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G. Murrell Smith, Speaker of the House

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2025 Enacted Legislation

(Indexed)

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In addition, you can navigate directly to a specific Act summary by holding down the Ctrl key, placing/hovering the cursor over the lines in the Table of Contents and left-clicking the mouse.

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Use the “.pdf” version. It has an INDEX organized by Act (and bill) numbers and subjects. This is so you can have a hard-copy print out of your summaries to take with you to meetings, speeches, interviews.

Bold

Please note that summary text in **bold** brings attention to the core meaning of the Act.

Note to the reader regarding these Legislative Summaries

Sources

The versions of bills and acts that these summaries are based on can be found in the House and Senate Journals of the 126th Session (First Session, 2025) and other webpage resources: (<https://www.scstatehouse.gov>).

Citation Style (Chicago Manual of Style) for Students/Researchers

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House Rule

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Monday, November 17, 2025

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Acts

BUDGET AND FINANCE

State Government Budget, Fiscal Year 2025-2026 [H. 4025, Act 69]

The General Assembly approved **H. 4025** (Act 69), the General Appropriation Bill and **H. 4026** (Act 71), the joint resolution making appropriations from the Capital Reserve Fund, which together comprise the \$14.8 billion **Fiscal Year 2025-2026 State Government Budget**.

Requirements

After \$814 million is transferred to the Tax Relief Trust Fund that provides for the residential property tax caps, \$13.3 billion in recurring general fund revenue is available for appropriation. The budget's \$1.5 billion in nonrecurring revenue includes \$332 million in the Contingency Reserve Fund and \$370 million in Capital Reserve Funds. Additionally, a total of \$563 million in Education Lottery funds is available for appropriation and a total of \$177 million in Education Improvement Act funds (\$53 million in recurring and \$124 million in nonrecurring revenue).

In keeping with the "Comprehensive Tax Cut Act of 2022," \$291 million is used to accelerate the income tax relief schedule, allowing the rate for the highest income tax bracket to be lowered from 6.3% to 6.0%.

\$1.2 billion provides full funding for the state financial reserve accounts used to cope with revenue shortfalls.

Roads and Bridges

\$200 million in nonrecurring funds is allocated to accelerate the Department of Transportation's schedule for repairing and replacing the state's bridges. SCDOT is also afforded \$35 million in nonrecurring funds to address damage from Hurricane Helene.

Airport Enhancements

The Division of Aeronautics receives \$5.4 million in recurring funds and \$5 million in nonrecurring funds for airport safety and development and \$300,000 in recurring funds for operations. The Department of Commerce is appropriated \$80 million in nonrecurring funds for airport enhancements.

Hurricanes Helene and Debby

\$40 million in nonrecurring funds is used for replenishing South Carolina's Disaster Relief and Resilience Reserve Fund in the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Debby. The

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Office of Resilience is also allocated \$1 million in nonrecurring funds for data collection and coordination and \$5 million in nonrecurring funds for watershed coordination and planning.

National Guard

The Adjutant General's Office is afforded \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for armory revitalization and \$1.96 million in nonrecurring funds for wireless network support for National Guard Armories and other key facilities. \$1 million in recurring funds is devoted to the South Carolina Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team for SC-HART emergency response. The South Carolina Emergency Management Division receives \$1 million in nonrecurring funds for the Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund, \$3 million in nonrecurring funds for the public assistance program, and \$198.7 million from the Capital Reserve Fund for declared disasters relief.

General Government

The budget includes a provision requiring state agencies that issue benefit checks to develop and implement measures to mitigate the risk of fraud. These agencies must outline the specific steps being taken to prevent and detect fraudulent activity such as a verification processes for recipient eligibility, security measures for check issuance and distribution, and monitoring procedures to detect and address fraudulent transactions. Each agency is responsible for compiling a report detailing fraud mitigation measures that they have implemented, along with any incidents of fraud detected and corrective actions taken. Each agency report must be submitted to the General Assembly by the end of the year.

In order to better manage the number of full-time equivalent positions across state government, a budget provision establishes a timeline for eliminating 25% of each agencies' vacant FTE positions.

The Department of Administration is allocated \$6.9 million in recurring funds for information security monitoring and protection tools, \$2 million in recurring funds for statewide information technology coordination, \$9 million in nonrecurring funds for a modernized IT service management platform, \$2.9 million in nonrecurring funds, and \$21 million from the Capital Reserve Fund for security upgrades at state-owned buildings.

\$14.6 million in recurring funds is provided for aid to political subdivisions through the Local Government Fund.

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State Employee Benefits

The budget provides for a restructuring of pay grades for state agency employees in classified full-time equivalent positions following expert recommendations for reforming the State's Classification and Compensation system commissioned from an external consultant. \$66.6 million in recurring revenue is used to provide a **2% state employee pay increase**, or a greater increase in cases where it is needed to bring employees' salaries up to the minimum levels of the new pay grades established by the Department of Administration.

\$106 million in recurring funds is included to cover increased costs in the **state's health insurance plan**. This provision ensures that employees are held harmless with no increases in their monthly premium payments.

In-District Compensation

Legislators of the General Assembly passed a budget proviso appropriating an additional \$1,500 to their existing \$1,000 monthly in-district compensation. This proviso sets out: "**91.13.** (LEG: In-District Compensation) All members of the General Assembly shall receive an in-district compensation of \$1,000 \$2,500 per month." ¹

The SC Supreme Court granted a preliminary injunction June 25th, 2025, ordering Treasurer Loftis "from distributing any funds under Proviso 91.13 of the 2025-2026 Appropriations Act, pending further order."²

Acting in its Original Jurisdiction, the Court heard oral arguments on the issue of whether this increase in "in-district compensation" for members of the South Carolina General Assembly, as set forth in a proviso of the 2025-2026 Appropriations Act, constituted an unconstitutional increase in compensation for the sitting General Assembly members.

On November 12, 2025, the Court held this proviso increasing the in-district compensation for members of the South Carolina General Assembly from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per month was unconstitutional. They then made their temporary injunction against these payments permanent.³

¹ [see H. 4025, Part 1 A, Sect. 91 A (SECTION 91 - A 990 - LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT), 91 B, 126th General Assembly (2025)]

² [Climer v. Loftis, Alexander and Smith. Appellate No. 2025-001111]

³ [Citation pending].

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Education

\$112 million in **State Aid to Classrooms** provides sufficient funding for local school districts to approve a \$1,500 teacher pay increase. The budget provides for a revised teacher salary schedule with the minimum starting salary for teachers increased to \$48,500. The total for State Aid to Classrooms in the budget represents an average per pupil appropriation of \$5,884. The average total is \$19,075 per pupil when federal, local, and state funding commitments are factored together.

\$5 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds is used for the second phase of the Teacher Strategic Compensation Pilot Program.

The budget's funding is sufficient to provide a school resource officer for every public school in the state, with \$56.2 million in recurring funds provided to the Department of Public Safety as well as \$8.3 million in nonrecurring funds for officer equipment.

\$20 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds is dedicated to school facilities safety upgrades.

\$4.4 million is provided to fully fund the increased enrollment in full-day four-year-old kindergarten.

\$1.8 million in recurring Education Improvement Act funds is allocated to the Child Early Reading and Developmental Education Program.

\$7 million in recurring EIA revenue and \$24 million in nonrecurring EIA revenue funds Summer Reading Camps.

\$42 million in nonrecurring funds is allocated for high quality instructional materials and \$3.3 million recurring and \$29.6 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds is used for instructional materials.

The Education Scholarship Trust Fund receives \$30 million in recurring funds and \$15 million in nonrecurring funds.

The Teaching Transformation Pilot Program is afforded \$1 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds.

\$6 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds is used for statewide implementation of the Imagination Library.

From recurring Education Improvement Act revenue, \$356,500 goes to Science PLUS, \$250,000 goes to Reach Out and Read, and \$695,000 goes to the Call Me Mister program.

\$6.7 million in recurring Education Improvement Act funds is appropriated for the School Leadership Accelerator.

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\$1.6 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds goes to the Child Nutrition Program.

\$1 million in recurring funds is provided through the Department of Agriculture for the Certified SC School Cafeteria Program.

\$750,000 in nonrecurring EIA funds is devoted to agriculture in the classroom.

The Tech-to-Teach Pilot Program is afforded \$1.5 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds.

\$5 million in nonrecurring funds is provided for the second phase of the School of Workforce Innovation Pilot Program.

\$3 million in recurring funds and \$35 million in nonrecurring Education Improvement Act funds is allocated for purchasing and leasing school buses.

Higher Education

The budget again includes a **higher education tuition mitigation initiative** in which additional recurring funding is distributed among the state's institutions of higher learning. In order to retain these appropriations, the institutions must comply with provisions for freezing in-state tuition and mandatory fees during the 2025-2026 academic year for all in-state undergraduate students.

The University of South Carolina is afforded \$5.8 million in recurring funds for its School of Law, \$4.5 million in recurring funds for a Center for Excellence in Neurological Critical Care and Rehabilitation Services, \$100,000 in recurring funds for the Pediatric Brain Health Center, \$100,000 in recurring funds for brain health education, \$500,000 in recurring funds for the Center for Civil Rights History and Research, \$2 million in recurring funds for a Carolina Internship Pilot Program, \$3.2 million in recurring funds for operational and programmatic support at the College of Pharmacy Research, \$400,000 in recurring funds for the Kennedy Pharmacy Innovation Center, \$1 million in recurring funds for Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation, and \$13.2 million in nonrecurring funds for a battery center facility.

