Vol. 38 January 15, 2021 No. 2

Contents

HOUSE WEEK IN REVIEW 2

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION 2

BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE THIS WEEK 4

NOTE: These summaries are prepared by the staff of the South Carolina House of Representatives and are not the expression of the legislation's sponsor(s) or the House of Representatives. They are strictly for the internal use and benefit of members of the House of Representatives and are not to be construed by a court of law as an expression of legislative intent.

**HOUSE WEEK IN REVIEW**

On Tuesday, January 12, 2021, lawmakers gathered in Columbia to commence the 124th South Carolina General Assembly.

The House of Representatives adopted **H. 3581**, a resolution for **House rules changes** that allow for its committees to conduct online virtual meetings, rather than in-person gatherings, in order to minimize the risk of coronavirus spread. The revised rules provide authority for House Committee Chairmen to designate alternative meeting arrangements and procedures, which may only be implemented in the event that extraordinary circumstances, such as natural disasters, severe weather, and Acts of God, render them necessary. The alternative meeting arrangements and procedures must: (1) provide for public observation or participation as required by House Rules and state statutes; (2) provide both a video and audio component that is publicly accessible; and, (3) record the meeting, in its entirety, and make the recording available on the General Assembly website, as soon as practicable following the meeting.

The Speaker of the House announced that committees and subcommittees will be conducting business remotely over the next few days through the virtual meetings authorized under the new House Rules. The House adjourned to meet again in statewide session at the Capitol upon the call of the Speaker.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H. 3481**, a joint resolution **suspending a transfer of funds to the South Carolina Retiree Health Insurance Trust Fund** for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The suspension allows the Public Employee Benefit Authority to retain these funds and continue to use them to address claims, which PEBA anticipates will be increasing following the delays in scheduling elective surgeries caused by COVID-19 shutdowns.

The House recalled from the Committee on Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs **H. 3602**, a bill directing the Department of Health and Environmental Control to temporarily **authorize qualified health care workers to administer approved COVID-19 vaccinations** regardless of whether the health care workers are otherwise prohibited from doing so under any professional scope of practice or unauthorized practice provision of law.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION**

**WAYS AND MEANS**

The Ways and Means Committee met during the week and reported out several pieces of legislation.

The committee gave a report of favorable with amendments on **H. 3194**, a bill addressing the **future of Santee Cooper**. The legislation makes provisions for continuing negotiations on a possible sale of this state-owned electric utility and makes provisions for governance reform at the South Carolina Public Service Authority.

**Consideration of the Sale of All or Part of the Public Service Authority**

The legislation authorizes the sale of the Public Service Authority and establishes a procedure for considering and approving proposals to sell all of Santee Cooper or certain PSA components. A special legislative committee, composed of three members from each house of the General Assembly, is created to consider offers for the sale of some or all of the assets of the Public Service Authority and to conduct further negotiations on the terms and conditions of any offers. The committee’s recommendation and report may be accepted and approved by each house in the same manner conference committee reports are accepted and approved. Upon approval by the General Assembly, the report must also be transmitted to the Governor for approval.

**Alternate Public Service Authority Governance**

The legislation makes provisions for governance reform at the Public Service Authority should Santee Cooper remain a state-owned electric utility. The legislation provides for the directors of the Public Service Authority to be approved with the advice and consent of the entire General Assembly, rather than the Senate, alone. The legislation revises the composition of the PSA Board, requiring: two of the directors from the congressional districts must have substantial work experience within the operations of electric cooperatives or substantial experience on an electric cooperative board, including one of the two who must have substantial experience within the operations or board of a transmission or generation cooperative. The board shall also have one director recommended to the Governor by the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance to represent industrial customers of the authority, and one director recommended to the Governor by the governing authority of the authority’s largest wholesale customer; provided however, these two directors may not be an employee, counsel, or board member of a customer served by the authority. In making appointments to the Board of Directors, the Governor and the General Assembly in its advice and consent capacity must give due consideration to race, gender, and other demographic factors to assure nondiscrimination, inclusion, and representation to the greatest extent possible of all segments of the population of this state. The legislation provides for staggered five-year terms for board members. The following shall be nonvoting ex officio members of the board of directors: (1) the Chair of the Board of Central Electric Cooperative; (2) the Secretary of Commerce or his designee; (3) a designee of the Chairs of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee. The legislation establishes qualifications criteria for board members and includes provisions to preclude conflicts of interest. Directors shall owe a fiduciary duty of care to the state of South Carolina during their service. The legislation provides for the establishment of subcommittees of the board of directors to include Finance and Audit, Public Information, Water Services and Resource Management, Generation and Power Supply Planning, and Executive and Governance.

