~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

The House assembled at 2:00 p.m.

Deliberations were opened with prayer by Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., as follows:

Our thought for today is from Joshua 1:6: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Let us pray. Gracious God, on this day of immeasurable possibilities, we thank You for life, health, and strength. And we do further pray that You would continue to endow all who labor in this Chamber with the kind of courage and tenacity required of those who work to make a contribution to the common good. We pray that through Your grace and mercy that You would make this State and this Country a more perfect expression of Your will for all of Your children. We ask You to lead and guide. We pray for genuine inspiration. We pray for our Nation and our State, for the President, for the Governor, for the Speaker, and the Members of this Chamber, and all of their families and staffs. Bless them with wisdom in all things noble and true. Bind up the wounds of all who are broken, so that they might find the peace that only You can give. For this day and for this hour, we thank You Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.

Pursuant to Rule 6.3, the House of Representatives was led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America by the SPEAKER.

After corrections to the Journal of the proceedings of yesterday, the SPEAKER ordered it confirmed.

**MOTION ADOPTED**

Rep. ANDERSON moved that when the House adjourns, it adjourn in memory of Mr. Norman L. Deas of Georgetown, which was agreed to.

**Norman L. Deas**

Mr. Speaker and Members,

When we adjourn today, I ask that we do it in memory of Mr. Norman L. Deas of Georgetown, a retired U.S. Government official, HUD’s first black appraiser and chief underwriter, the A.M.E. Church Lay Organization President for the Seventh Episcopal District (SC), and advisor for the Connectional Lay 2011-2019. He was also advisor to the Sons of Allen for the Georgetown District until his sudden death. He will be remembered as a family man and friend to everyone.

Rep. Carl Anderson

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3136 -- Reps. Bailey, McCravy and Chumley: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAYS 57 AND 111 IN HORRY COUNTY "LANCE CORPORAL MELTON LEVI 'FOX' GORE MEMORIAL INTERSECTION" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS LOCATION CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3139 -- Rep. Chumley: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THE INTERSECTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 417 AND GREEN POND ROAD IN SPARTANBURG COUNTY CONTAINING THE WORDS "UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AIRMAIL DIRECTIONAL ARROW SITE".

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3176 -- Reps. B. Newton, Mitchell, Neese and Yow: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE INTERSECTION LOCATED AT UNITED STATES HIGHWAY 521, HUBBARD DRIVE, AND CRAIG MANOR ROAD IN LANCASTER COUNTY "CHARLES ALAN BUNDY MEMORIAL INTERSECTION" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS LOCATION CONTAINING THESE WORDS

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3179 -- Reps. Pope and Ligon: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION DEDICATE THE STATUE AND PLAZA OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL GARDEN, LOCATED ON THE GROUNDS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA FIRE ACADEMY IN RICHLAND COUNTY, "IN MEMORY OF CHIEF JERRY WILLIAMS".

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3357 -- Reps. B. Newton, Mitchell, Neese and Yow: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE PORTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 9 IN LANCASTER COUNTY FROM THE LANCASTER BYPASS TO SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 522 "SHERIFF WILLIFORD LEE FAILE MEMORIAL HIGHWAY" AND PLACE APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS ALONG THIS PORTION OF THE HIGHWAY CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3396 -- Rep. Wheeler: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE INTERSECTION LOCATED AT THE JUNCTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 34 AND MCGEE TOWN ROAD IN LEE COUNTY "LEWIS W. BOONE MEMORIAL INTERSECTION" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS LOCATION CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3397 -- Rep. Wheeler: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE PORTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 154 IN LEE COUNTY FROM ITS INTERSECTION WITH LOWER LEE SCHOOL ROAD TO ITS INTERSECTION WITH MANVILLE - ST. CHARLES ROAD "TONEY AND THELMA SLATER MEMORIAL HIGHWAY" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS ALONG THIS PORTION OF HIGHWAY CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3398 -- Rep. Wheeler: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PLACE AN APPROPRIATE SIGN AT THE WESTBOUND ENTRANCE RAMP TO INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 20 IN LEE COUNTY AT EXIT 120 CONTAINING THE WORDS "IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE DAVID ADDISON".

