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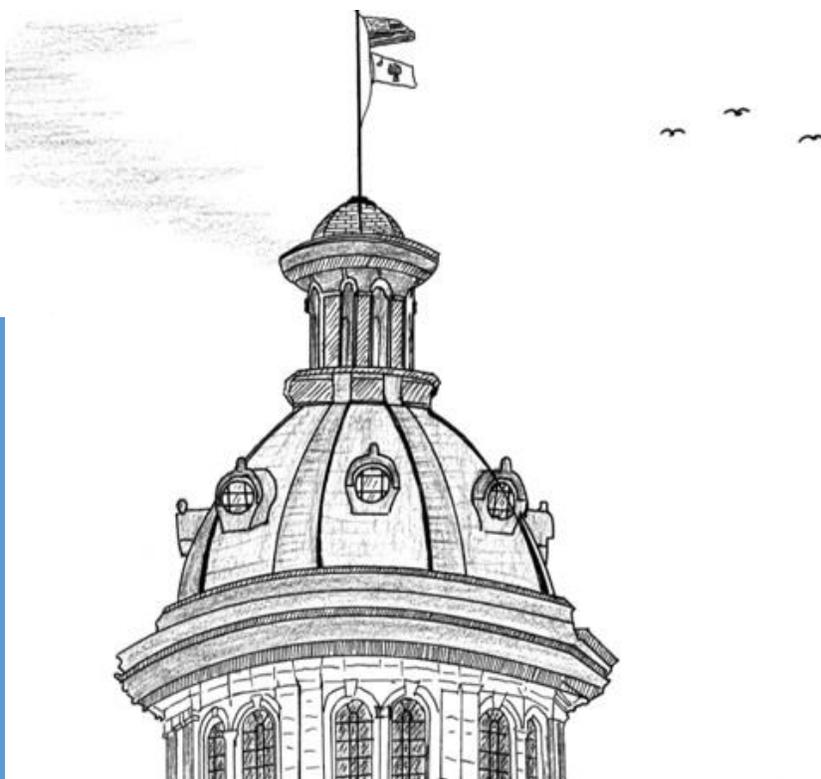


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This week in the Senate

April 4 - April 8, 2016

The Senate continued debate on H 3184 - the House bill known as Ethics Reform Act - which was put on special order by the Senate on February 25.

The bill would make a number of reforms to the state's ethics laws, including making changes to the State Ethics Commission. It calls for independent investigations of ethics complaints made against members of the General Assembly and other public officials.

The course of debate shifted Thursday when Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster ruled that the Committee amendment containing a requirement related to disclosing income was out of order because it went beyond the scope of the underlying House ethics bill.

The debate will continue next week on an independent investigation amendment proposed by Senator Larry Martin. There will also likely be efforts to bring up bills that address income disclosure and the regulation of independent campaign committees.

Bills passed by the Senate this week include:

S. 913, requiring the release of police dashboard video in officer-involved shootings. This bill is sponsored by Senators Larry Martin, Tom Davis, Greg Hembree, Mike Fair and Gerald Malloy.

S. 743, sponsored by Senators John Matthews, Brad Hutto, Chip Campsen, Kevin Johnson and Sean Bennett, which creates an enhancement zone within 60 miles of the Port of Charleston to serve as a distribution hub for cargo shipped to and from the port.

S. 1111, sponsored by Senators Harvey Peeler and Larry Grooms. This bill revises the method by which certain fees for automobile manufacturing license plates are calculated and credited and sets the license plate fee for 2017 and 2018.

S. 771, sponsored by Senator Danny Verdin, establishing procedures that regulate the relationship between manufacturers, distributors, and the dealers of recreational vehicles such as RVs, campers and trailers.

S. 233, sponsored by Senators Chip Campsen, Greg Hembree and Larry Grooms, which defines public invocation as prayer and states that prayer is allowed by a public body as long as it does not promote a particular religion or coerce participation by everyone present during the invocation.

H. 3204, which allows DHEC to offer cervical cancer vaccinations to seventh grade students enrolled at a public or private school in South Carolina.