The Public Service Authority shall explore joint cost-saving opportunities through joint agreements with a privately owned electrical utility for the purpose of advancing system economy and reliability and generating cost savings to its customers. The legislation makes provisions for the PSA to update its reform plan submitted under to Act 95 of 2019. The Public Service Authority must submit an integrated resource plan for review by the Public Service Commission. A revised process is established for approving PSA rate increases, with appeals of board decisions on rate increases made to the South Carolina Supreme Court. The Public Service Commission Office of Regulatory Staff is afforded authority to investigate the Public Service Authority. The Public Service Authority must apply to the Public Service Commission for approval of the proposed issuance of long-term revenue obligation securities representing new debt. All major utility facilities proposed by the Public Service Authority must be submitted to the Public Service Commission for approval.

The Committee gave a report of favorable with amendments on **H. 3481**, a joint resolution **suspending a transfer of funds to the South Carolina Retiree Health Insurance Trust Fund** for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The suspension allows the Public Employee Benefit Authority to retain these funds and continue to use them to address claims, which PEBA anticipates will be increasing following the delays in scheduling elective surgeries caused by COVID-19 shutdowns.

The Committee is scheduled to report favorable, with amendments, on **H. 3609**, a joint resolution **restoring teacher step salary increases** that were suspended by Act 135 of 2020, enacted by the General Assembly due to financial uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 virus, by appropriating fifty million dollars from the 2018-2019 Contingency Reserve Fund to provide for teacher step increases for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The Committee is scheduled to report favorable, with amendments, on **H. 3608** , ajoint resolution **addressing a funding shortfall for the Public Charter School District** as a result of the General Assembly enacting Act 135 of 2020 due to financial uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 virus, by appropriating nine million dollars from the 2018-2019 Contingency Reserve Fund to the Department of Education for distribution to the Public Charter School District for per pupil funding for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The Committee is scheduled to report favorable on **H. 3607**,a bill addressing **projects financed through the State General Obligation Economic Development Bond Act** to expand the definition of what is considered infrastructure under the act and to make provisions for financing government-owned projects and undertakings that support or promote a foundation for economic growth and industrial development.

**BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE THIS WEEK**

**Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs**

**H.3596 Surveillance of Farmland, Timberland, Fields, or other Certain Land Rep. Hiott**

This bill prohibits the surveillance by a state or local law enforcement agency of farmland, timberland, fields or other certain land through the use of surveillance equipment without first obtaining a warrant or property owner’s permission.

**H.3684 Cobia Limits Rep. Herbkersman**

The bill provides limits for Cobia caught and prohibits the taking or possession of Cobia when Federal regulations provide for the closure of a recreational or commercial Cobia Fishery in the waters of the South Atlantic Ocean.

**H.3694 Bear Hunting Rep. Atkinson**

The bill outlines that in Game Zone 4 during the week of October 24 through October 30, hunting or taking bear by the use or aid of bait is permitted.

**Education and Public Works**

**H. 3588 LIFE Requirements Rep. Allison**

This bill would strengthen course requirements of high school seniors seeking LIFE scholarships by requiring successful completion of certain English, mathematics or computer science coursework during their senior years (which may be accomplished by dual enrollment during the senior year beginning in July 2024). The bill excludes members of the 2022-2023 senior class from these requirements. The bill also specifies an ACT score that is equivalent to the statutorily established SAT score for the LIFE scholarship.

**H. 3589 Schools of Innovation Rep. Allison**

This bill would re-designate (by establishing exemptions) certain schools as being schools of innovation. The bill would also allow that public school districts may establish multiple (but a limited number) of schools of innovation. In addition, this bill clarifies that school districts may have more than one school of innovation (formally school of choice). Districts may not name all schools in a district as a school of innovation. The designation must be renewed every four years.