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3399 -- Rep. Wheeler: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE INTERSECTION OF UNITED STATES HIGHWAY 15 AND BROWNTOWN ROAD IN LEE COUNTY "W.A. BERRY MEMORIAL INTERSECTION" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS INTERSECTION CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. MOSS, from the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions, submitted a favorable report on:

H. 3400 -- Rep. Wheeler: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ERECT AN APPROPRIATE SIGN AT THE EASTBOUND EXIT RAMP ONTO SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 341 FROM INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 20 IN LEE COUNTY CONTAINING THE WORDS "IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT MIKKOS L. NEWMAN".

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. W. NEWTON, from the Committee on Judiciary, submitted a favorable report with amendments on:

H. 3122 -- Reps. J. E. Johnson and W. Newton: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY REPEALING SECTION 1-7-730 RELATING TO THE EXAMINATION OF THE OFFICES OF COUNTY OFFICERS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. W. NEWTON, from the Committee on Judiciary, submitted a favorable report with amendments on:

H. 3209 -- Rep. Jordan: A JOINT RESOLUTION TO EXTEND CERTAIN GOVERNMENTAL APPROVALS AFFECTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE STATE.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Rep. W. NEWTON, from the Committee on Judiciary, submitted a favorable report with amendments on:

H. 3503 -- Reps. Gilliam, Pope, Taylor, Chumley, Haddon, McCravy, Oremus, Hiott, Burns, Wooten, Hixon, Bailey, Caskey, Thayer, Trantham, Forrest, Yow, S. Jones, Sessions, Guffey, Lawson, Chapman, Leber, O'Neal, Vaughan, Robbins, B. J. Cox, M. M. Smith, Davis, Brewer, Murphy, Whitmire, Ligon, Felder, Mitchell, Hager and Connell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 44-53-190, RELATING TO SCHEDULE I SUBSTANCES, SO AS TO ADD FENTANYL-RELATED SUBSTANCES; BY AMENDING SECTION 44-53-370, RELATING TO PROHIBITED ACTS AND PENALTIES, SO AS TO ADD AN OFFENSE FOR TRAFFICKING IN FENTANYL; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 16-1-60, RELATING TO VIOLENT CRIMES, SO AS TO ADD TRAFFICKING IN FENTANYL.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

**HOUSE RESOLUTION**

The following was introduced:

H. 3793 -- Reps. Leber, Yow, Guest, Hewitt, M. M. Smith, Stavrinakis, Wetmore, Pace, W. Newton, B. L. Cox, Hartnett, Hager, Murphy, Mitchell, Gatch, Brewer, Bustos and Landing: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE ARTHUR RAVENEL, JR., OF CHARLESTON COUNTY AND TO EXTEND THEIR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS LARGE AND LOVING FAMILY AND HIS MANY FRIENDS.

The Resolution was adopted.

**HOUSE RESOLUTION**

The following was introduced:

H. 3794 -- Reps. Bailey, Hardee, Brittain, Guest, Crawford, Schuessler, Atkinson, Hayes and McGinnis: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO SALUTE LAWRENCE RAY "LARRY" LEAGANS, SR., OF NORTH MYRTLE BEACH FOR A LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY, STATE, AND NATION AND TO WISH HIM MUCH HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

The Resolution was adopted.

**HOUSE RESOLUTION**

The following was introduced:

H. 3795 -- Rep. McCravy: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE STAFF AND DONORS OF THE FOOD BANK OF GREENWOOD COUNTY FOR FOUR DECADES OF HELPING THOSE IN NEED WITH ESSENTIAL FOODS AND

TO CONGRATULATE THEM UPON THE OCCASION OF THEIR FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

The Resolution was adopted.

**HOUSE RESOLUTION**

The following was introduced:

H. 3796 -- Rep. Hart: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO AMEND RULES 8.5, 8.6, AND 8.11 OF THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, RELATING TO THE CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS, WHEN THE PREVIOUS QUESTION MAY BE INVOKED AND VOTE REQUIREMENTS OF CERTAIN MOTIONS, SO AS TO INCREASE FROM A MAJORITY TO UNANIMOUS CONSENT THE VOTE REQUIREMENT TO INVOKE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.

