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State Senate
Press Office

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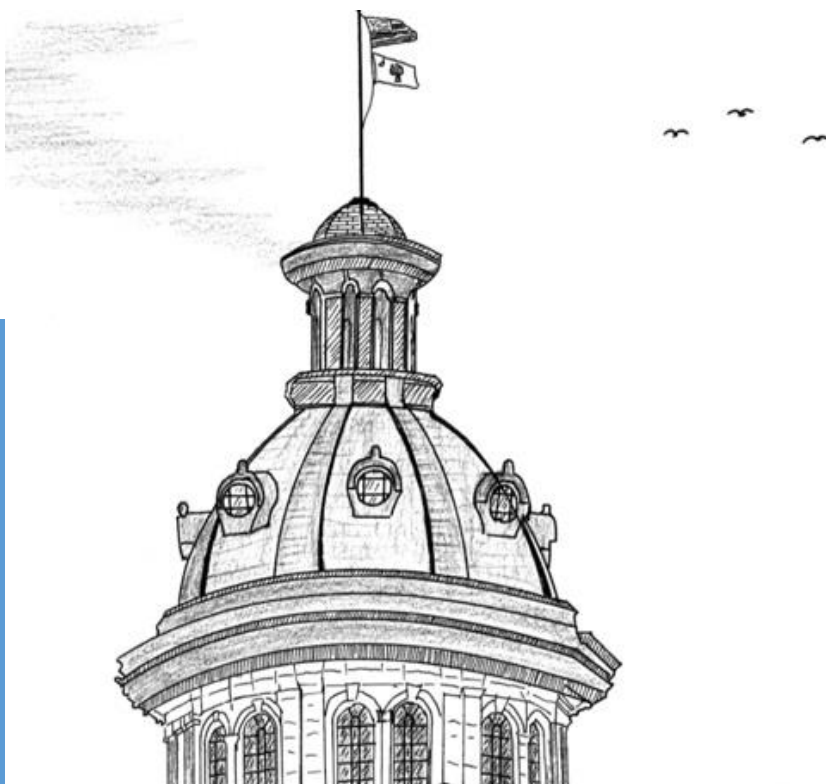


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This week in the Senate

May 2 - May 6, 2016

The Senate finalized its version of the budget on Wednesday after a 36-5 vote, sending the budget back to the House for approval. The bill is expected to head to a joint conference committee where legislators from the House and Senate will hammer out details.

Here are highlights of the 2016-2017 appropriations bill approved by the Senate:

- \$27.5 million is added to the Local Government Fund for a total funding level of \$240 million.
- A 4 percent cost-of-living-adjustment. There's also employee increases for bus drivers, county auditors and treasurers, local health providers, local aging providers and judicial employees, including judges.
- Health insurance increases for school district employees, state employees and retirees are fully funded.

- The “Farm Aid Bill,” [H. 4717](#), is funded as a proviso with \$40 million to assist farmers who had damage from last October’s floods.
- The proposed African American Museum in Charleston receives an additional \$5 million in state funding.
- The public school base-student cost for the EFA is increased from \$2,220 to \$2,350, which means a \$130 per student increase.
- Additional \$28 million for school buses, of which \$10 million is recurring.
- Additional \$19.2 million for bus driver salaries aimed at improving retention.
- Fully funds DSS request for statewide recruitment and retention of child welfare caseworkers.
- Increases foster home rates and provide first time financial aid for more than 1,200 children in “kinship care” at the same rates as foster care.
- State match for the flood cost is \$49 million, \$37.3 million of which is sent directly to DOT (\$11.7 million is from the Adjutant General).
- \$50 million appropriation to County Transportation Committees to be spent on state-owned highway system.
- This is in addition to funds allocated by [S. 1258](#). This bill sends a portion of the fine and fee revenue from the DMV to the State Highway Fund to be used on infrastructure projects in the state. The other portion of that revenue would be transferred to the State Infrastructure Bank for projects approved by the Joint Bond Review Committee. The first \$50 million sent to the SIB must be used to finance bridge replacement, rehabilitation projects, and expansion and improvements on existing roads in the State Highway System. Funds in excess of \$50 million must be used to finance expansion and improvements to existing interstates.

Other bills passed by the Senate this week include:

[H. 4510](#), establishes limitations on the number of foster children who may be placed in a foster home.

[H. 5002](#), the Capital Reserve Fund bill, finances previously authorized capital improvement bond projects and retires interest or principal on previous bonds. Each year, the constitution mandates that the fund be appropriated 2 percent of the previous year’s General Fund revenue.

[S. 1013](#), sponsored by Senators Thomas Alexander and Tom Davis: specifies that certain duties and responsibilities belong to the Real Estate Commission rather than the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.

Look ahead to next week and beyond:

The Senate will not meet until Wednesday, May 11 at 2 p.m. The House is on furlough next week.

Senators Ray Cleary, Larry Grooms and Brad Hutto, along with three members of the House, are part of a conference committee trying to hammer out difference on H. 3579, a bill that reforms the governing structure of the Department of Transportation.

Also, a portrait of Senator Clementa Pinckney will be unveiled during a ceremony in the Senate on May 25.