**H. 3590 Hiring of Noncertified Teachers Rep. Allison**

This bill would provide that public school districts may hire noncertified teachers for any schools and career and technology centers that have vacant teaching positions five business days before the beginning of the school year (these noncertified teachers may comprise no more than twenty-five percent of the entire teaching staff of a school or career and technology center). (With attendant academic and experience requirements).

**H. 3591 South Carolina Teacher Preparation Report Card Rep. Allison**

This bill would improve the means for evaluating educator preparation programs to train new teachers by directing several agencies to develop and annually publish before November 1 an online report card known as the “South Carolina Teacher Preparation Report Card.” The bill also requires SDE to share data regarding the graduates of the various preparation programs with the respective providers.

**H. 3592 Statewide Assessment Program Rep. Allison**

This bill would relate to the statewide assessment program to promote student learning and student performance. It establishes that a 'formative assessment' means a test that may be administered at least once, but no more than three times, over an academic year. The bill has details governing the frequency of tests (and exceptions). This bill would delete the requirement for an end of course assessment in United States history. The course would still be required. Specific diagnostic information must be included, among which is certain related information that districts and schools shall provide parents or guardians of students being assessed (including that if the formative assessment is administered more than once during the school year, information provided to the teacher and parent or guardian must document all prior administrations of the assessment so that the parent or guardian can determine the progress of the student). The bill would require the administration of the ACT (with the writing assessment) to eleventh grade students beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and for five years thereafter. The department shall procure a college readiness assessment provider that includes sections in mathematics, English, writing, and science. Further, that beginning with the 2022-2023 school year the Department shall embed items in standards-based assessments to address certain social studies standards on the SC Ready reading and writing assessments.

**H. 3600 Utility Terrain Vehicle Rep. Ott**

This bill would define the term "Utility Terrain Vehicle" and provide for the registration and operation of them on the highways and streets.

**H. 3601 Owner of a Dam Rep. Ott**

This bill would provide that the owner of a dam which fails or failed on or after October 1, 2015, which has a public road or highway in the state highway system running across the top of it, must provide written notification to the state Department of Transportation and the Department of Health and Environmental Control indicating whether or not the owner intends to repair the dam and the date by which the repairs are anticipated to be completed. This bill would authorize the Department of Transportation to proceed with the process of repairing the public road or highway (if the dam owner indicates the owner does not intend to repair the dam).

**H. 3610 Revised Accountability Measures Rep. Lucas**

This bill would provide revised accountability measures for public schools and public school districts.

**H. 3611 Workforce and Education Data Oversight Committee Rep. Lucas**

This bill would establish the Workforce and Education Data Oversight Committeeto support the mission of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development by collecting data from various state government agencies and institutions and analyzing the compiled data to improve the effectiveness of the state's educational delivery system in providing economic opportunities.

The legislation provides for WEDOC's composition of key public officials in the areas of employment and K-12 and higher education, positing that agencies that collect relevant data related to educational and workforce outcomes are required to submit that data to the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office so that it may be used by WEDOC to compose reports and provide analysis for policy makers. All information disseminated by these partner agencies to the office, committee, or external stakeholders must conform to state and federal privacy, security, and data breach laws and regulations. These include requirements for using data in aggregate form and preventing the reporting of data that may potentially be used to identify information relating to a specific individual. The legislation specifies that the data submitted remains under the ownership and direction of the agency submitting the data and prohibits the unauthorized release of collected data.

The bill establishes a protocol for the immediate notification of the Governor's Office in the event of any actual, probable, or reasonably suspected breach of security or any unauthorized access to or acquisition, use, loss, destruction, compromise, alteration, or disclosure of any information under the oversight of WEDOC.

**H. 3612 “South Carolina Computer Science Education Initiative Act” Rep. Lucas**

This bill would enact the "South Carolina Computer Science Education Initiative Act" and would provide for the expansion and enhancement of computer science education in public high schools through the creation and implementation of a statewide computer science education plan (and require that each public school offer at least one computer science course that meets certain criteria).