The Resolution was ordered referred to the Committee on Rules.

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

The Senate sent to the House the following:

S. 319 -- Senators Williams and Reichenbach: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE PORTION OF SC-51, PAMPLICO HIGHWAY, BETWEEN FLOWERS ROAD AND WILLARD HENRY ROAD IN FLORENCE COUNTY "SGT. ROBERT A. MOBLEY HIGHWAY" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS LOCATION CONTAINING THE DESIGNATION.

The Concurrent Resolution was ordered referred to the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions.

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

The Senate sent to the House the following:

S. 430 -- Senators Alexander, Adams, Allen, Bennett, Campsen, Cash, Climer, Corbin, Cromer, Davis, Fanning, Gambrell, Garrett, Goldfinch, Grooms, Gustafson, Harpootlian, Hembree, Hutto, Jackson, K. Johnson, M. Johnson, Kimbrell, Kimpson, Loftis, Malloy, Martin, Massey, Matthews, McElveen, McLeod, Peeler, Rankin, Reichenbach, Rice, Sabb, Scott, Senn, Setzler, Shealy, Stephens, Talley, Turner, Verdin, Williams and Young: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO CONGRATULATE THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS SOUTHERN OFFICE UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS SEVENTY-SEVENTH SOUTHERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE AND TO COMMEND THE ORGANIZATION FOR ITS MANY YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE AND THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

The Concurrent Resolution was agreed to and ordered returned to the Senate with concurrence.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

The following Bills and Joint Resolution were introduced, read the first time, and referred to appropriate committees:

H. 3797 -- Reps. B. J. Cox, G. M. Smith and Beach: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "MILITARY TEMPORARY REMOTE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT ACT" BY ADDING SECTION 59-63-33 SO AS TO PROVIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL PUPILS COMPLY WITH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS IF THEIR PARENTS ARE TRANSFERRED TO OR ARE PENDING TRANSFER TO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THIS STATE WHILE ON ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY PURSUANT TO OFFICIAL MILITARY ORDERS, TO PROVIDE SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHALL ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR ENROLLMENT AND COURSE REGISTRATION FROM SUCH PUPILS BY ELECTRONIC MEANS, TO PROVIDE PARENTS OF SUCH STUDENTS SHALL PROVIDE CERTAIN PROOF OF RESIDENCE WITHIN TEN DAYS AFTER THE ARRIVAL DATE, TO PROVIDE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT APPLY NOTWITHSTANDING ANOTHER PROVISION OF LAW, TO PROVIDE AMBIGUITIES IN CONSTRUING THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT MUST BE RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF ENROLLMENT, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMINOLOGY.

Referred to Committee on Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs

H. 3798 -- Reps. Burns, Chumley, Long and Haddon: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 39-15-50 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE LABELING OF FOOD OR FOOD PRODUCTS THAT CONTAIN MESSENGER RIBONUCLEIC ACID AND TO PROVIDE A PENALTY.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

H. 3799 -- Rep. Hyde: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 53-3-270 SO AS TO DECLARE THE FIRST MONDAY OF MARCH OF EACH YEAR AS "WATER PROFESSIONALS DAY".

Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry

H. 3800 -- Rep. Burns: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 15-3-710 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION, OR EMPLOYEE, VOLUNTEER, OR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR OF A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION MAY BE IMMUNE FROM CIVIL LIABILITY FOR DISCLOSING TO AN INDIVIDUAL'S CURRENT OR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER INFORMATION REGARDING AN OFFENSE INVOLVING SEXUAL ABUSE.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