USC Aiken receives \$900,000 in recurring funds for Cyber/Engineering Program Enhancement and \$8.4 million in nonrecurring funds for science building enhancements and modernization. USC Upstate receives \$6 million in nonrecurring funds for the Recreation and Tourism Management Center. USC Beaufort receives \$9.3 million in nonrecurring funds for a new convocation center. USC Sumter receives \$3 million in nonrecurring funds for the Facilities Management Center and \$5.5 million in nonrecurring funds for its Collaboration Lab.

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Clemson University is appropriated \$4 million in recurring funds for the expansion of its Institute for the Study of Capitalism, \$4 million in recurring funds for student experiential learning, \$500,000 in recurring funds for the energy center, \$40 million in nonrecurring funds for a NextGen Computing Complex, and \$1 million for the College of Veterinary Medicine.

South Carolina State University is afforded \$5 million in nonrecurring funds for the replacement of the Smith Hammond Middleton Convocation Center and \$1 million in recurring funds (with \$15 million in nonrecurring funds) to renovate the Dr. Maceo O. Nance Hall for the establishment of the new College of Agriculture, Family & Consumer Science. The budget legislation provides for the forgiveness of the principal balance, all associated interest, and costs of the South Carolina Budget Control Board Operating Loan issued to South Carolina State University in 2015.

The Medical University of South Carolina receives \$5 million in recurring funds for Comprehensive Cancer Center designation, \$4.9 million in recurring funds for dental tuition reduction, \$3 million in recurring funds for residential rehabilitation treatment assessment, \$25 million in nonrecurring funds for a College of Medicine academic building, \$5.8 million in nonrecurring funds for the Lancaster Medical Center Graduate Medical Education (GME) program, and \$6.6 million in nonrecurring funds for the Southeastern Health AI Consortium.

The Citadel is afforded \$12.9 million in nonrecurring funds for the replacement of its engineering building, \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for workforce housing renovation, and \$7 million in nonrecurring funds for the renovation of Deas Hall.

Coastal Carolina University receives \$4.5 million in nonrecurring funds for the renovation of Wheelwright Auditorium.

Lander University is appropriated \$8 million in nonrecurring funds for renovating the Marion Carnell Learning Center and \$600,000 in recurring funds for the SC Institute on the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses.

Francis Marion University receives \$5 million in nonrecurring funds for the renovation of the Hyman Fine Arts Center and \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for the Leatherman Science Facility and the McNair Science Building renovation.

The Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries receives \$1.5 million in Education Lottery funds to further the cost-effective sharing of high-quality resources through PASCAL.

Full funding is provided in Education Lottery funds for the LIFE, HOPE, and Palmetto Fellows higher education scholarship programs.

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The Commission on Higher Education is afforded \$80 million in lottery funds for need-based grants.

\$3.6 million in lottery unclaimed prize funds is appropriated for College Transition Program scholarships through the CHE.

The Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission is allocated \$20 million in lottery funds.

\$6.2 million in lottery funds is provided to CHE for the National Guard Tuition Repayment Program.

\$9 million in lottery funds is allocated to the CHE's Higher Education Excellence Enhancement Program.

\$8 million in lottery funds is devoted to CHE technology.

\$10 million in lottery funds is provided to the Commission on Higher Education for its Nursing Initiative.

\$53 million in lottery funds is provided for the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program through CHE and the Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education.

The Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education is afforded \$54.3 million in lottery funds and \$2.8 million in unclaimed prize funds for SC Workforce Industry Needs scholarships that help provide full tuition at technical colleges for SC WINS recipients seeking degrees in industry sectors with critical workforce needs.

\$1 million in lottery funds is allocated to the Ready SC Program which provides worker training at the state's technical colleges that is customized to the needs of new and expanding business and industry.

Commerce

The Department of Employment and Workforce is afforded \$10.3 million in nonrecurring funds for the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Portal, \$2.8 million in recurring funds for maintenance of the portal, and \$1 million in nonrecurring funds for the Graduation Alliance.

The Department of Commerce receives \$1 million in recurring funds and \$80 million in nonrecurring funds for site readiness through LocateSC to address business and industry needs.

The Rural Infrastructure Fund is appropriated \$12 million in nonrecurring funds and the Statewide Water and Sewer Fund is appropriated \$15 million in nonrecurring funds.

Agriculture

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The Department of Agriculture receives \$1 million in recurring funds for customer service activities at the State Farmers Market and \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for regional farmers markets.

PSA

Clemson University PSA is afforded \$1 million in recurring funds for food safety and nutrition extension personnel and programmatic support.

SC State University PSA receives \$500,000 in recurring funds and \$650,000 in nonrecurring funds for statewide extension agribusiness development, \$500,000 in recurring funds and \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds for agriculture innovation research, \$525,000 in nonrecurring funds for business development training and assistance, \$600,000 in nonrecurring funds for new beginner farmer assistance, \$250,000 in nonrecurring funds for future farm planning, and \$2.5 million in nonrecurring funds for the Animal Research and Education Center.

PRT

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism receives \$9 million in nonrecurring funds for tourism development, \$2 million in recurring funds and \$6 million in nonrecurring funds for destination specific tourism marketing grants, \$1.5 million in recurring funds for statewide marketing, \$1.1 million in nonrecurring funds for SC Association of Tourism Regions promotions, \$4 million in nonrecurring funds for film incentives, \$4 million in nonrecurring funds for its Sports Marketing Program, \$250,000 in recurring funds for the Undiscovered SC Grant Program, \$1 million in recurring funds for welcome center facility operations, \$3 million in nonrecurring funds for maintenance and repairs at state parks, and \$1.5 million in nonrecurring funds for beach renourishment grants.

The Department of Archives and History receives \$6 million in recurring funds and \$4 million in nonrecurring funds for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in South Carolina.

The Arts Commission received \$500,000 in recurring funds and \$1 million in nonrecurring funds for support grants for community arts organizations.

Environment

The Conservation Bank is provided \$5.5 million in recurring funds and \$25 million in nonrecurring funds for conservation grant funding, \$2 million in recurring funds and \$8 million in nonrecurring funds for working agricultural lands grants, and \$20 million in nonrecurring funds for strategic land acquisition.

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The Department of Natural Resources is appropriated \$2 million in recurring funds for agency operations, \$2.8 million in recurring funds for recruitment and retention, \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for law enforcement equipment, \$3 million in recurring funds for wildlife management area maintenance, \$1.5 million in nonrecurring funds for waterfowl impoundments infrastructure maintenance, \$1.5 million in nonrecurring funds for statewide flood inundation map modeling, \$27.8 million in nonrecurring funds for high hazard dams and spillway repair, and \$13.3 million in nonrecurring funds for disaster relief grant match funding.

The Department of Environmental Services is afforded \$6.9 million in recurring funds for workforce retention and credentialing, \$1.9 million in recurring funds for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, \$3.5 million in recurring funds for its Drinking Water Program, \$2.3 million in recurring funds for its Air Quality Program, (with \$836,000 in recurring funds and \$4,700 in nonrecurring funds for electrical utilities permitting).

Health

The Department of Public Health receives \$3 million in recurring funds for healthcare facility safety, \$2 million in recurring funds for critical public health services, \$1.3 million in recurring funds and \$1.6 million in nonrecurring funds for its Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies initiative, and \$10 million in nonrecurring funds for modernizing its information technology infrastructure support systems.

The Department of Health and Human Services receives \$60.4 million in recurring funds for Medicaid program maintenance of effort, \$5.8 million in recurring funds for Medicaid behavioral health provider rate adjustments, \$10 million in recurring funds for graduate medical education, \$2.4 million in recurring funds for the Partial Hospitalization Program/Intensive Outpatient Program, \$4 million in recurring funds for opioid treatment services, \$7.5 million in recurring funds to reduce the waiting list for home and community-based services, \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for the Children's Hospital Collaborative, \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for statewide pediatric beds enhancements, and \$150 million from the Capital Reserve Fund for neurological critical care and rehabilitation services in South Carolina.

The budget includes a provision requiring the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services to withhold funding to abortion providers to the fullest extent allowed under the law.

The Department of Mental Health receives \$6 million in recurring funds for state-mandated programs, \$8 million in recurring funds to improve inpatient services hospital

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bed capacity, \$9.4 million in nonrecurring funds for inpatient services capital needs, \$2 million in recurring funds towards community hospital bed days, and \$2 million in recurring funds and \$2.5 million in nonrecurring funds for the Alternative Transportation Program.

The Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services is afforded \$5 million in recurring funds for formula grants and direct treatment services, and \$1 million in recurring funds for residential treatment and withdrawal management access.

The Department of Disabilities and Special Needs receives \$4.6 million in recurring funds and \$5 million in nonrecurring funds for residential services, \$500,000 in recurring funds for the Greenwood Genetics Center, and \$1 million in nonrecurring funds for the South Carolina Genomic Medicine Initiative.