**H. 3613 Early Literacy and Numeracy Screening Assessment Instruments, with Revisions to Read to Succeed Rep. Lucas**

This bill would provide that the SC Department of Education shall approve no more than five reliable and valid early literacy and numeracy screening assessment instruments for selection and use by school districts for kindergarten through third grade. The bill provides requirements for such instruments.

In addition, the bill creates the South Carolina Reading Panel, and determines the composition, functions, and duties of the panel. Moreover, the bill establishes definitions concerning the universal screening processes used in public school districts for students experiencing academic or social-emotional difficulties and provide all related screening tools must be capable of identifying students with dyslexia or other reading disorders.

Also, regarding the Read to Succeed Office, the bill revises the requirements concerning coursework necessary for literacy add-on endorsements and to revise requirements for professional development in reading and coaching for certified reading/literacy coaches and literacy teachers where the coursework must be founded on scientifically based reading practices and evidence-based interventions (including how to use the data to identify struggling readers and inform instruction). The bill also revises the requirements for screening and diagnostic assessments and interventions relating to mandatory student retention provisions of the Read to Succeed Act, so as to revise criteria for retention and exemptions from retention, to eliminate an appeals process, and to revise criteria for intensive instructional services and support provided to retained students. The bill would remove the requirement that reading/literacy coaches be employed in all elementary schools, revise requirements concerning the roles and functions of reading/literacy coaches, and provide certain reading and literacy support services to schools identified as having certain levels of lowest achievement on English/language arts summative assessments by third grade students.

**H. 3614 Application for Federal Student Aid Rep. Lucas**

This bill would provide that high school seniors shall complete and submit a free application for federal student aid before graduating from high school. Exceptions for students not wishing to complete the form are included.

**H. 3616 Student Bullying Advisory Council Rep. Clyburn**

This bill would provide that the governing body of each school district of this state shall create a Student Bullying Advisory Council to be comprised of students, parents, and teachers selected by the governing body to advise the governing body on matters relating to student-on-student bullying problems (and on other matters that the governing body considers appropriate).

**H. 3618 Student Assessments Rep. Lucas**

This joint resolution would direct the Department of Education to administer certain student assessments required under the Education Accountability Act for the 2020-2021 school year. This would include an alternative approach if the Department were unable to administer such assessments to all appropriate students and require the publication of all school reports cards for the 2020-2021 school year before October 1, 2021 (also waiving school performance ratings in school report cards for the 2020-2021 school year).

**H. 3679 Aiken County Veterans Memorial Park Rep. Taylor**

This joint resolution would authorize the Aiken County Council and the Aiken City Council to transfer the Vietnam War Memorial, Eternal Flame, and United States flag installations to the Aiken County Veterans Memorial Park.

**H. 3680 Classic and Antique Motor Vehicles Rep. Chumley**

This bill would designate the restoration, exhibition, showing, and enjoyment of classic and antique motor vehicles as the official family-friendly pastime of the state.

**H. 3686 “Student Loan Bill of Rights Act” Rep. Govan**

This bill would enact the "Student Loan Bill of Rights Act" to provide for the regulation of student education loan servicers by the Commission on Higher Education.

**H. 3689 International Registration Plan Rep. Allison**

This bill would provide that if a commercial motor vehicle is registered through the international registration plan and is operated under a United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) number assigned to a person other than the vehicle's owner, then the person to whom the USDOT number is assigned may register the commercial motor vehicle by submitting the appropriate application and fees to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

**Judiciary**

**H. 3597 “South Carolina COVID‑19 Liability Safe Harbor Act” Rep. Taylor**

Health care providers and businesses that follow public health guidance in response to the Coronavirus pandemic would be afforded some civil liability protections under this legislation.

**H. 3617 Early Voting Rep. Clyburn**

If enacted, this bill would allow an early voting period to begin thirty days before any election

**H. 3619 Criminal Asset Forfeiture Rep. Pope**

Adds a new criminal asset forfeiture section to our state code of laws. Any crime-related forfeiture of money, property, and other assets would come under these requirements. It exempts innocent owners and some others from being subject to property forfeitures. Our Commission on Prosecution Coordination would also track them if this legislation becomes law.

