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State Senate
Press Office

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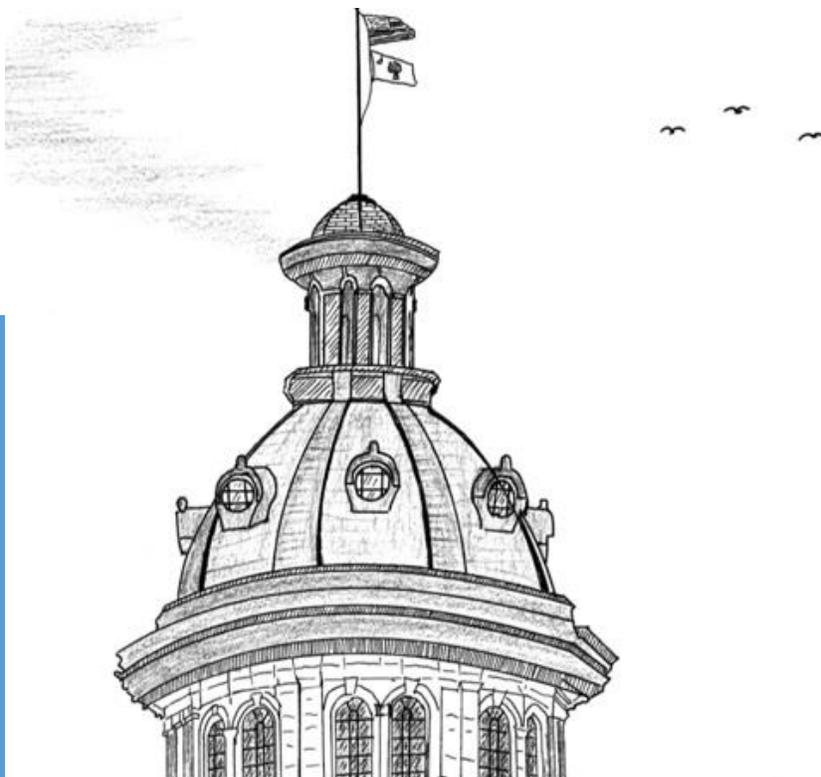


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This week in the Senate

April 18 - April 22, 2016

The Senate Finance Committee approved an approximately \$7.5 billion general appropriation bill on Thursday. Floor debate is expected to begin next Thursday and continue the following week. The bill includes a 4 percent pay raise for state employees, a \$217 million overall increase to the public school base-student cost and \$315 million for road repairs.

Also, the Senate voted on Tuesday to non-concur with House changes on H. 3579, a bill that reforms the governing structure of the Department of Transportation. The bill now heads to conference committee to try to hammer out differences between the House and Senate versions.

Bills passed by the Senate this week include:

ON THIRD READING:

[S. 777](#), sponsored by Senators Gerald Malloy and Sean Bennett: This bill reworks the provisions of state law relating to veteran guardianships in probate court.

Currently, there is a separate part in the probate code for veterans' estates and VA benefits. This bill incorporates those provisions into other existing sections of the probate code.

[S. 778](#), sponsored by Senator Gerald Malloy: expands the existing provisions concerning Powers of Attorneys and renumbers the South Carolina Health Care Power of Attorney code to make it easier to follow.

[H. 4709](#), revises the fishing limitations imposed by the "Southern Cobia Management Zone," which covers all waters of South Carolina south of Jeremy Inlet, Edisto Island, and amends the South Carolina Marine Resources Act of 2000.

ON SECOND READING:

[S. 561](#), after being amended this week, the bill clarifies the lines of authority between the SCDOT Commission and the department secretary. The secretary will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the highway system, allowing the Commission to focus on setting policies and long-term priorities of the agency. This bill is sponsored by Senators Larry Grooms, Tom Davis, Greg Gregory, Harvey Peeler, Gerald Malloy, Paul Campbell, Ray Cleary and Sean Bennett.

[S. 139](#), sponsored by Senator Ray Cleary: freezes a building restriction line along the coast from being moved inward toward the sea after the date of Dec. 31, 2017. By law, state regulators have to reset this building line every 8 to 10 years. This bill, however, is intended to set a permanent line and restrict the construction of new hotels, condominiums and other developments that may be built farther toward the ocean.

[S. 1016](#), establishes regulations and requirements for the sale of prescription eyewear. This bill is sponsored by Senators Ray Cleary, Darrell Jackson, John Matthews, Paul Campbell, Tom Davis, John Scott, Ross Turner, Luke Rankin and Thomas Alexander.

[S. 1015](#), sponsored by Senators Hugh Leatherman and Kevin Johnson: makes it unlawful to knowingly or intentionally import, manufacture, sell or install a counterfeit or nonfunctioning airbag in a motor vehicle.

[S. 908](#), sponsored by Senator Wes Hayes: establishes a framework by which Internet users have the power to plan for the management and disposition of their digital assets - such as banking data and social media information - if they should die or become incapacitated.

[S. 1023](#), sponsored by Senators Brad Hutto and Thomas McElveen: allows retired justices, judges, solicitors, assistant solicitors, and Workers' Compensation Commissioners to carry a concealed weapon if they possess a valid permit.

[S. 944](#), sponsored by Senators Harvey Peeler and Greg Hembree: designates demonstration areas, creates permit requirements for events, and allows for a permit safety review by the directors of SLED, the Department of Public Safety, and Department of Administration relating to the use of the Statehouse grounds.

Look ahead to next week and beyond:

Expect a frenzy of activity on the floor next week as bills race to meet the General Assembly's crossover deadline of May 1 - the date by which any bill that hasn't passed either chamber essentially dies. Any bill that hasn't been moved is considered to have a much smaller chance of passing both the House and the Senate by the end of session on June 2.

The Farm Aid Bill, H. 4717, which provides \$40 million to farmers who can verify agricultural losses after last October's flooding, is currently up for second reading in the Senate.

The Senate also has a package of bills related to Ethics Reform up for consideration, including H. 3186, which was set for special order on April 12. This bill aims to make potential conflicts of interest more transparent by requiring officials and candidates to disclose the sources of their private income. There is also on H. 3184, which would make several reforms to the state's ethics laws, including changing the structure of the State Ethics Commission. The legislation calls for independent investigations of ethics complaints made against legislators and other public officials.