The Department of Social Services is appropriated \$18.6 million in nonrecurring funds for economic services system application modernization, \$4 million in recurring funds for early care and education, \$11 million in recurring funds for children and families, \$1.7 million in recurring funds for foster family board rate increase, \$470,000 in recurring funds for emergency stabilization beds, and \$1.2 million in recurring funds for its domestic violence program.

The Department on Aging is allocated \$3 million in recurring funds for maintenance of effort and \$10 million in recurring funds for home and community-based services.

Veterans' Affairs

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is afforded \$12 million in recurring funds for veteran homes operating costs, \$1 million in recurring funds for veteran homes support costs, \$2 million in nonrecurring funds for facility maintenance improvements at the E. Roy Stone State Veterans Home, and \$5 million in nonrecurring funds for the Military Enhancement Fund.

Public Safety

The Attorney General's Office is allocated \$19.5 million in nonrecurring funds for the crime victim assistance program and \$250,000 in recurring funds for the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

The Prosecution Coordination Commission receives \$4.2 million in recurring funds.

The Commission on Indigent Defense is afforded \$2.98 million in recurring funds.

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The budget emphasizes recruitment and retention initiatives at the state agencies employing law enforcement officers.

The Department of Public Safety receives \$1 million in nonrecurring funds for law enforcement equipment, \$2.5 million in recurring funds to address vehicle maintenance costs, \$3 million in recurring funds for Highway Patrol critical staff retention, and \$1.2 million in recurring funds for ten additional Highway Patrol Officers.

The Department of Corrections is afforded \$5 million in recurring funds for operating expenses, \$4 million in recurring funds and \$3.5 million in nonrecurring funds for cell phone interdiction, \$2.5 million in nonrecurring funds for deferred maintenance, \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds for security equipment replacement, and \$1 million in nonrecurring funds for prison industries operating costs.

The Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services receives \$2 million in recurring funds and \$750,000 in nonrecurring funds for IT modernization and \$200,000 in recurring funds for improved delivery of victim services.

The Department of Juvenile Justice is allocated \$2 million in recurring funds for community and administrative salary increases, \$3 million in recurring funds for agency operations, \$1.7 million in recurring funds for alternative placements, and \$1.3 million in nonrecurring funds for ongoing security assessment and remediation.

The Judicial Department is afforded \$4.2 million in recurring funds for judicial system enhancements, \$25 million in nonrecurring funds for modernization of the case management system, and \$3 million in recurring funds for the Family Court case management system.

The Election Commission is afforded \$10.97 million in nonrecurring funds for statewide voting system upgrades and \$500,000 in recurring funds for election integrity.

The Legislative Audit Council was authorized to hire an independent reviewer to evaluate at least two agencies and make recommendations on improving efficiency and reducing waste. These provisos (91.27 and 118.22) were vetoed by the Governor (Veto 8, 9) on June 3rd. The General Assembly has not addressed the vetoes as of this date.

Capital Reserve Fund [H. 4026, Act 71]

H. 4026 (Act 71) is a joint resolution making \$369.7 million in appropriations from the Capital Reserve Fund: Department of Health and Human Services Neurological Critical

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Care and Rehabilitation Services in South Carolina: \$150,000,000; Department of Administration State-Owned Buildings Security Upgrades: \$21,070,682; Adjutant General's Office SC EMD - Declared Disasters Relief: \$198,713,200.

State's Finances / Alix-partners Forensic Accounting Report [S. 253, Act 72]

S. 253 (Act 72) addresses accounting discrepancies in the state's finances. The forensic accounting firm AlixPartners (commissioned to report on the subject) determined that a purported \$1.8 billion surplus in the State Treasury was an accounting error made during the transition to a new state bookkeeping system rather than unexpended funds. The legislation directs the State Treasurer, Comptroller General, and State Auditor to work in concert to effectuate, within one year, the implementation of recommendations made in the AlixPartners forensic accounting report and other relevant studies. Audit support funding is redirected to the Department of Administration to be utilized to hire an independent consultant to assess and oversee compliance. The legislation's compliance timeline requires monthly reports on implementation and, by the one-year deadline, the submission of a comprehensive final report from the independent compliance monitor.

ENERGY AND UTILITIES

South Carolina Energy Security Act [H. 3309, Act 41]

H. 3309 (Act 41) is the "South Carolina Energy Security Act." Aging infrastructure and less expensive production of energy constitutes a major challenge for the whole nation. The **South Carolina Energy Security Act** stems from the work of the Economic Development and Utility Modernization Ad Hoc Committee (established by the Speaker of the House) to address these issues. This legislation makes comprehensive provisions, in light of the rapid population growth and expansive economic development that the state has experienced in recent years, as a means of implementing a strategic and forward-thinking approach for developing new energy infrastructure capable of meeting the energy needs of South Carolina's residents and supporting the continued prosperity of the state.

The legislation emphasizes a broad array of approaches to meeting the state's energy needs including natural gas, nuclear, biomass-fired generation, solar and other clean, renewable energy resources, as well as battery facilities and other energy storage resources that can absorb energy and release it for later use. The legislation allows South Carolina's Public Service Authority to enter into a joint ownership arrangement of electrical generation and transmission facilities with an investor-owned electric utility. The

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legislation includes provisions encouraging the prompt siting, permitting, and completion of energy infrastructure projects, energy corridor projects, and brownfield electrical generation projects. Provisions are made for an expedited appeals process that allows certain decisions or actions concerning energy infrastructure projects to be appealed to the South Carolina Supreme Court. Provisions are made for “economic development project rates” that the Public Service Commission may offer to those identified by the South Carolina Department of Commerce as transformational customers proposing to make sizeable new commercial or industrial investments in South Carolina or significantly expand their activities in the state. The legislation enables greater transparency in proceedings before the Public Service Commission and greater flexibility in the way Public Service Commissioners carry out their duties in overseeing the state’s public utilities. The Office of Regulatory Staff (consulting with stakeholder groups that include representatives of consumer, environmental, manufacturing, forestry and agricultural organizations, natural gas and electrical utilities), the South Carolina Public Service Authority, and other affected state agencies, is charged with preparing a comprehensive South Carolina energy assessment and action plan which must identify recommended actions over ten years to ensure the availability of adequate, reliable, and economical supply of electric power and natural gas to the people and economy of South Carolina.

Electrical Utilities Hurricane Helene Storm Recovery Bonds [S. 157, Act 2]

S. 157 (Act 2) authorizes **Hurricane Helene storm recovery bonds** to be issued under an expedited storm damage securitization process that allows electrical utilities to borrow funds necessary to cover the costs of repairing, restoring, and rebuilding infrastructure following the unprecedented damage caused by Hurricane Helene in 2024.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations [S. 275, Act 18]

S. 275 (Act 18) requires nondiscriminatory rates and services for **electric vehicle charging stations** owned, operated, or maintained by an electrical utility, a municipality, a consolidated political subdivision, the Public Service Authority, or an electric cooperative for direct public use. These public utilities and political subdivisions are prohibited from subsidizing their direct-current-fast-charging stations to give them an unfair advantage compared to private sector EV charging stations.

V.C. Summer Nuclear Power Projects [S. 51, Act 73]

S. 51 (Act 73) is a resolution **encouraging Santee Cooper to consider proposals for developing abandoned V.C. Summer nuclear power projects**. It takes into account the potential relief to ratepayers and other possible impacts that the completion of these projects might pose for South Carolinians. Any transaction by Santee Cooper that involves a transfer of interest in real property is subject to the approval process with the Joint Bond Review Committee established for the Public Service Authority.

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Underground Facility Damage Prevention Act [H. 3571, Act 65]

H. 3571 (Act 65) provides **enhancements for the “Underground Facility Damage Prevention Act”** with requirements for providing notice to South Carolina’s 811 call center before engaging in excavation, tunneling, drilling, or other activities that might damage buried power lines, fiber optic cables, pipes, or other underground facilities. Revisions include enhanced penalties to serve as a deterrent (especially for willful misconduct and egregious violations - such as concealing damage or removing the stakes or other markers showing the location of underground facilities).

FAMILY AND CHILDREN’S ISSUES

The General Assembly passed a group of Acts to support the protection of families and children from the predatory aspects of social media and the internet.

Images of Children Used for Sexual Abuse [S. 28, Act 57]

S. 28 (Act 57) addresses the rise of **images being created as obscene visual representations used for child sexual abuse**. These images, whether on undeveloped film, artificially generated by any method, put on videotapes, existing on computer disk storage, or on any other electronic platforms, fall under the penumbra of this Act.

Law enforcement officials, criminal defense counsel, solicitors, any Office of the Attorney General lawyer, telecommunications service providers, and other named officials are exempt from prosecution under the provisions of this bill.

Arrest warrants cannot be issued without a true bill being reported by a State Grand Jury, a probable cause determination after a completed Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force investigation made in conjunction with the South Carolina Attorney General’s Office and also conditioned upon the warrant being processed by the South Carolina Attorney General.

Adult violators face felony convictions with penalties ranging from two to ten years in jail, as well as having to register on the South Carolina State Sex Offender Registry once convicted. Minor violators are to be prosecuted in the Family Court.