**H. 3620 Hate Crime Penalty Enhancements Rep. Gilliard**

This Penalty Enhancements for Certain Crimes proposal would tack on additional punishments for perpetrators of hate crimes. It would apply to crimes committed against victims based on their race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender, age, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability.

**H. 3621 Criminal Coercive Control of another Person Rep. May**

A bill to create the criminal offense of coercive control over another. Its proposed definitions give examples of the behavior and evidence to be used in prosecutions.

**H.3622 No More Legislative FOIA Exemption Rep. May**

This bill proposes removing the existing exemption for members of the General Assembly and their immediate staff from our SC Freedom of Information Act.

**H. 3623 Quicker Early Release Eligibility Rep. Murphy**

Inmates in jail for no parole offenses would become eligible for early release, discharge, or community supervision after serving sixty five percent of certain drug offense sentences. Reduces penalties and revises weight presumptions for the unlawful possession, manufacture, and trafficking of controlled substances. Seeks to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences, as well, if enacted.

**H. 3624 “Drug Court Program Act” Rep. Murphy**

Proposes enacting the “Drug Court Program Act.” It would direct circuit solicitors to set up drug court programs for adults and juveniles. Also contains details on program eligibility, setting up offices to operate them, designating judges to preside, and other particulars

**H. 3663 Congressional Member Term Limits Rep. Elliott**

Calls for a convention of the states. It would be limited to proposing an amendment to the US Constitution to set tem limit on US Congress members.

**H. 3665 Body Camera Video Retention Rep. Henderson-Myers**

An effort to enhance preservation of data from body‑worn law enforcement cameras. Also would prohibit its alteration to influence a criminal action, criminal investigation, internal police investigation, civil action, or potential civil action. Seeks statewide uniform procedures for using this equipment. It also would allow judges to charge juries that they may infer negligence when officers wearing body‑worn cameras fail to produce a video. Another change would be to make loss-of-life incidents captured on body-worn law enforcement camera video to be subject to disclosure under the SCFOIA.

**H. 3666 Law Enforcement Officer Perjury Rep. Henderson-Myers**

Proposes elements of, and punishment for, the crime of law enforcement officer perjury.

**H. 3667 Minority Law enforcement Officer Recruitment Rep. Henderson-Myers**

Law enforcement agency in communities with a concentration of minority residents would be directed to recruit, retain, and promote minority law enforcement officers in this bill. It has the stated goal of racial and ethnic diversity in these agencies. Our South Carolina Law Enforcement Training Council would prepare and submit reports documenting these efforts.

**H. 3668 Law Enforcement Civilian Review Boards Rep. Henderson-Myers**

A bill requiring local governments to establish law enforcement civilian review boards.

**H. 3670 Presidential Election by Popular Vote Only Rep. Hart**

An effort seeking adoption of the Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote. If it becomes law, all state code sections relating to presidential electors would be null.

**H. 3672 Decriminalized Pot Rep. Hart**

Law enforcement would only issue civil citations for anyone simply possessing small quantities of marijuana or hashish in this bill.

**H. 3677 Limiting Wireless Electronics Use While Driving Rep. Hart**

Drivers would be prevented from using cellular telephones, pagers, personal digital assistant devices, or other wireless communications devices that are not equipped with a hands‑free mechanism if this initiative becomes law.

**H. 3681 No Local Government Vaping Ordinances Rep. Simrill**

After December 31, 2020, political subdivisions could not enact any laws, ordinances, or rules pertaining to ingredients, flavors, or licensing of cigarettes, electronic smoking devices, e‑liquid, vapor products, tobacco products, or alternative nicotine products if this proposal becomes law. Use of these products in public areas would still be subject to local ordinances, however.

**H. 3685 Renamed Commission for Minority and Multicultural Affairs Rep. Govan**

The SC Commission for Minority Affairs would be renamed the SC Commission for Minority and Multicultural Affairs under this bill.

**H. 3687 No More Law Enforcement Use of Ketamine in Arrests Rep. Govan**

If enacted, law enforcement officers, or paramedics, would be subject to criminal prosecution for injecting criminal suspects with ketamine to try to incapacitate them.

