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# This week in the Senate

## Jan. 30 - Feb. 3, 2017

The House and Senate met in Joint Session on Wednesday to elect a new Supreme Court Justice, as well as Court of Appeals, circuit court, family court and administrative law court judges.

The Senate spent much of the week passing [S. 27](#), which makes the Superintendent of Education a cabinet position, in addition to several other bills.

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

*The following bills were read the third time -*

[S. 27](#) - Makes the Superintendent of Education a cabinet position appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. It also provides for the terms, qualifications and filling of a vacancy in the office of superintendent. This bill is sponsored by Senators Chip Campsen, Tom

Young, Greg Hembree, Wes Climer, Greg Gregory, John Scott, John Matthews, Nikki Setzler and Ross Turner.

[S. 67](#), Sponsored by Senator Brad Hutto: This bill relates to the redevelopment of former military bases and federal facilities. Specifically, this bill states that current redevelopment fee allocations of individual income tax withholdings to the Savannah River Site Authority continue past 2021.

[S. 58](#), This bill creates Port Enhancement Zones to serve as distribution hubs for cargo shipped to and from the Port of Charleston. It provides for sales tax, corporate income tax and other financial incentives to increase economic growth in these zones. It's sponsored by Senators John Matthews, Brad Hutto, Kevin Johnson, Gerald Malloy, Margie Bright Matthews and Kent Williams.

[S. 197](#), Sponsored by Senator Greg Hembree: This bill relates to the terms and conditions of operating a moped, including allowing drunken moped drivers to be charged with DUI. Current state law does not treat mopeds as vehicles so drivers aren't violating DUI laws when they drive while intoxicated. This bill also requires moped drivers to register with the Department of Motor Vehicles and follow the same traffic rules as other vehicles.

[S. 250](#), Sponsored by Senators Hugh Leatherman, Nikki Setzler and Thomas Alexander: This bill, known as the "annual conformity bill," updates South Carolina's tax code to reflect changes made at the federal level in 2016 by conforming the state's tax law to the federal code through Dec. 31, 2016.

[S. 198](#), Sponsored by Senators Katrina Shealy, Thomas Alexander, Thomas McElveen and Kevin Bryant. This bill makes changes as to who may sign the application for a beginner's permit or driver's license of an unemancipated minor. In addition to the mother, father and guardian, individuals responsible for the minor, including individuals appointed by DSS, may sign the application.

[S. 263](#) - This bill allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue Clemson University 2016 Football National Champions special license plates. It's sponsored by Senators Harvey Peeler, Gerald Malloy, Thomas Alexander, Larry Grooms, Paul Campbell, Ross Turner, Tom Corbin, Mike Gambrell, Shane Martin and Rex Rice.

[S. 44](#), Sponsored by Senators Greg Gregory and Glenn Reese, this bill creates two property tax exemptions for alternative energy generating projects, including solar, hydro, geothermal, wind, and landfill gas energy.

[S. 220](#), Sponsored by Senators Katrina Shealy and Thomas McElveen, this bill requires local law enforcement agencies conducting a child abuse investigation involving a hearing impaired child to use a sign language interpreter that isn't a parent or family member of the child when the child is being interviewed.

*The following bills were read the second time -*

[S. 214](#) - Sponsored by Senator Marlon Kimpson, this bill requires a retailer who has internet sales in excess of \$10,000 in the preceding 12 months to obtain a retail license. They are then required to collect and remit sales tax on all items sold in this state.

[S. 176](#) - Sponsored by Senator Vincent Sheheen, this bill prohibits drones from flying within 500 feet of a state prison.

[S. 46](#) - Sponsored by Senators Chip Campsen, Sean Bennett and Tom Young, this bill adjusts the state's tax brackets by full inflation each year with the aim of protecting taxpayers from what economists and tax experts call "bracket creep," which occurs when incomes rise on pace with inflation, but tax brackets remain unchanged.

[S. 61](#), Sponsored by Senator Senator Hutto, this bill provides that a political subdivision of South Carolina or a governmental agency or instrumentality of a political subdivision is eligible to participate in state health and dental plans.

[S. 75](#), Sponsored by Senator Tom Young, this bill allows a person to maintain the special four percent assessment ratio on their owner-occupied home if they reside in a nursing home. The special four percent assessment ratio shall be maintained as long as the owner has the intention of returning to their home and no rental income is attributable to the property.