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**South Carolina  
Senate  
Pro Tempore  
Communications  
Director**  
Michael Ulmer

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109 Gressette Building  
1100 Gervais Street Columbia,  
SC 29201  
803.212.6732

# This week in the Senate

## Feb. 27 - March 3, 2017

The Senate on Thursday approved third reading of [S. 394](#), which aims to make the state's pension system more financially sound. The bill now heads to the House. The legislation is a companion bill to [H. 3726](#), which was read the third time by the House on Wednesday.

The Senate's version was approved unanimously on a 41-0 vote. The goal of the bill is to make the retirement system solvent and make sure the benefits promised to state employees are provided. The Senate is expected to address the House version this upcoming week.

### **Bills approved by the Senate this week include:**

*The following bills were read the third time -*

[S. 394](#) - Senators Vincent Sheheen, Darrell Jackson, Floyd Nicholson, John Scott, Sean Bennett and Mike Gambrell: This bill aims to improve the financial health of the state's retirement system. Provisions of the bill

include reducing the unfunded amortization schedule from 30 years to 20 years and changing the assumed annual rate of return on investments from 7.5 percent to 7.25 percent.

[S. 381](#) - Senator Thomas Alexander: This bill seeks to rectify conflicting citations in state law to ensure cigarettes are considered contraband if they are unstamped and in the possession of anyone who: 1.) is not the first person to have received the untaxed cigarettes; 2.) is importing or otherwise receiving cigarettes for consumption in South Carolina; and/or 3.) is offering cigarettes for retail sale in South Carolina.

*The following bills were read the second time -*

[S. 411](#) - Senator Vincent Sheheen: Increases the total number of members and number of members appointed from Kershaw County to the Central Carolina Technical College Commission.

[S. 78](#) - Senators Thomas Alexander, Stephen Goldfinch and Kent Williams: Allows members of the State Guard who are state employees to receive military leave without any loss of pay, seniority or efficiency rating when attending State Guard encampments or schools for training.

[S. 213](#) - Senators Harvey Peeler, Thomas Alexander and John Scott: Creates the College and University Trustee Screening Commission to consider the qualifications of candidates for trustees to state-supported colleges and universities.

[S. 79](#) - Senator Darrell Jackson: Designates July as “Fibroid Tumor Awareness Month” and aims to raise awareness of the impact uterine fibroid tumors have on women's health.

[S. 315](#) - Senator Ronnie Cromer: Authorizes the Hurricane, Earthquake, and Fire Advisory Committee to address mitigation of property losses due to flood.

[S. 340](#) - Senator Vincent Sheheen: Establishes terms of office and duties for South Carolina’s Poet Laureate and provides that the South Carolina Arts Commission give the governor recommendations for qualified candidates.

[S. 366](#) - Senator Ronnie Cromer: Amends the Mortgage Lending Act, the Mortgage Broker Act and related laws because of federal law changes with the aim of reducing regulatory burdens on the mortgage broker industry while maintaining consumer protections.

### **Look ahead to next week and beyond:**

A bill passed by the House, [H. 3516](#), dealing with the state’s infrastructure system was sent to the Senate. The legislation is expected to eventually put \$600 million a year into the state’s road system. Most of the new dollars would come from a 10 cents per gallon increase in the motor fuel user fee phased-in over five years. The Senate is expected to begin debate on this issue in committee and on the floor over the next few weeks.

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday is scheduled to consider [S. 92](#), which aims to give family court judges a greater range of options in determining alimony.

The Senate is also likely to hold confirmation votes for Emily Farr as the new director of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation and W. Hartley Powell as the new director of the Department of Revenue.