**H. 3693 No Credit Reports as Preconditions for Leases Rep. Gilliard**

Landlords would be banned from requesting credit reports, or using the credit scores, of prospective residential renters in order to decide whether to lease a rental residence, or to set its rental rate.

**H. 3695 No Emergency Suspension of Alcohol Sales Rep. Rutherford**

The governor, in any emergency proclamation, would not be able prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages before midnight if this legislation becomes law. Alcohol sales licensees could not lose their licenses for alleged violations of gubernatorial emergency orders under this bill.

**H. 3696 Additional Circuit and Family Court Judges Rep. Lucas**

This bill seeks to add a circuit court judges by one in the ninth, fourteenth, and fifteenth circuits. It also would add a family court judge in the first and sixteenth circuits.

**H. 3698 Specified COVID19 Liability Safe Harbors Rep. Pope**

Responsible health care providers and businesses that follow public health guidance in response to the Coronavirus pandemic would have some civil liability protections under this proposal.

**Labor, Commerce and Industry**

**H. 3582 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Rep. Sandifer**

This bill establishes conditions under which a person or corporation who uses an electric vehicle charging station to resell electricity to the public for compensation is not to be considered an electric utility. The legislation provides that any increase in customer demand or energy consumption associated with transportation electrification shall not constitute revenues for an electrical utility.

**H. 3583 Financial Institutions Rep. Sandifer**

This bill revises provisions governing the operation of financial institutions including banks, credit unions, and savings and loan associations.

**H. 3585 Insurers Rep. Sandifer**

This bill revises provisions governing the operation of insurers.

**H. 3586 Department of Insurance Fraud Division Rep. Sandifer**

This bill establishes the Fraud Division within the Department of Insurance and provides for the division’s duties and obligations.

**H. 3587 Reduction in Insurance Coverage Rep. Sandifer**

This bill prohibits an insurer from treating a correction of a typographical or scrivener’s error as a reduction in coverage.

**H. 3606 Home Improvements Rep. G. M. Smith**

This bill exempts certain improvements made to residential property from building permit requirements. The legislation exempts property owners who make such improvements from Residential Builders Commission licensure requirements. Corresponding revisions are made to the definition of residential specialty contractors.

**H. 3664 Criminal Background Check Requirements for Real Estate Commission Licensure Rep. Hewitt**

This bill revises criminal background checks required for initial licensure by the Real Estate Commission to require Social Security number-based criminal records checks in addition to existing requirements.

**H. 3673 Requirements for Electrical Utilities to Bury Power Lines in Municipalities Rep. Hart**

This bill requires an electrical utility operating in this state to bury all of its new electrical power transmission lines installed within the boundaries of a municipality in this state after January 2, 2022, and to bury all of its existing electrical power transmission lines located within the boundaries of a municipality in this state according to a graduated schedule before January 1, 2027.

**H. 3675 Base State Minimum Wage Rep. Hart**

This bill makes provisions for a base state minimum wage of seventeen dollars per hour effective January 1, 2022.

**H. 3676 Mandatory Minimum Grace Period for Mortgage Payments Rep. Hart**

This bill makes provisions for a mandatory minimum grace period of twenty days for a mortgage payment. The provisions do not apply to a simple interest or other mortgage in which interest accrues daily.

**H. 3678 Mortgage Loan Payments Rep. Hart**

This bill provides that, when a mortgagee makes a payment on a loan secured by a mortgage, the mortgagor shall apply at least thirty percent of the payment received toward the principal balance of the loan secured by the mortgage. A penalty is provided for violations.

**H. 3683 “South Carolina Ratepayer Protection Act of 2021” Rep. Lucas**

This bill, the “South Carolina Ratepayer Protection Act Of 2021,” draws upon the work of the special House Utility Ratepayer Protection Committee which was appointed by the Speaker of the House following the announcement from Santee Cooper and SCANA’s South Carolina Electric & Gas that construction on the V. C. Summer nuclear reactors in Fairfield County was being abandoned after billions of dollars in fees had been collected from South Carolina’s ratepayers under the Base Load Review Act to support the failed nuclear power project. The legislation includes reforms and enhanced authority for the Public Service Commission, the body that provides oversight and renders decisions in public utility matters. The legislation eases restrictions on communications with members or staff of the Public Utilities Review Committee or any other legislative committee charged with review of the commission. Provisions are included to prevent conflicts interests for regulators and those who serve as advocates for the interests of the consumer. Employees of public utilities are afforded whistleblower protections when reporting wrongdoing.

