**NO. 36**

**JOURNAL**

**OF THE**

**SENATE**

**OF THE**

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

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**REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020**

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**FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020**

Friday, March 13, 2020

(Local Session)

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

 The Senate assembled at 11:00 A.M., the hour to which it stood adjourned, and was called to order by the ACTING PRESIDENT, Senator HARPOOTLIAN.

**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

 The following remarks by Senator MARTIN were ordered printed in the Journal of March 5, 2020:

**Remarks by Senator MARTIN**

 Here we are, on Third Reading of S. 419. I stood here in January and I personally went through the Committee Report -- which is pretty much the Bill now -- section by section and talked about all of the negatives. This Senate has gone through the Bill section by section for weeks trying to make changes. Unfortunately, nearly everyone in this Body believes that those sections are pretty much good as written. Nothing I say today will change any minds. But, I would like you to consider a couple of things that I think are fairly obvious and inarguable.

 First, I know it is true in Spartanburg and Union Counties, and I believe it is true in every county, that no one who actually works in a classroom or a school thinks that this Bill will improve their schools or classrooms. Not the first person in areas I represent, not any of the parents and not any of the local board members has said to me, "Wow, this will do wonders for teachers and students." No one has said, "Well, on the whole, things will improve because of what is in this Bill." I have not had a soul in the district I represent tell me that this Bill is a good idea -- not a soul. And I have asked.

 I am not going to rehash whether anyone listened to teachers or did not -- had hearings or did not. I am only going to say that I do not know one teacher from Spartanburg, Union, Greenville or any other county in South Carolina that thinks this will help them or the children they teach.

 Second, this is a Columbia Bill, and by Columbia I mean General Assembly of South Carolina. This Bill was written in Columbia, it was debated in Columbia, it will be monitored by Columbia and it will be funded, or much more likely not funded, by Columbia. But, as always, the penalties for failing to live up to the Bill will not be paid by Columbia, because Columbia never pays the penalty. The penalties will be paid by the districts, and the schools, and the teachers -- and ultimately -- the children who cannot live up to the fantasies and dictates of Columbia. It happens every time, and it will happen this time.

 Third, I have heard it said in this Chamber, more than once, "There is no education in the second kick of the mule." The majority of this Body, though, apparently does not believe that. Because this is about to be the 37th kick of the mule. Every time the General Assembly passes something called "education reform", it never works. That is not true just of the folks in this room or even the folks in this century. It never works. The penny tax and EFA did not work. The Education Accountability Act and the EOC did not work.

 KRA has not worked, Read to Succeed has not worked and the Education and Economic Development Act has not worked, but in this Bill, we are asking for more kicks from the same ole mule. Now, the reasons that these things do not work are those I mentioned before about passing things created in Columbia, not paying for them, and then punishing the districts. We are doing that in this Bill, often for the second, third, or fourth time, and I do not expect the results to differ. This Senate will be here again in three or four years with another reform Bill telling folks that this time, this time Columbia will make it work. It will not.

 Now, in a couple of years, if South Carolina has rocketed to the top of national scores and rankings, and there is a line around the block to apply for classroom teaching positions, and all our children are above average, then I will get up here and say with 100% sincerity and humility that I was wrong and that Columbia finally fixed a problem. We will see. But, in the meantime, the only thing I can ask is, now that this Bill has heaped yet another load of mandates on the schools and teachers, that we at least do the decent and honorable thing and pay for it. We have never done that, either, but as our PRESIDENT often says, "While I breathe, I hope."

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**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

 The following remarks by Senator JACKSON were ordered printed in the Journal of March 5, 2020:

**Remarks by Senator JACKSON**

 Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT. Just a few moments ago we received a notice that Prisma Health was buying another hospital in the Midlands ‑-Providence Hospital. Mr. PRESIDENT, members of the Senate, I am standing here today to voice my concern and outrage over what's going on with what I'm calling healthcare monopoly.

 Just a few months earlier Prisma Health laid off almost 300 employees from the hospital that they recently purchased, Palmetto Health. Many were constituents of mine and others elected in Richland County. What is so unfortunate is many could not afford to have lost their job when they did. Some just before the holidays. Cafeteria workers and administrators lost their jobs. Prisma Health said to us it was important in order to balance the budget and do what they need to do. Yet just today we have received the notice that Prisma Health is buying Providence Hospital in Richland County. This is very disturbing. When you think about the impact of a healthcare monopoly -- perhaps with the merger and purchase of this most recent hospital, Prisma Health, one entity, may control three-quarters of all of the healthcare providers in this market that they are buying up -- not those offices and others. I think at some point, Senator VERDIN, we ought to examine whether or not these healthcare monopolies are good for the citizens of South Carolina. Now I don't have any personal problem with Prisma Health. Quite honestly, I was a bigger fan of Palmetto Health before it became Prisma Health. Many may be familiar with it. The debate there were promises to people from Richland County that were never fulfilled. County council -- if you ask them today if you would do it over, some of them, most of them perhaps would say it was a mistake. In fact, perhaps some would say they were misled by Prisma Health, at that time Greenville Hospital System. This may be good for someone. It may be good for people that I don't know about. I'm here to tell you, it is not good for the citizens that live in Richland County. My colleagues from the House, Representative Howard is here and he chairs the 3M Committee. He can tell you we have met with representatives from Prisma Health and talked to employees. There are some employees who came to us privately crying just before the holidays -- not just that they were laid off but at how it happened. They walked in their office a few days before the holidays and were told it will be their last day -- pack your bags, we are escorting you off the premises. This is the kind of company we are dealing with.

 I just had to stand this morning to say at some point I hope we as a legislative body deal with this healthcare monopoly. We've dealt with others in the Senate. There are some concerns right now as we debate the Santee Cooper possession of whether or not it is wise to allow a company to manage it who's already taken over a big footprint in this State. I will suggest to you it is an even greater concern when it comes to healthcare because it impacts so many citizens from Pickens County to Sumter County to Greenville County to Richland County. Perhaps they will travel down to the lowcountry and take over some other hospitals down in the Charleston market and others. But I am sure I'm not the only one who feels this way. I represent a big part of those who have been negatively impacted. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT and members.

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MOTION ADOPTED

 On motion of Senator ALEXANDER, with unanimous consent, the Senate stood adjourned out of respect to the memory of Angela Blackston Hamilton of Seneca, S.C. Angela was a retired Social Studies teacher with the Oconee County School District. Angela was a member of the Seneca Woman’s Club, Seneca Garden Club and was a longtime member of Trinity Baptist Church where she sang in the choir. She enjoyed doing crossword puzzles, traveling and spending time with her family. Angela was a loving wife, devoted mother and doting grandmother who will be dearly missed.

ADJOURNMENT

 At 11:05 A.M., on motion of Senator JACKSON, the Senate adjourned to meet next Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at 2:00 P.M.

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