FUNDING** - The Senate did not take up **H. 3412**, a bill designed to move more funding into road and bridge work. The current version of the bill simply shifts existing funds from the General Fund into a pot specifically for infrastructure. I expect we will have a discussion about the issue before we adjourn on Thursday, though.

**REDISTRICTING OF SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICTS** -Last week the Senate passed redistricting plans for the school board lines in Aiken and Edgefield Counties. The bills are now in the House, and I expect both to be completed before the end of the week. Elsewhere in our Senate District . . . in Lexington School District One and McCormick County School District, the school board members are elected at-large; so there are no districts. Saluda County's school district lines were adjusted last year.

**A PENNY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS IN AIKEN?**- A few people have asked me about the legislation to allow for an additional sales tax penny in Aiken for capital projects. As background, Aiken County School District has been considering ways to pay for new schools and facility upgrades for the past several years. Under current law, their options are limited: use existing funds, intended for educational services and salaries, or gain public approval of a bond proposal to borrow money and increase property taxes to pay off the loan. Across the state, 20 school districts have the authority to ask voters to impose a 1% sales tax to be used solely for capital improvements to school facilities. This bill would include Aiken in that list.

We are trying to work out a small difference with the House on the appropriate language, but I hope that will be resolved Tuesday or Wednesday. If the legislation passes, it would not increase taxes; it would, however, give the school district the opportunity to ask voters for a 1% sales tax to be used for specific, identified capital projects and property tax relief. The voters would then make that decision in a public referendum, most likely at this year's general election in November

**STATE BUDGET** – House and Senate members are working to resolve differences on the state budget. I expect a final vote on the budget this week. I will give more details next week.

**NO CONFIDENCE IN DSS DIRECTOR?** – Following several terrible media reports and oversight hearings, a few senators introduced a resolution last week expressing no confidence in the leadership of the Director of the Department of Social Services, Lillian Koller. I think it's likely we will have a vote on that resolution this week.

**COUNTY ELECTION OFFICES** – Last week the House and Senate agreed on changes to county election commissions and election offices. The new law will ensure the state election commission can supervise and assist county election offices in running and certifying elections. The bill also makes changes to the make-up of the local election commissions. As I mentioned in previous updates, those changes will have very little effect on the county election commissions in our Senate District because we have been doing it correctly.

### **Last Week's Meetings**

On Wednesday, I attended a luncheon held for Fallen Soldiers. The event recognized the families of Spc. Ember Alt of Aiken County and Captain Ed Chaffin of Lexington County; Spc. Alt and Captain Chaffin were killed in Afghanistan. I was thrilled to sit with Cpl. (Ret) Kyle Carpenter, a resident of Gilbert and our Senate District, who will receive the Congressional Medal of Honor later this month.

On Thursday night, I attended Saluda High School's annual FFA awards banquet.

On Sunday afternoon, I attended the graduation ceremony for Gilbert High School's class of 2014. Congratulations to all the graduates!

### **Constituent Interests**

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS** - Here is a list of graduation ceremonies for the high schools in our district.

North Augusta High School  
Thursday, 6/5/2014  
2:00 p.m.

Fox Creek High School  
Thursday, 6/5/2014  
7:00 p.m.

Midland Valley High School  
Friday, 6/6/2014  
12:00 p.m.

Ridge Spring Monetta High School  
Friday, 6/6/2014  
6:00 p.m.

Saluda High School  
Friday, 6/6/2014  
7:00 p.m.

Strom Thurmond High School  
Friday, 6/6/2014  
7:00 p.m.

**CREDIT MONITORING** –The State has contracted with CSIdentify Corporation (CSID) for the purpose of continuing credit monitoring/ID protection services to South Carolinians and businesses affected by the October 2012 security breach at the Department of Revenue. CSID's services provided under the contract are available to eligible individual taxpayers (including minors and adult dependents) and eligible business taxpayers through October 31, 2014 (although it will almost certainly be extended).

You can sign up with CSID for the offered service by doing one of the following:

1. Go to [www.scidprotection.com](http://www.scidprotection.com) and follow the steps to enroll

or

2. Call (855)-880-2743 to enroll.

The State will pay \$8.5 Million for the first year of the CSID contract with the option to renew for four additional one year periods at the state's sole discretion. You do not have to pay anything to sign up.

The Experian contract for the past year was a \$12 Million contract.

If you choose to purchase your own protection service, you can deduct a portion of that cost from your state income taxes. Talk with your accountant/tax preparer for more information.

**OUR SENATE DISTRICT** – Senate district 25 consists of all of Edgefield County and parts of Aiken, Lexington, McCormick, and Saluda Counties. If you'd like to see the district map, go [here](#)

**VOTING RECORD** – If you'd like to see how I voted last week, go [here](#). You can always check to see how I vote by going to my website, [www.senatormassey.com](http://www.senatormassey.com), and clicking on the "Voting Record" tab.

**SPEAKING WITH GROUPS** – Several groups, clubs, and classes around our Senate district have invited me to attend their meetings and provide legislative updates. If you would like for me to come speak with your group, please let me know.

**EMAIL UPDATES** – If you know of people in or around District 25 who do not receive my updates but would like to get them, please email their names and email addresses to me. You can also forward this email to them and encourage them to sign up for the updates at [www.senatormassey.com](http://www.senatormassey.com).

Sincerely,

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