Identifiable Minor Morphed Images for Sexual Exploitation [S. 29, Act 58]

S. 29 (Act 58) considers **adult offenders who computer-generate, or morph, images of identifiable minors** and then use these altered representations **for sexual exploitation purposes**, to be committing a felony offense under South Carolina law. Penalties range from two to twenty years. Arrest warrants could not be issued without a true bill being reported by the State Grand Jury, a probable cause determination after a completed Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force investigation made in conjunction with the

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South Carolina Attorney General's Office, and the warrant being processed by the Attorney General. Violators under the age of eighteen are to be tried in Family Court, where they are subject to the additional condition of participating in behavioral health counseling amongst other sentencing choices.

Communication and Computer Information Access in Internet Crimes Against Children Case Investigations [S. 74, Act 59]

S. 74 (Act 59) confirms that the **Attorney General** must be given **access to communication service and remote computing services customer account information in Internet Crimes Against Children cases**. The Attorney General can issue any necessary subpoenas, after setting out specific and articulable reasons for doing so. This law cannot be used if an existing federal or state statutory provision already authorizes a subpoena being issued. These compliant communication services are exempt from liability for providing the account information contained within these subpoenas.

Illegal Use of Intimate Personal Images [H. 3058, Act 37]

H. 3058 (Act 37), an anti-revenge porn measure, adds new definitions to state law for identifying violations of this proposed, new criminal offense. Under this new law, intentionally disseminating intimate images, or digitally created intimate images, without the consent or knowingly without the consent of the person depicted constitutes criminal activity. Sharing the image with someone is not tantamount to consent, however.

Penalties range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for up to five to ten years. Sentencing judges are provided with factors (in addition to the number of offenses) to consider before imposing any sentence. Multiple images published as part of a single act are to be considered a single offense under this Act.

Child Welfare Records Access and Department of Children's Advocacy Procedures and Responsibilities [H. 3654, Act 8]

H. 3654 (Act 8) covers Child Welfare Records Access and Department of Children's Advocacy procedures and responsibilities. Among other things, this Act allows the Department of Children's Advocacy, including guardians *ad litem*, and employees of its division of guardians *ad litem*, to provide child welfare reports to county guardian *ad litem* program staff, the guardian *ad litem* division, and the state's child advocate. It also seeks to clarify that the Department of Children's Advocacy could employ a Continuum of Care director, hire a division director and staff, as well as continue to provide annual reports as it has been doing all along.

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South Carolina Child Abuse and Neglect Network [S. 276, Act 19]

S. 276 (Act 19) relates to the South Carolina Children's Advocacy Medical Response System Act (SCAMRS) and renames the Act the South Carolina Child Abuse and Neglect Network (SCCANN).

Meals to School Children Living in Poverty [S. 425, Act 23]

S. 425 (Act 23) seeks to formalize into law the current practice (currently implemented through a budget proviso) of providing meals to school children living in poverty. It requires public school districts to annually identify the number of their students who live in poverty and increase access to free school breakfasts and lunches for these students. The bill provides a definition for "students in poverty." The bill also outlines that if a student is unable to pay for a meal or accrues meal debt, the student's district or school may not publicly identify or penalize the student in any way including, but not limited to, denying meals, serving alternative meals, discarding meals after serving them to the student, requiring chores or work in exchange for meals, prohibiting participation in extracurricular activities, denying participation in graduation, withholding diplomas, or refusing transcript requests.

EDUCATION

Educator Assistance Act [H. 3196, Act 12]

After passing the House five times, the Educator Assistance Act has now become law.

H. 3196 (Act 12) enacts the "Educator Assistance Act" by increasing professionalism regarding continued teacher development and contractual relationships with districts.

The Act provides that, instead of having to take recertification courses which can be a significant expense to teachers, completion of district professional development will qualify for recertification. Professional development is required as part of a teacher's contract.

School districts must establish a sick leave bank; however, participation by faculty and staff is voluntary. Districts that have already implemented a policy that advances the full annual leave balance to new employees with the first payroll disbursement are exempt from this requirement.

If a board of trustees fails to notify a teacher before May 1 regarding employment for the next year, the State Department of Education (SDE) shall assess a penalty of \$10,000 per occurrence to be deducted from the district's state funding. The teacher is considered to be hired. To give districts time to prepare, implementation is delayed until 2026.

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Notification of re-employment must include the district's projected minimum salary schedule for the upcoming school year as well as an agreement to provide a final salary schedule as soon as practicable upon completion of state and local appropriations processes. Districts must provide teachers with the factors used to determine their pay category on the salary schedule.

Teachers must be given two weeks' notice before the start of the school year of their respective school assignments. A teacher may not be moved to another location in the district unless the superintendent can demonstrate the need for reassignment. Teachers must receive written notice at least five school days in advance of the reassignment unless the superintendent demonstrates that such notice cannot be given due to a critical need (or the teacher made the request). The board of trustees must be notified in writing of all teacher reassignments.

The time that the State Board can receive a complaint for breach of contract is extended from thirty to sixty days, and the mandatory suspension for breach of contract is reduced from one year to six months. The State Board is given greater flexibility when deciding whether to suspend or revoke a certificate. Educators with a bona fide residence change to a noncontiguous county during the term of the educator's contract are not considered to be in breach.

The Act specifies how districts must use non-instructional days. Four days are for professional development, two are for staff workdays that are self-directed and free from required meetings, and four must be used for teacher planning and parent conferences. Retired educator certificates are changed from renewable to lifetime if the certificate has not been previously revoked.

SDE, in collaboration with the Education Oversight Committee, is authorized to use data already being collected through current processes to report on in-state and out-of-state college enrollment, college persistence, and postsecondary completion of South Carolina's high school graduates.

Education Scholarship Trust Fund [S. 62, Act 11]

S. 62 (Act 11) amends the Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF) so that the statute incorporates the recommendations put forward in the dissent of *Eidson v. S.C. Department of Education*.

Eligible elementary and secondary students may be awarded scholarships in the amount of \$7,500 per scholarship student for the 2025-2026 School Year. For subsequent school years, the allocation must be equivalent to the allocation from the previous year, increased by the percentage increase in the average per-pupil funding from state sources, unless an increased or decreased amount is authorized in the appropriations

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act. (The original per student amount was \$6,000). Expenses may include, among other items, tuition and fees, instructional materials, tutoring, computer hardware, and assessments. Transportation is also covered and may not exceed \$3,000 per year. (The previous limit was \$750.)

Public and nonprofit independent schools may accept scholarship funds, but home-schooled students are excluded. A charter school may accept funds only if it offers approved programs, such as after-school tutoring services, transportation, or costs associated with participation in extracurricular activities.

Student eligibility is expanded, and application windows are amended. Eligible students must still reside in the state. Families are required to meet a specified percentage of the federal poverty guidelines to qualify:

- To be eligible in School Year 2025-2026, household income cannot exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.
- For 2026-2027 and all subsequent years, household income cannot exceed 500 percent of the guidelines.
- Application windows are first open to current participants and their siblings. They are then open as follows:
 - families whose household income does not exceed 300 percent of federal poverty guidelines;
 - families where the parent is an active-duty member of the military; and,
 - when the student attended a public school the previous year.
- If slots are still available, any other eligible students may apply.
 - A maximum of 10,000 students may participate in the 2025-26 school year. For the 2026-27 school year and all subsequent years, the program must be made available to at least 15,000 scholarship students but this number may be increased through the Appropriations Act at the direction of the General Assembly. The source of funding is left to the discretion of the General Assembly.
 - When applying for a scholarship, parents must acknowledge that nonpublic school education service providers are not subject to the Individuals with Disabilities Act and are not required to offer the same services as public schools.
 - The State Superintendent of Education must appoint a trustee for the ESTF. The trustee's terms and fee structure must be commercially reasonable, and the Act lists the credentials trustees must possess.

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- The Department must conduct random audits of education service providers, the trust fund, and scholarship accounts on an annual basis. The State Department of Education is also tasked with developing model policy guidelines for interdistrict transfers.

Work-Based Learning Experiences [H. 3247, Act 6]

H. 3247 (Act 6) requires school districts to adopt a policy that **authorizes a student to be excused from school to participate in any work-based learning experience** (in events sponsored by Career and Technical Student Organizations [CTSOs]). These experiences of student participation and learning outcomes are directed by a certified teacher for assessment of competencies. Absences authorized in the bill are to be considered “lawful absences” (absences may not exceed ten school days per year).

Palmetto Fellows Enhancements for Accounting and Education Majors [S. 388, Act 93]

S. 388 (Act 93) is a joint resolution that makes permanent the \$2,500 **Palmetto Fellows enhancements for accounting and education majors**. Legislation authorizing these enhancements passed last year (Act 156 of 2024), and the regulations were initially implemented under emergency provisions. However, due to a timing issue, a joint resolution was now required to ensure the permanent regulations took effect in time for the Fall semester, so students could continue receiving these scholarships.

Life Scholarship Enhancements for Accounting and Education Majors [S. 389, Act 94]

S. 389 (Act 94) is a joint resolution that **makes permanent the \$2,500 LIFE scholarship enhancements for accounting and education majors**. Legislation authorizing these enhancements passed last year (Act 156 of 2024) and the regulations were initially implemented under emergency provisions. However, due to a timing issue, a joint resolution was required to ensure the permanent regulations took effect in time for the Fall semester, so students could continue receiving these scholarships.