S. 982, sponsored by Senators Harvey Peeler, Larry Grooms and Kevin Bryant, which would create a sales tax exemption for the purchase of natural gas if the buyer has a fuel user fee license and converts the natural gas into compressed or liquefied natural gas for use in their own motor vehicles.

Receiving second reading:

S. 1166, which is a joint resolution restructuring South Carolina State University's debt repayment obligations to the state. It also reduces the principal and interest payments to the state if the university ends each fiscal year without an operating budget deficit. This joint resolution is sponsored by Senators Hugh Leatherman, Nikki Setzler, Karl Allen, John Matthews, Darrell Jackson, Margie Bright Matthews, Gerald Malloy, Joel Lourie, Kent Williams, Vincent Sheheen, Floyd Nicholson, Kevin Johnson, John Scott, Ronnie Sabb, Brad Hutto and Marlon Kimpson.

S. 267, which would shorten the legislative session by changing the date of adjournment from the first Thursday in June to the first Thursday in May. This bill is sponsored by Senators Tom Young, Chip Campsen, Greg Hembree, Sean Bennett, Ross Turner, Paul Thurmond, Tom Davis, Lee Bright, Kevin Bryant, Larry Martin, Shane Martin, Wes Hayes, Paul Campbell and Larry Grooms.

S. 1178, which is a joint resolution amending regulations governing the conduct and activities of visitors to Wildlife Management Areas, Heritage Preserves and other lands owned or leased by the Department of Natural Resources.

S. 1179, a joint resolution regulation related to turkey hunting rules and seasons in order to set seasons, bag limits and methods of hunting and taking wildlife on Wildlife Management Areas and provide additional turkey hunting opportunity on new properties within the program.

S. 1180, a joint resolution allowing the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation - Board of Registration for Foresters, to amend its fee schedule.

S. 689, sponsored by Senators Greg Hembree and Thomas McElveen, which provides that someone with a beginner's permit may not operate a motorcycle or motor scooter at any unpermitted time unless supervised by a licensed motorcycle or motor scooter operator.

S. 1073, sponsored by Senators Nikki Setzler and Thomas Alexander, which bring South Carolina law in-line with recently passed federal legislation related to the Internal Revenue Code.

S. 1075, sponsored by Senators Paul Campbell, Wes Hayes and Larry Grooms, which exempts - for up to 30 percent - the difference in cost between a diesel and a compressed gas/liquified gas fueled truck from property tax.

S. 1125, sponsored by Senator Glenn Reese, which deletes a provision in state law related to the Textiles Communities Revitalization Income Tax Credit that limits the credit to 50 percent of certain liability.

S. 1136, sponsored by Senators Gerald Malloy and Chip Campsen, which proposes a S.C. Constitutional amendment changing the age of juveniles, for purposes of imprisonment, from under age 17 to under age 18 in order to comply with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act.

H. 4328, changes the due date of the fourth quarter income tax withholding return. It also changes the due date for W-2 forms and the annual withholding recapitulation and reconciliation report. These proposed date changes correspond with current federal due date requirements.

H. 3706, which authorizes organizations, businesses and other institutions to keep supplies of EpiPens in order to administer medication to those who are experiencing severe allergic reactions.

S. 1028, sponsored by Senator Danny Verdin, creating a program within the Department of Agriculture to integrate veterans into the field of agriculture and support veterans currently working in agriculture.

H. 4141, which allows travel retailers to offer and disseminate travel insurance coverage for personal risks incident to planned travel.

H. 4662, which amends the Interstate Insurance Product Regulation Compact.

S. 1064, sponsored by Senators Tom Young and Luke Rankin, which requires workers' compensation insurers to use the most recent loss cost within 120 days of approval, or the most recently approved loss cost, when it submits its loss cost multiplier, when filing for approval of new rates.

Look ahead to next week and beyond:

The Senate Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday as full committee budget deliberations begin. The discussions will dominate much of the work of the Senate in April.

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