**H. 3688 Financial Literacy Class Requirement for Housing Authority Eligibility Rep. S. Williams**

This bill provides that, in order to be eligible for housing under the housing authority, an individual shall attend one financial literacy class offered or approved by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

**Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs**

**H.3598 Veterans Service Organization Burial Honor Guard Support Fund Rep. McGarry**

This bill creates a separate and distinct treasury fund account called the Veterans Service Organization Burial Honor Guard Support Fund. This fund account is to offset the costs incurred by the South Carolina chapters of Congressionally Chartered Veterans Service Organizations in providing honor guard burial details at the funerals of qualifying South Carolina military veterans.

**H.3599 Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Rep. Newton**

The bill enters South Carolina into a Multistate Occupational Licensure Compact to provide for the reciprocal practice of occupational therapy among the state that are parties to the Compact. The goal of the Compact is to improve public access to occupational therapy services.

**H.3602 Certain Qualified Health Care Workers to Administer Certain Approved COVID-19 Vaccinations**

**Approved by the Department of Health and Environmental Control Rep. Cox**

This joint resolution temporarily authorizes the Department of Health and Environmental Control to authorize certain qualified health care workers to administer certain approved COVID-19 vaccinations regardless whether the health care works are otherwise prohibited under any professional scope of practice provisions.

**H.3603** **Certain Qualified Health Care Workers to Administer Certain Approved COVID-19 Vaccinations Approved by United States Food and Drug Administration Rep. Cox**

This Joint Resolution outlines that health care workers who are qualified by professional training to administer intramuscular injections may administer COVID 19 vaccines authorized by the United States Food and Drug Administration at vaccination provider facilities or organizations enrolled in the Federal COVID 19 Vaccination Program coordinated through DHEC’s Immunization Program.

**H.3604 Employment Earned Paid Sick Leave Rep. Wooten**

The bill provides employees may use up to three days of earned paid sick leave for certain chronic illnesses or health conditions without obtaining health care provider certification.

**H.3682 Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) Rep. Collins**

Among many things, this bill provides that an APRN may perform specific medical acts according to approved written guidelines. The bill also removes the supervision requirement from the definition of “approved written guidelines” and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) Practice.

**H. 3697 Authorized Provision of Medications by Unlicensed Persons in Community Residential Facilities Rep. G. M. Smith**

The bill provides that the authorized delivery of medications by unlicensed persons in community residential facilities will now include correctional facilities.

**H.3698 Liability Protections for Businesses that follow Public Health Guidance in Response to the Coronavirus Public Health Emergency Rep. Pope**

This Joint Resolution protects against liability for a limited time for health care providers and businesses during the coronavirus public health emergency. This Joint Resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor and its provisions apply to all civil and administrative causes of action that arise between March 13, 2020, and December 31, 2021, or 180 days after the final state of emergency is lifted for COVID-19.

**Ways and Means**

**H. 3593 Income Tax Credit for Employing Public School Teachers as Interns Rep. Allison**

This bill allows income tax credits for taxpayers who employ public school teachers of grades six through twelve as interns based on criteria provided by the Department of Education in an effort to increase the number of teachers who understand the skills and abilities needed for twenty-first century jobs.

**H. 3594 Income Tax Credit Covering All Property Taxes on Residences of Public School Teachers Employed in Economically Disadvantaged Counties Rep. Allison**

This bill establishes an income tax credit equal to one hundred percent of the property taxes paid on a residence located in a Tier IV economically disadvantaged county when the homeowner is employed as a K-12 public school teacher in a Tier IV economically disadvantaged county.

**H. 3595 Retirees Returning to Work Rep. Allison**

This bill revises provisions of the South Carolina Retirement System and the South Carolina Police Officers Retirement System to provide that a retired member may be hired and return to employment covered by any system provided for by law, without regard to earnings, without affecting the monthly retirement allowance the member is receiving from the system if the member has not been engaged to perform services for a participating employer in any system provided for by law for compensation in any capacity, whether as an employee, independent contractor, leased employee, joint employee, or other classification of worker, for a period of at least twelve consecutive months subsequent to retirement.