Public School Districts Security Personnel Licensed as a Proprietary Security Business [S. 269, Act 36]

S. 269 (Act 36) allows public school districts to hire armed security personnel with arrest authority to work in schools and other district properties (provides that public school districts with more than 15,00 students may use **security personnel licensed as a proprietary security business**). The Act does not remove the requirement that districts must utilize School Resource Officers (SROs) and provides that private security personnel may not be used in the advisor and teacher roles authorized for SROs. There must be a written agreement with local law enforcement for shared, consistent joint training and continuous education in firearms, defensive tactics, active shooter or assailant scenarios, and other areas addressed by the local law enforcement agency.

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Public Access to School Board Meetings [S. 77, Act 28]

S. 77 (Act 28) promotes public access to school board meetings by **requiring school boards to adopt and implement policies that ensure the electronic transmission of** meetings (subject to the Freedom of Information Act) are open and accessible to the public. The State Board of Education must adopt a model livestream meeting policy. A public school governing body may *not* adopt or follow a livestream policy that prevents or impedes in-person participation by the public. The provisions of this Act must be implemented by January 1, 2026.

Noncertified Teachers [S. 79, Act 30]

S. 79 (Act 30) establishes a five-year pilot program to permit public school districts to hire **noncertified teachers** in a ratio of up to 10% of their entire teaching staff; provide academic, evaluation, and experience requirements. Act 30 enables annual program reporting and provides noncertified teacher registration and clearance requirements.

Initial Teaching Certificate [S. 78, Act 29]

S. 78 (Act 29) provides that an individual's prior work experience may be awarded on an **initial teaching certificate** if the prior experience is in or related to the content field of the certificate. It provides that existing certificate holders may receive credit for prior work experience. Applicants must register, pay associated fees, and provide transcripts. FBI and SLED criminal records checks, both supported by fingerprints, are required. Individuals whose South Carolina educator certificate has been suspended or revoked may not be employed as a non-certified teacher.

Years of experience may be awarded only for the purpose of advancement on the teacher salary schedule and do not apply for state retirement or state health plan purposes. The Act does not change existing requirements for earning an educator certificate. If years are awarded, educators may have their pay adjusted for the current school year to reflect the new step on the state minimum salary schedule; however, they are not entitled to retroactive pay.

Requirements for Scholarships (Palmetto Fellows and LIFE) [H. 3632, Act 44]

H. 3632 (Act 44) relates to requirements for additional **LIFE** and **Palmetto Fellows scholarship stipends**, to provide that certain coursework in economics and business statistics must count towards certain required freshman year coursework in mathematics and science, and to clarify these provisions apply beginning with **accounting majors** who completed such coursework as freshmen in the 2024-2025 school year.

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Charter School Admissions Preferences [H. 3862, Act 47]

H. 3862 (Act 47) amends the Charter School Act so that schools may give an enrollment preference to children of active-duty military service members who reside or are stationed in the state.

The priority is limited to no more than ten percent of a school's enrollment. Charter schools use lotteries to determine who may enroll, and state law already allows preferences for returning students, siblings, and children whose parents are educators at the school. The Act adds students of military families to the list of preferences.

INSURANCE

Tort Reform and Liquor Liability Insurance Premium Reductions [H. 3430, Act 42]

H. 3430 (Act 42), legislation to advance significant tort reform measures for assigning liability responsibility amongst defendants and tortfeasors who cause injuries to others, reduce and regulate dram shop⁴ liability insurance premium expenses, regulate alcohol sales at collegiate sports events, and rein in captive insurance company operations within our borders. The Act was signed by the Governor on May 12, 2025.

It amends current state law to add the term 'tortfeasors' along with defendants as potentially jointly and severally liable for proven injuries and deaths they proximately cause to others, so long as they are more than 50% at fault. Otherwise, their liability will be determined on a percentage basis by employing comparative negligence legal standards.

Tortfeasors are not named defendants in lawsuits but can be assigned liability responsibility nonetheless under comparative liability principles. Judges and juries will make awards of damages as they have been doing but, in addition, will now assign percentages of fault to these tortfeasors. They will not be added to judge- or jury-determined responsibility percentages if they are granted immunity, defendants' liability is imputed to them by tortfeasors' fault, strict liability applies, the action is an asbestosis case, or the action has been brought by the attorney general or other public entity to recover public funds, remediation costs, or other third party-inflicted damages. *Note, though*, that state actions for recovery of these costs in perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl [PFAS] substance actions are not subject to this prohibition against being held responsible. Percentages of liability attributed to plaintiff conduct will not reduce the amount of recoverable damages they are owed, however.

⁴ Establishments selling alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption ("dram" is a measure of alcohol [from the Scots]).

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When two or more defendants act in concert, they will be considered one party for purposes of assigning liability. Willful, wanton, reckless, or otherwise intentionally-acting defendants, on the other hand, will be held jointly and severally liable and not have any liability share determined by a judge or jury.

Also as amended, businesses licensed to sell alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption who stay open after 5:00 p.m., that stop serving at 12:00 a.m., will have to maintain liability policies with an annual aggregate limit of \$1,000,000, and with at least fifty percent of this limit applicable to any single occurrence, but can qualify for a \$100,000 premium reduction, as well as additional deductions for each hour they stop serving alcohol before 6:00 p.m. They also could realize savings if they conduct SC DOR, SLED, and SC Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities [DBHDD], Office of Substance Abuse minimum curriculum-approved alcohol server training programs for all of their servers; have less than 40% of their gross sales resulting from alcohol sales (this reduction is up to \$100,000 for each of these measures being in place); or, are a nonprofit with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, which obtains a single event permit. (These nonprofits may be able to reduce their aggregate coverage by as much as \$500,000.) None of these reductions could take any policy aggregated limits amount below \$300,000.

This Act also restricts sales of alcohol at collegiate sporting events. These venues are required to have trained servers, digitalized identification forensic personal identification validation technology, no sales in the student sections, perform random internal checks, and take other measures to make sure sales at these events are properly conducted. Vertical IDs are not *bona fide* age-verification documents under any circumstances.

If violations occur, the presence of these preventive measures can be considered mitigating factors before determining fines or license suspensions by factoring in whether these vendors acted in good faith.

Insurers have to establish liquor liability mitigation measures and offer premium discounts as well. However, their proposed insureds could not obtain any mitigation if they fail to produce documentation of server training certificates in responsible alcohol serving.

It also prohibits anyone from *knowingly* selling alcohol to an intoxicated person and allow liquor liability insurance to be in a limited amount in the aggregate versus per occurrence as current law has been interpreted to state. Alcohol servers could only be considered a joint and several tortfeasor if determined by a trier of fact to be more than 50% of the total fault for any resulting indivisible damage.

When drivers have been charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or a combination of them, or driving with an unlawful alcohol

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concentration, they will be added to these jury verdict forms or be a part of a judicial determination in nonjury matters as a tortfeasor and considered as set forth above. Licensees having served these criminal defendants are also considered jointly and severally liable **and are subject to civil penalties and license suspensions** for serving them alcohol.

Captive insurance company operations have also been limited in our state under this legislation. While they cannot directly issue workers compensation, homeowners, or motor vehicle insurance, they can directly issue policies offered by their parent company, member organization, or industrial insured group. In addition, special purpose captive insurance companies can insure risks as approved by our State Department of Insurance Director. As current state law sets out, they cannot accept or cede reinsurance outside of the restrictions it states.

The Department of Insurance will publish an annual report on liquor liability insurance rate trends **and include other specified information**. In addition, captive insurance providers could not modify or reduce insureds' policy coverages by the costs incurred defending any claims. Alcohol servers could only be considered a joint and several tortfeasor if determined by a trier of fact to be at more than 50% of the total fault for any resulting indivisible damages, as an additional feature of this Act.

Captive Insurance Companies [S. 210, Act 62]

S. 210 (Act 62). Legislators approved revisions to state statutes governing **captive insurance companies** that include provisions to ensure that an alien adversary may not exert corporate control over an alien or foreign captive insurance company.

Revisions to the Insurance Holding Company Regulatory Act [S. 220, Act 17]

S. 220 (Act 17) provides for **revisions to the Insurance Holding Company Regulatory Act**. The legislation revises financial stability requirements and other provisions of South Carolina's Insurance Holding Company Regulatory Act to allow for greater transparency, provide for enhanced oversight by the Department of Insurance, and align state provisions with the standards of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

South Carolina Hands-Free and Distracted Driving Act (H. 3276, Act 40)

Consistent with national trends to curb distracted driving, **H. 3276 (Act 40)**, the "**South Carolina Hands-Free and Distracted Driving Act**," creates a two-point traffic offense for mobile unit device users who violate this distracted driving prohibition. In addition, it levies unsuspendable mandatory fines of \$100 for first time offenders or a \$200 fine

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for second or more violations committed within a three-year time span. Twenty-five percent of these fines will be retained by the Department of Public Safety. The Department of Motor Vehicles will maintain records of prior offenses and share this information with the Department of Public Safety.

Law enforcement officers with a clear view to observe drivers violating these prohibitions have to see drivers using a mobile unit device to compose, send, or read text-based communications while driving on a public roadway before they have probable cause to initiate any traffic stops. This violation cannot result in a custodial arrest or be the basis of any search for, or seizures from this vehicle.

