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Date: 5/8/2013 11:05:28 PM
Subject: Email

This morning the Senate Judiciary Committee is poised to take up and pass a bill to strengthen our State's ethics laws which hasn't been done in over 20 years.

H.3945 as amended by the Subcommittee earlier this week creates a more independent process to investigate complaints by a reconstituted State Ethics Commission made up equally by the Executive and Legislative Branches; opens up the hearings by the legislative committees; increases transparency with greater income disclosure; and enhances criminal penalties among many other positive changes.

While we believe the Subcommittee adopted a comprehensive and strong amendment, we need your support for some amendments to further improve the bill - these amendments will be offered by Senators Campsen, Massey and Hembree.

The amendments will clarify the Subcommittee's intent regarding income disclosure and enhancing criminal penalties which are technical corrections. Other amendments are substantive and relate to disclosure of fees by public officials who represent clients who sue state agencies and keeping the process of appointing members to the State Ethics Commission balanced and consistent with the principles of separation of powers.

Again, we ask for your support for the Campsen, Massey and Hembree amendments and we ask for your help to pass H.3945 out of Full Committee today.