**H. 3605 Repealing Provisions for Joint Meetings of the Legislative Appropriations Committees Rep. White**

This bill repeals provisions for the standing committees of the House of Representatives and of the Senate in charge of appropriation measures to sit jointly in open sessions while considering the budget.

**H. 3607 Projects Financed Through the State General Obligation Economic Development Bond Act Rep. Lucas**

This bill revises the State General Obligation Economic Development Bond Act to expand the definition of what is considered infrastructure under the act and to make provisions for financing government-owned projects and undertakings that support or promote a foundation for economic growth and industrial development.

**H. 3608 Addressing a Funding Shortfall for the Public Charter School District Rep. Lucas**

This joint resolution addresses a funding shortfall for the Public Charter School District as a result of the General Assembly enacting Act 135 of 2020 due to financial uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 virus, by appropriating nine million dollars from the 2018-2019 Contingency Reserve Fund to the Department of Education for distribution to The Public Charter School District for per pupil funding for the 2020-2021 School Year.

**H. 3609 Restoring Teacher Step Salary Increases Rep. Lucas**

This joint resolution restores teacher step salary increases that were suspended by Act 135 of 2020, enacted by the General Assembly due to financial uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 virus, by appropriating fifty million dollars from the 2018-2019 Contingency Reserve Fund to provide for teacher step increases for the 2020-2021 School Year.

**H. 3615 Suspension of Millage Rate Increase Limitation to Support a Fire Protection District**

**Rep. Wheeler**

This bill revises the limitation imposed on property tax millage rate increases to allow the governing body of a county to suspend the limitation for the purpose of supporting a fire protection district.

**H. 3625 Qualifications for the Owner Occupied Real Property Tax Assessment Ratio Rep. Finlay**

This bill revises provisions for residential property tax assessment ratios to eliminate the owner occupant’s spouse from the definition of “a member of my household,” and to provide that the owner occupant must provide a South Carolina driver’s license and a Social Security card or passport to qualify for the special four percent assessment ratio.

**H. 3669 Real Property Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans Rep. Hart**

This bill revises provisions relating to liability for taxes and assessments on real property to provide a property tax exemption for a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States who is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service-connected disability.

**H. 3671 Proposed Constitutional Amendment Rescinding Real Property Valuation Reform Act Provisions Rep. Hart**

This joint resolution proposes to amend provisions of the South Carolina Constitution relating to property tax, the method of valuation of real property, and the limits on increases in the value of real property for purposes of the property tax, so as to require the General Assembly to provide by law a definition of “fair market value” for real property for purposes of the property tax, to eliminate the fifteen percent limit on increases in the value of real property over five years and to eliminate an assessable transfer of interest as an event which may change the value of the real property.

**H. 3674 Repeal of the South Carolina Real Property Valuation Reform Act Rep. Hart**

This bill repeals the South Carolina Real Property Valuation Reform Act with its “point of sale” valuation of real property for purposes of imposition of the property tax and largely reinstates the former systems of valuation and taxation of real property and improvements to real property.

**H. 3690 Proposed State Constitutional Amendment to Devote All Lottery Proceeds to Higher Education Tuition Assistance And Scholarships Rep. White**

This joint resolution proposes an amendment to the South Carolina Constitution to provide that proceeds in the Education Lottery Account may be used only for higher education tuition assistance and scholarships.

The Legislative Update is on the internet. Visit the South Carolina General Assembly home page (http://www.scstatehouse.gov) and click on Publications, then click on Legislative Updates. This will list all of the Legislative Updates by date in two forms: Word documents and hypertext links. Click on the date you need. Also available on the website is a bill summary index, where bills referenced in one or more issues of the Legislative Update are listed in numeric order. Links to the specific text of the Legislative Update issue are provided in the bill summary index.

NOTE: the Legislative Update is available to legislative tracking subscribers. You may register for this free service on the South Carolina General Assembly home page by clicking on Track Legislation (on the left-side vertical menu bar).