Drivers will be able to use earpieces, wrist worn, or other such hands-free technology, as well as touch their devices to activate or deactivate them, report any emergencies, or use dictation to draft and messages but cannot support their devices with any body part. Drivers who are parked or lawfully stopped are not violating this law.

It also prohibits so-called “citizen’s arrests” of violators.

This law will be effective September 1, 2025; however, only written warning tickets can be issued for 180 days after this effective date. Once that date passes, regular citations as point violations could be written.

Catawba Nation and the Police Officers Retirement System [S. 127, Act 60]

S. 127 (Act 60) authorizes the Catawba Nation’s participation in the Police Officers Retirement System. The legislation revises South Carolina Police Officers Retirement System provisions to establish the conditions under which the Catawba Nation may become an employer under SC PORS.

Timely Election of Public Service Commissioners [S. 271, Act 74]

S. 271 (Act 74) regards the Public Service Commissioners. This joint resolution suspends for Calendar Year 2025 a provision prohibiting the General Assembly from holding an election for Public Service Commissioners until a final determination is made by the courts regarding its review of congressional districts’ compliance with statutory or constitutional requirements. The legislation provides that certain statutory requirements relating to notice of vacancies in elective office do not apply to elections for members of the Public Service Commission conducted by the General Assembly during Calendar Years 2025 and 2026.

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Legislative Review Period for Regulations [S. 164, Act 13]

S. 164 (Act 13) reduces the legislative review period for regulations from 120 days to 110 days, addressing a timing issue created when the legislative session was shortened in 2017. In some years, such as 2025, there can be as few as 113 days in a legislative session. Consequently, regulations filed during those years are not effective within the same session. The bill also codifies an existing practice, historically part of the Sine Die resolution, by pausing the legislative review period from the second Friday in May through the second Monday in January.

Election of Public Service Commissioners [H. 4402, Act 75]

H. 4402 (Act 75) is a joint resolution addressing the election of Public Service Commissioners by the General Assembly. The resolution suspends for Calendar Years 2025 and 2026, the provision prohibiting the General Assembly from holding an election until a final determination is made by the courts regarding their review of the congressional districts' compliance with statutory or constitutional requirements. Under the resolution, a requirement for providing notice of vacancies in nonjudicial elective offices does not apply to elections for members of the Public Service Commission conducted by the General Assembly during Calendar Years 2025 and 2026.

Board Member Elections and Appointment Procedure Revisions [H. 3933, Act 10]

H. 3933 (S. 363) is legislation to reduce board membership on special purpose districts, which were formerly nonprofit entities organized to provide water service, from nine to seven members. In addition, it revises the appointment of members to serve. These appointments are made by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. These appointments have to be made based on the proposed criteria set out in this proposal.

Property Rights Vesting Reforms [H. 3432, Act 25]

H. 3432 (Act 25) updates **nonvested property interests**, powers of appointment, reformation of property dispositions, timing of creation of property interests, and discretionary trusts. It also increases the **time a property interest can vest** within twenty-one years of the death of anyone alive at the time, or absolutely within three hundred sixty years [*up from the current ninety-year deadline*] if that is not the case.

Among other provisions, it also provides that certain amounts paid to taxing authorities may not be considered an amount that may be distributed for the settlor's benefit. The effective date of this legislation is July 1, 1987 for nonvested property interests or powers of appointment; January 1, 2025 for irrevocable trusts, trusts with spendthrift provisions, IRS Section 671 trusts, trusts created or to be administered in South Carolina, as well as for any required notices to be given.

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Golf Carts [H. 3292, Act 64]

H. 3292 (Act 64) relates to golf cart permits and the operation of golf carts, to provide that certain municipalities and counties may enact ordinances to allow golf carts to operate in designated areas within their jurisdictions at night. This bill aims to revive a statute for the same purpose that was allowed to sunset in 2021.

Operation of Personal Delivery Devices in Richland County [H. 3969]

H. 3969 was legislation to provide for the operation of personal delivery devices in Richland County. *The Act was vetoed by the Governor. The House has not addressed the veto as of this date.*

JUDICIAL, COURT, AND LEGAL MATTERS

Larger Small Estate Probate Court Administrations [H. 3472, Act 26]

H. 3472 (Act 26) modifies South Carolina probate laws allowing 'small estates' dispositions and allow collection of personal property by affidavit in probate court, for estates worth up to \$45,000, after deducting liens or other encumbrances, and, when appropriate, exempt property, costs and expenses of estate administration, and reasonable funeral expenses, as well as last illness medical expenses.

More Family Court Judges [H. 3529, Act 7]

H. 3529 (Act 7) increases the number of family court judges in the ninth, eleventh, and fourteenth circuits by one additional judge.

More Resident Circuit Judges [H. 4160, Act 50]

H. 4160 (Act 50) converts *existing* at-large circuit judge seats into additional **resident circuit court judge seats** in the third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth judicial circuits.

Public Persona Personal Information Protections [S. 126, Act 4]

See **S. 126** under Law Enforcement and Public Safety (directly below).

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Persona Personal Information Protections [S. 126, Act 4]

S. 126 (Act 4) is follow-up legislation to further clarify how **active and retired judges and law enforcement officers** can **better protect their personal contact information** (by applying to have that done). It adds these individuals' names and real estate tax parcel numbers to the information privacy protections already covered by existing state law. Applications to protect a specific home address can be updated any time it changes, however. This bill requires South Carolina's Office of Court Administration and the

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South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy to work together to develop an appropriate form for processing these requests.

It also allows this information to be kept from publicly available internet websites and indices maintained by state or local governments. Nevertheless, this restricted personal contact information would still be in judges and law enforcement officials records held by state or local government agencies. If the information appears on a UCC filing statement or other business filing with the SC Secretary of State, it is not protected by this legislation.

This information could be disclosed to personal representatives of a deceased eligible requesting party, title insurance providers, title insurance agents, professional engineers, as well as South Carolina licensed lawyers and land surveyors. It protects state or local government employees or agents from legal liability for handling this information.

This Act delays implementation from July 1, 2025 [the effective date set in 2023 Act 56] to January 1, 2026.

Organized Retail Crime and Aggravated Retail Crime [H. 3523, Act 1]

H. 3523 (Act 1) is an effort to stem the rising number of 'smash and grab' incidents of retail thefts that are occurring, by creating the offenses of organized retail crime and aggravated retail crime.

These crimes occur when two or more people work in concert to illegally take merchandise, property, money, or negotiable documents that include gift cards, from retailers, with the intent to sell or barter them with a retail property fence, as defined in this proposed legislation.

It also sets out a graduated list of possible penalties tied to the nature of the incidents, total value of what is stolen, and the number of the offense committed. Thefts occurring in different counties that exceed \$2,000 of retail goods within 90 days could be combined into one offense. These graduated penalties range from \$5,000 fines and/or three years in jail to fines of up to \$50,000 or twenty years in jail.

For crimes occurring in multiple counties, the circuit solicitor or his deputy solicitors could prosecute them all in their resident county, so long as the Attorney General approves the prosecutions proceeding in that fashion.

Willful Failure to Stop for a Blue Light and Siren [H. 3127, Act 38]

H. 3127 (Act 38) punishes motorists who are found guilty of a **felony for failing to stop for a blue light or siren** when they increase their speed or otherwise attempt to avoid

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law enforcement officers who have activated their patrol vehicle blue lights and/or siren. First time offenders causing no injuries face fines up to \$500 and up to three years in jail along with a thirty day license suspension. High speed offenders will be committing a felony, face up to 10 years in jail, and have their license suspended for a year. Fleeers causing great bodily injury during their flight face up to 15 years in jail. Motorists causing death while fleeing pursuing officers will face up to 30 years in jail. It will take effect on May 12, 2026.

Illegal Gun Possession Criminal Charge Dismissal Rights [S. 136]

S. 136 allows anyone charged with only an **unlawful possession of a gun offense** prior to the enactment of the South Carolina Constitutional/Second Amendment Preservation Act of 2024, to be entitled to a **dismissal** of their charge. First-time offenders will be entitled to expungement of their charges as well. However, gun possession charges resulting from incidents involving commission of other crimes cannot be automatically dismissed. No civil actions for these gun possession charges being made could be filed after any dismissals, however. *The Act was vetoed by the Governor and subsequently overridden by the Senate. The House has not addressed the veto as of this date.*

Fentanyl-Induced Homicide [S. 156, Act 61]

S. 156 (Act 61) creates the criminal offense of **Fentanyl-Induced Homicide**. Anyone knowingly providing unlawfully dispensed fentanyl, or any fentanyl-related substances, to users who die as a proximate cause of ingesting it, is committing a new South Carolina criminal offense of fentanyl-induced homicide under the provisions of this Act.

Violators would have to spend up to 30 years in jail.

In addition, any alleged contributory negligence –whether purposeful, knowing, reckless, or negligent injection, inhalation, absorption, or ingestion of fentanyl -- by the deceased victim cannot be used as a defense to prosecutions for this crime. However, anyone ingesting fentanyl by any means along with another consenting person cannot be prosecuted for this crime, unless the person sharing the fentanyl knew the user intended to commit suicide.

LAW AND CIVIL SOCIETY

US Congressional Member Term Limits Constitutional Convention [H. 3008]

H. 3008 is a concurrent resolution that requires South Carolina to file a continuing **application for a constitutional convention** under Article V of the United States Constitution, has passed the House and the Senate. The scope of this proposal is only **to propose**

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congressional term limits for Senators and Representatives serving in Washington, DC via a US Constitutional Amendment Convention.

Commission for Minority Affairs [S. 214, Act 56]

S. 214 (Act 56) relates to the Commission for Minority Affairs, so as to rename the Commission and to remove Commission membership requirements. The Act creates a State Commission for Community Advancement and Engagement, consisting of nine members and the Governor, ex officio. The Governor must appoint one person from each of the congressional districts of the State and two persons from the State at large upon the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor designates the chairman. The commission must meet quarterly and at other times as the chairman determines necessary to study the causes and effects of the socio-economic deprivation of communities in the State and to implement programs necessary to address socio-economic inequities confronting the State. The commission is to provide the State with a single point of contact for statistical and technical assistance in the areas of research and planning for a greater economic future; work with elected officials on the state, county, and local levels of government in disseminating statistical data and its impact on their constituencies; provide for publication of a statewide statistical abstract on rural and under-resourced community affairs; provide statistical analyses for members of the General Assembly on the state of rural and under-resourced communities as the State experiences economic growth and changes; determine, approve, and acknowledge by certification state recognition for Native American Indian entities; however, notwithstanding their state certification, the tribes have no power or authority to take any action which would establish, advance, or promote any form of gambling in this State; among other functions.

American Revolution License Plates [H. 3175, Act 39]

H. 3175 (Act 39) provides that the Department of Motor Vehicles shall issue license plates commemorating the **250th anniversary of the American Revolution**.

Mayflower Compact Day [H. 4267, Act 68]

H. 4267 (Act 68) designates the twenty-first day of November as "**Mayflower Compact Day**."

Abandoned, Derelict, and Sunken Vessels in South Carolina Waters [S. 367, Act 22]

S. 367 (Act 22) establishes procedures and gives the Department of Natural Resources the authority to identify and address abandoned, derelict, and sunken vessels in state waters. It is unlawful for any person to cause or allow a vessel to become abandoned or derelict. A violation constitutes a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000,

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imprisonment for up to 60 days, or both. Violators are also responsible for all costs related to the removal and disposal of the vessel. The bill authorizes the removal of sunken vessels at any time once the designated removal period has expired, without liability to the responsible party. Additionally, individuals who remove and dispose of abandoned or derelict vessels may initiate a civil action against the responsible party within a specified timeframe. The Department of Environmental Services, in coordination with the Department of Natural Resources, must develop and maintain an application and website to enable law enforcement and the public to report vessels that are wrecked, junked, or submerged.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TAXES

State and Federal Tax Conformity [S. 507, Act 63]

S. 507 (Act 63) provides for state and federal tax conformity. The legislation updates references to the federal Internal Revenue Code in South Carolina statutes and coordinates state tax laws with federal tax provisions.

Sales Tax Exemption on Durable Medical Equipment [H. 3800, Act 45]

H. 3800 (Act 45) revises the sales tax exemption on durable medical equipment and related supplies by eliminating the eligibility requirement that the seller's principal place of business must be located in South Carolina.

Redevelopment of Military Installations [H. 3333, Act 24]

H. 3333 (Act 24) expands projects that can be undertaken in the redevelopment of a federal military installation to include certain affordable housing projects. The bill defines "affordable housing" as residential housing for rent or sale that is appropriately priced for rent or sale to a person or family whose income does not exceed eighty percent of the median income for the local area, with adjustments for household size, from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Act outlines that all or part of the new property tax revenues generated in the tax increment financing (TIF) district will be used to provide or support publicly and privately owned affordable housing, including supporting infrastructure projects, in the district. The obligations for redevelopment projects have been extended to not later than thirty-five years after the adoption of an ordinance.

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Peer-To-Peer Car Sharing Programs [S. 307, Act 20]

S. 307 (Act 20) establishes guidelines governing the operation of peer-to-peer car sharing programs, which are business platforms that connect vehicle owners with drivers to

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enable the sharing of vehicles for financial consideration. Provisions include record-keeping and insurance coverage requirements.

Commodities Code [H. 4247, Act 67]

H. 4247 (Act 67) addresses the enforcement of South Carolina's Commodities Code. The Act makes numerous revisions to provisions of South Carolina's Commodities Code and their enforcement. The legislation provides for the Attorney General, rather than the Secretary of State, to be the administrator of the Commodities Code. The Office of Attorney General is authorized to retain the first \$750,000 in fines and penalties received in a fiscal year in settlement of litigation enforcement actions and reimbursements of expenses arising from Commodities Code violations to offset investigative, prosecutorial, and administrative costs of enforcing the code, after which any excess fines and penalties received in a fiscal year must be deposited into the state's general fund. Fines for Commodities Code violations are revised so that they mirror penalties in South Carolina's Uniform Securities Act. To enhance transparency, the legislation provides that all enforcement orders are public documents subject to the Freedom of Information Act and must be published on the Attorney General's website and be searchable by the name of the parties involved. The legislation also updates provisions governing litter control officers vested with custodial arrest authority and specifies that a litter control officer may exercise the power of arrest with respect to his primary duties of enforcement of litter control laws and ordinances and other state and local laws and ordinances as may arise incidental to the enforcement of his primary duties only if the officer has been certified as a law enforcement officer pursuant to the statutes governing the Law Enforcement Training Council and Criminal Justice Academy.

Continuing Education Requirements For Real Estate Professionals [H. 3947, Act 27]

H. 3947 (Act 27) relates to continuing education requirements for real estate professionals. In order to restore reciprocity arrangements between South Carolina and other states, the legislation revises continuing education requirements for licensure renewal by South Carolina's Real Estate Commission to provide that nonresident brokers and nonresident associates who successfully satisfy continuing education requirements of their jurisdiction of residence may be exempt from the continuing education requirements of this state with approval of the commission. The legislation also allows an exemption from continuing education requirements for more experienced real estate professionals renewing expired licenses. Under these provisions, an individual with an expired license who, at the time of expiration, was in good standing, has twenty-five years or more of licensure in South Carolina, and who is sixty-five years of age, may apply to the Real Estate Commission for a renewal of the expired license. The applicant must pay the renewal fee as provided by law. Upon renewal, the licensee is exempt from continuing education requirements as provided by law.

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Public Accountants and Public Accountants [S. 176, Act 34]

S. 176 (Act 34) revises provisions regulating certified public accountants and public accountants to provide updates and bring state statutes into better alignment with provisions of the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy.

Revisions to the South Carolina Firefighters Employment and Registration Act [S. 101, Act 32]

S. 101 (Act 32) revises the South Carolina Firefighters Employment and Registration Act to include a more detailed definition of a fire department and a revision to the minimum information that the Office of the State Fire Marshal must maintain for each firefighter it registers by requiring a valid driver's license number rather than a South Carolina driver's license number.

AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Department of Natural Resources - Additional Regulations [S. 363, Act 92]

S. 363 (Act 92) is a Joint Resolution to approve regulations of the Department of Natural Resources, relating to additional regulations applicable to specific properties, designated as Regulation Document number 5329, pursuant to the provisions of Article 1, Chapter 23, Title 1 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

Surface Water Study Committee (2024) [H. 3814, Act 91]

H. 3814 (Act 91) is a Joint Resolution updating the **2024 Surface Water Study Committee** to study the current state of surface water. The legislation expands the scope to include groundwater. As a result, the study committee's report is now extended to March 2, 2026.

South Carolina Conservation Education Fund [S. 165, Act 15]

S. 165 (Act 15) enacts the South Carolina Conservation Education Fund under the "South Carolina Conservation Education Act," for the purpose of connecting youth with nature through classroom and outdoor natural resource conservation education. The fund can receive state funds, federal funds, local government funds, donations, gifts, and grants. The Department of Natural Resources will be responsible for identifying programs that meet the conservation education goals; distributing funds to approved programs in an effort to help youth take part in outdoor education programs about natural resource conservation that the Department approves.

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Quail Management Program [S. 345, Act 21]

S. 345 (Act 21) addresses the Department of Natural Resources' Quail Management Program and concerns related to the quail population. Quail management has been impacted by issues related to feeding practices and the overlap of turkey hunting. It is unlawful to hunt wild turkey over a baited area for quail managed for the restoration and sustainability of wild bobwhite quail. As a result, the bill clarifies definitions of "bait" and "baited area" to resolve and improve the management of both programs. It is not a violation if the land is permitted by the Department. The property cannot be leased for hunting turkey or run a commercial hunting opportunity for turkey. The Department has the authority to pull the permit.

Snapper-Grouper Fishery Federal Management Plan [S. 219, Act 16]

S. 219 (Act 16) broadens the fishing opportunities dealing with the catch and size limits for certain species under the Snapper-Grouper Fishery Federal Management Plan. It outlines that the state of South Carolina's catch limit will be the higher catch limit between the Federal and State limits, and the state's size limit will be the lower size limit between the Federal and State size limits.

Waste Tires, Unsafe Used Tires, and Tire-Derived Products [S. 171, Act 33]

S. 171 (Act 33) addresses **waste tires, unsafe used tires, and tire-derived products** that include revised fees and record-keeping requirements for waste tire generators, waste tire haulers, and operators of waste tire facilities. The legislation includes provisions making it unlawful to install onto a passenger car or light truck an unsafe used tire with damage or tread wear that fails to conform to safety standards. Provisions are made for the Department of Environmental Services to award grants from the Waste Tire Trust Fund to assist in recruiting industries that utilize waste tires for alternative productive uses, such as rubber modified asphalt, to keep tires out of the solid waste stream.

Bear Hunting (H. 3813, Act 46)

H. 3813 (Act 46) regards **bear hunting**. The Act revises hunting seasons for still gun hunts, from October 11 through October 23 on private land and October 11 through October 16 on wildlife management areas; and for dog hunts, October 17 through October 30 on private land and on wildlife management areas. Because the Department of Natural Resources now uses a tag system, the bill updates legislation by removing references to registered "party dog" hunts in Game Zone 1.

Native Plants [H. 4211]

H. 4211 is a Concurrent Resolution to recognize the essential value and importance of South Carolina native plants to the state's environment, landscape, agriculture, history,

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and economy. The legislation encourage state agencies, local governments and private landowners to use native plants for landscaping, erosion control and vegetation management whenever possible to promote the viability of migratory and nonmigratory pollinators and to help to preserve South Carolina's unique flora and fauna.

MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Military, Civil Defense and Veterans Affairs [H. 4296, Act 55]

H. 4296 (Act 55) cleans up outdated language throughout Title 25 (Military, Civil Defense and Veterans Affairs) of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

Concurrent Jurisdiction with South Carolina and the United States Regarding Juveniles [H. 3910, Act 54]

H. 3910 (Act 54) deals with jurisdiction over certain lands relinquished by the United States. This legislation addresses crimes committed by children of military families. Currently, the only exception to the United States' exclusive jurisdiction over lands it acquires in South Carolina, including Department of Defense military installations, is for service by the state's civil and criminal process courts. The Act expands the concurrent jurisdiction with South Carolina and the United States over a military installation relating to any violation of federal law committed by a juvenile that is also an offense under state law with two conditions: (a) the United States Attorney, or the United States District Court, for the applicable district in South Carolina, waives exclusive jurisdiction; and (b) the violation of federal law is also a crime or infraction under state law. The Act also states that when concurrent jurisdiction has been established, the family court has exclusive original jurisdiction over these cases. Upon the establishment of concurrent jurisdiction, any state or local agency may enter into a reciprocal agreement with any agency of the United States for coordination and designation of responsibilities related to the concurrent jurisdiction.

SC Military Affairs Advisory Council [S. 89, Act 31]

S. 89 (Act 31) renames the South Carolina Military Base Task Force to the South Carolina Military Affairs Advisory Council. In addition, the Act updates the purpose of the Council to coordinate with military communities to support mission readiness for installations and to improve the quality of life for service members and their families. The bill adds Aiken and Edgefield as military counties, as well as the City of North Augusta, and makes appropriate changes. This Council shall convene no less than once every calendar year at such times as requested by the Council's chairperson, secretary, or the Governor. The bill adds that members of the executive committee shall be recommended by the county legislative delegation to the Governor for consideration for appointment.

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Evaluation of County Veterans' Affairs Offices [H. 3563, Act 43]

H. 3563 (Act 43) relates to the evaluation of county veterans' affairs offices. This Act requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or designee to evaluate each county office no more than twice per year to determine the level of service being provided to veterans and to ensure compliance with established uniform methods and procedures. The Department shall reevaluate any deficiencies noted no more than six months from the initial inspection. The Department may assist a county in creating and executing a corrective action plan by the time of reinspection. The secretary shall report the results of the final inspection, in writing, to the legislative delegation and the county administrator of each county within ninety days of the final evaluation. The secretary or designee shall not have the authority to remove a county officer for any reason.

South Carolina Veterans Homes [S. 218, Act 5]

S. 218 (Act 5) gives the SC Department of Veterans Affairs the authority to fully manage and oversee operations by adopting policies and procedures for admissions and discharges. The legislation further allows the Department to set and collect residence and service fees, as well as to receive payments from the assignment of any state or Federal benefit. With the creation of the SC Department of Veterans Affairs, the **South Carolina Veterans Retirement Homes**, previously under the Department of Mental Health, were moved under the authority of Veterans Affairs.

Redevelopment of Military Installations [H. 3333, Act 24]

H. 3333 (Act 24) expands projects that can be undertaken in the redevelopment of a federal military installation to include certain affordable housing projects. The bill defines "affordable housing" as residential housing for rent or sale that is appropriately priced for rent or sale to a person or family whose income does not exceed eighty percent of the median income for the local area, with adjustments for household size, from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Act outlines that all or part of the new property tax revenues generated in the tax increment financing (TIF) district will be used to provide or support publicly and privately owned affordable housing, including supporting infrastructure projects, in the district. The obligations for redevelopment projects have been extended to not later than thirty-five years after the adoption of an ordinance.

HEALTH

Labeling of Cell-Cultured Meat [S. 103, Act 14]

S. 103 (Act 14) deals with the labeling of cell-cultured meat (meat developed in a lab). The Act provides for the definition of "artificial or cell-cultivated food product" as any food product developed in a laboratory or facility and grown from a biopsy of living

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animal cells, including, but not limited to, livestock, poultry, fish, crustaceans, or other animal protein. It shall be unlawful for any person to label any artificial or cell-cultivated food product, such as beef, poultry, fish, crustacean, or any other animal protein that the artificial or cell-cultivated food product may resemble for the purposes of advertising, manufacturing, selling, or holding, or offering for sale.

Blood Cancer Awareness Month [H. 4261, Act 51]

H. 4261 (Act 51) designates the month of September of each year as “**Blood Cancer Awareness Month**” to demonstrate the state’s commitment to the study, prevention, and eradication of blood cancers. The legislation encourages all South Carolinians to support patients and their families, as well as efforts to better understand and find cures for these diseases.

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) [S. 2, Act 3]

S. 2 (Act 3) consolidates certain allied treatment agencies into the Governor’s cabinet, providing the Governor greater coordinated control on agency issues (by developing and executing a cohesive and comprehensive plan for services provided by the component offices housed within the Department). This Act is an effort to consolidate efficient healthcare that will result in the reduction of administrative duplication and improve public health outcomes. The Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints the Director to act as the head and governing authority. There will be three components of this new agency: the **Office of Substance Use Services** (currently known as DAODAS), the **Office of Mental Health**, and the **Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities** (currently known as DDSN). Each component office shall be headed by an office director who shall be appointed by the department's director.

The legislation outlines that the Director shall develop and execute a cohesive and comprehensive plan for services provided by the component offices housed within the department. Among many things, the bill also outlines that the director may, to the extent authorized through the Annual Appropriations Act or relevant permanent law, 1) organize the administration of the department, including the assignment of personnel to the offices and among its component departments, as is necessary to carry out the department's duties; 2) develop the budget for the department, including the component offices, to reflect the priorities of its comprehensive service plan and 3) provide to the Governor and General Assembly, an annual accountability report containing the agency's mission, objectives to accomplish the mission, and performance measures that show the degree to which objectives are being met. In addition, the Department's annual accountability report shall include a review of efforts to maximize efficiency and identify any duplicative services. They are also to develop a plan to consolidate, and

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coordinate identified duplicative programs and to eliminate redundancy (while ensuring that the quality, accessibility, and specialization of services are preserved or enhanced). As a result, the bill makes conforming changes throughout the code to reflect the newly formed Department and offices.

Physician on Duty in Hospital Emergency Rooms [H. 4067, Act 49]

H. 4067 (Act 49) formalizes in law the current practice of ensuring at least one physician is on duty in hospital emergency rooms. The Act specifies that the physician does not need to be physically present in the emergency department but must be on the premises.

Supervision of Anesthesiologists' Assistants [H. 3996, Act 48]

H. 3996 (Act 48) changes the anesthesiologist's supervisory ratio, from two to four, of anesthesiologists' assistants at any one time. In addition, the bill also removes the in-person interview requirement for anesthesiologist assistants.

South Carolina Kratom Consumer Protection Act (S. 221, Act 35)

S. 221 (Act 35) creates the South Carolina Kratom Consumer Protection Act. The Act provides for the regulation of the sale of kratom products by retailers and processors. Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia and is a supplement that is sold as an energy booster, mood lifter, pain reliever, and remedy for the symptoms of quitting opioids. "Kratom" commonly refers to an herbal substance that can produce opioid- and stimulant-like effects. Kratom and kratom-based products are currently legal and accessible in many areas; however, kratom or its related compounds have not been approved by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration as safe and effective. Among many things, the bill outlines that it is unlawful for a kratom processor or kratom retailer to distribute, dispense, or sell any kratom product to any individual under twenty-one years of age. In addition, retailers cannot display or store a kratom product in a location that allows the product to be accessed by anyone under twenty-one years of age. The bill creates penalties for violations. This provision goes into effect 60 days after the Governor signs the bill.

Social Work Interstate Compact Act [H. 3752, Act 66]

H. 3752 (Act 66) is the "Social Work Interstate Compact Act." The Act was approved to make provisions for South Carolina to join a compact **to facilitate interstate practice of regulated social workers** with the goal of improving public access to competent social work services while preserving the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure.

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