H. 3801 -- Reps. McCravy, Burns, Nutt, T. Moore, B. L. Cox, Lawson, Pope, Long, M. M. Smith, Thayer, Haddon, Pace, Chumley, Bailey, J. E. Johnson, Hiott and Hixon: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE PROTECTION ACT"; AND BY ADDING CHAPTER 23 TO TITLE 63 SO AS TO PROHIBIT THE STATE GOVERNMENT FROM DISCRIMINATING AGAINST PERSONS WHO PROVIDE ADOPTION OR FOSTER-CARE SERVICES BASED UPON A SINCERELY HELD RELIGIOUS BELIEF, TO DEFINE TERMS, TO CREATE A PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION AGAINST THE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE CHAPTER, TO ALLOW CERTAIN REMEDIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

H. 3802 -- Rep. B. J. Cox: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "VETERANS' TRUST FUND" BY AMENDING SECTION 25-21-20, RELATING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES, MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS, TERM AND COMPENSATION, AND ANNUAL REPORTS, SO AS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF BOARD MEMBERS FROM NINETEEN TO ELEVEN; TO PROVIDE FOR APPOINTMENT OF THOSE MEMBERS BY THE GOVERNOR WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE SENATE; TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERS; AND TO ESTABLISH A FOUR-YEAR TERM.

Referred to Committee on Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs

H. 3803 -- Rep. Hart: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 44-53-370, RELATING TO CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENSES AND PENALTIES, SO AS TO DECRIMINALIZE POSSESSION OF TWENTY-EIGHT GRAMS OR ONE OUNCE OR LESS OF MARIJUANA OR TEN GRAMS OR LESS OF HASHISH, AND TO AUTHORIZE LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ISSUE A CIVIL CITATION FOR POSSESSION OF THAT SAME QUANTITY OF MARIJUANA OR HASHISH.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

H. 3804 -- Rep. Hart: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 29-1-70 SO AS TO PROVIDE A MANDATORY MINIMUM GRACE PERIOD OF TWENTY DAYS FOR A MORTGAGE PAYMENT, TO DEFINE THE TERM "GRACE PERIOD", AND TO PROVIDE THAT THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A SIMPLE INTEREST OR OTHER MORTGAGE IN WHICH INTEREST ACCRUES DAILY.

Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry

H. 3805 -- Rep. Hart: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 41-1-125 SO AS TO PROVIDE A BASE STATE MINIMUM WAGE OF SEVENTEEN DOLLARS PER HOUR EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2025, TO PROVIDE FOR THE NOTIFICATION OF THIS MINIMUM WAGE TO EMPLOYERS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 2024, TO PROVIDE THAT IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR AN EMPLOYER TO FAIL TO PAY THE STATE MINIMUM WAGE OR TO RETALIATE AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE FOR CERTAIN ACTIONS REGARDING ENFORCEMENT OF THE STATE MINIMUM WAGE LAW, TO PROVIDE REMEDIES FOR VIOLATIONS, TO PROVIDE A FIVE-YEAR STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT ACTIONS BROUGHT PURSUANT TO THIS ACT MAY BE BROUGHT AS A CLASS ACTION UNDER STATE LAW.

Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry

H. 3806 -- Rep. Hart: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 6-1-320, RELATING TO THE LIMIT ON ANNUAL PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE INCREASES IMPOSED BY POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS, SO AS TO RESTORE THE FORMER METHOD OF OVERRIDING THE ANNUAL CAP BY A POSITIVE MAJORITY OF THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNING BODY AND DELETING THE SUPER MAJORITY REQUIREMENT FOR OVERRIDING THE CAP FOR SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES; BY AMENDING SECTION 11-11-150, RELATING TO THE TRUST FUND FOR TAX RELIEF, SO AS TO RESTORE FUNDING FOR THE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION AND FULL FUNDING FOR THE SCHOOL-OPERATING MILLAGE PORTION OF THE REIMBURSEMENT PAID LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR THE HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR THE ELDERLY OR DISABLED; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-220, RELATING TO PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS, SO AS TO DELETE THE EXEMPTION REIMBURSED FROM THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FUND FROM ALL SCHOOL-OPERATING MILLAGE ALLOWED FOR ALL OWNER-OCCUPIED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-270, RELATING TO THE REIMBURSEMENTS PAID LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR PROPERTY TAX NOT COLLECTED AS A RESULT OF THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FOR THE ELDERLY OR DISABLED AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE APPLICATION OF PROPERTY TAX CREDITS IN COUNTIES WHERE THE USE OF LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX REVENUES GIVE RISE TO A CREDIT AGAINST SCHOOL-OPERATING PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING AMENDMENTS; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-251, RELATING TO THE CALCULATION OF "ROLLBACK TAX MILLAGE" APPLICABLE FOR REASSESSMENT YEARS, SO AS TO RESTORE THE FORMER EXEMPTION ALLOWED FROM A PORTION OF SCHOOL-OPERATING MILLAGE FOR ALL OWNER-OCCUPIED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY; BY REPEALING ARTICLE 7 OF CHAPTER 10, TITLE 4 RELATING TO THE LOCAL OPTION SALES AND USE TAX FOR LOCAL PROPERTY TAX CREDITS; BY REPEALING SECTIONS 11-11-157, 11-11-155, AND 11-11-156 RELATING TO THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION TRUST FUND; BY REPEALING ARTICLE 11 OF CHAPTER 36, TITLE 12 RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE ADDITIONAL ONE PERCENT SALES AND USE TAX THE REVENUES OF WHICH REIMBURSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FROM ALL PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE IMPOSED FOR SCHOOL OPERATIONS; BY AMENDING SECTIONS 12-37-3130, 12-37-3140, AND 12-37-3150, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS, VALUATION, AND ASSESSABLE TRANSFERS OF INTEREST, FOR PURPOSES OF THE "SOUTH CAROLINA REAL PROPERTY VALUATION REFORM ACT", SO AS TO ELIMINATE THE "POINT OF SALE" VALUATION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF IMPOSITION OF THE PROPERTY TAX AND RETURN TO THE FORMER VALUATION SYSTEM IN WHICH REAL PROPERTY AND IMPROVEMENTS TO REAL PROPERTY ARE APPRAISED BY THE ASSESSOR AND PERIODICALLY ADJUSTED IN COUNTYWIDE REAPPRAISALS, TO PROVIDE THAT WHEN THE FIFTEEN PERCENT CAP OVER FIVE YEARS ON INCREASES IN FAIR MARKET VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY RESULTS IN A VALUE THAT IS LOWER THAN THE FAIR MARKET VALUE OF THE PROPERTY AS DETERMINED BY THE ASSESSOR THAT THE LOWER VALUE BECOMES THE PROPERTY TAX VALUE OF THE REAL PROPERTY AND IS DEEMED ITS FAIR MARKET VALUE FOR PURPOSES OF IMPOSITION OF PROPERTY TAX, TO PROVIDE THAT AN ASSESSABLE TRANSFER OF INTEREST IS A TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OR OTHER INSTANCE CAUSING A "STEPUP" IN THE PROPERTY TAX VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY TO ITS FAIR MARKET VALUE AS DETERMINED BY THE ASSESSOR, TO REQUIRE THE CAP ON INCREASES IN VALUE TO BE APPLIED SEPARATELY TO REAL PROPERTY AND THE IMPROVEMENTS THEREON, AND TO PROVIDE WHEN THE STEPUP VALUE FIRST APPLIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-60-30, RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF "PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT" FOR PURPOSES OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE PROCEDURES ACT, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE NOTICES TO INCLUDE PROPERTY TAX VALUE AND PROVIDE THAT THE APPLICABLE ASSESSMENT RATIO APPLIES TO THE LOWER OF FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROPERTY TAX VALUE, OR SPECIAL USE VALUE; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-60-2510, RELATING TO THE FORM OF ASSESSMENT NOTICES ISSUED BY THE COUNTY ASSESSOR, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THESE NOTICES MUST CONTAIN THE PROPERTY TAX VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY AND IMPROVEMENTS IN ADDITION TO FAIR MARKET VALUE AND SPECIAL USE VALUE; BY REPEALING ARTICLE 25 OF CHAPTER 37, TITLE 12 RELATING TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA REAL PROPERTY VALUATION REFORM ACT, IF CERTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ARE RATIFIED; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-43-220, RELATING TO PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS AND SECTIONS 12-60-30 AND 12-60-2510, RELATING TO TAX PROCEDURES, ALL SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING AMENDMENTS, AND MAKE THESE REPEALS AND AMENDMENTS CONTINGENT UPON RATIFICATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 6, ARTICLE X OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THIS STATE ELIMINATING THE FIFTEEN PERCENT CAP OVER FIVE YEARS IN INCREASES IN THE VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF IMPOSITION OF THE PROPERTY TAX AND ELIMINATING AN ASSESSABLE TRANSFER OF INTEREST AS AN EVENT THAT MAY RESULT IN A CHANGE IN THE VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF THE IMPOSITION OF THE PROPERTY TAX.

Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

H. 3807 -- Rep. Hart: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 7-19-130 SO AS TO ADOPT "THE AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT BY NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES; AND BY REPEALING SECTIONS 7-19-70, 7-19-80, 7-19-90, 7-19-100, AND 7-19-120 ALL RELATING TO PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

H. 3808 -- Rep. Hart: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 58-27-25 SO AS TO PROVIDE AN ELECTRICAL UTILITY OPERATING IN THIS STATE SHALL BURY ALL OF ITS NEW ELECTRICAL POWER TRANSMISSION LINES INSTALLED WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF A MUNICIPALITY IN THIS STATE BEGINNING JANUARY 2, 2024, AND SHALL BURY ALL OF ITS EXISTING ELECTRICAL POWER TRANSMISSION LINES LOCATED WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF A MUNICIPALITY IN THIS STATE ACCORDING TO A GRADUATED SCHEDULE BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2029 ; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 58-27-20, RELATING TO AREAS IN WHICH THE CHAPTER IS INAPPLICABLE, SO AS TO MAKE THE CHAPTER APPLICABLE TO SECTION 58-27-25.

Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry

H. 3809 -- Rep. Hart: A JOINT RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 6, ARTICLE X OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1895, RELATING TO PROPERTY TAX AND THE METHOD OF VALUATION OF REAL PROPERTY AND THE LIMITS ON INCREASES IN THE VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF THE PROPERTY TAX, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE BY LAW A DEFINITION OF "FAIR MARKET VALUE" FOR REAL PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF THE PROPERTY TAX, TO ELIMINATE THE FIFTEEN PERCENT LIMIT ON INCREASES IN THE VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY OVER FIVE YEARS, AND TO ELIMINATE AN ASSESSABLE TRANSFER OF INTEREST AS AN EVENT THAT MAY CHANGE THE VALUE OF THE REAL PROPERTY.

Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

H. 3810 -- Rep. Elliott: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-20-50, RELATING TO THE IMPOSITION OF LICENSE TAXES ON CORPORATIONS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE FEE DOES NOT APPLY TO ANY PORTION OF THE FIRST FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS OF CERTAIN CAPITAL STOCK AND PAID-IN OR CAPITAL SURPLUS.

Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

H. 3811 -- Rep. Elliott: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-3585, RELATING TO THE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP FUND TAX CREDIT, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR AN INCREASE IN THE AGGREGATE CREDIT FROM NINE MILLION TO TWELVE MILLION DOLLARS FOR TAX YEARS AFTER 2022.

Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

H. 3812 -- Rep. Hart: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 56-5-3895 SO AS TO PROVIDE IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR PERSONS TO OPERATE MOTOR VEHICLES WHILE USING CELLULAR TELEPHONES, PAGERS, PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT DEVICES, OR OTHER WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES THAT ARE NOT EQUIPPED WITH HANDS-FREE MECHANISMS, AND TO PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THIS PROVISION.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

H. 3813 -- Reps. Jefferson, White and Kilmartin: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "RURAL AREA SUPPORT ACT"; AND BY ADDING ARTICLE 13 TO CHAPTER 77, TITLE 38 SO AS TO REQUIRE ALL AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE POLICIES TO CONTAIN AN APPRAISAL CLAUSE, TO REQUIRE AUTOMOBILE REPAIRS TO FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S INSTRUCTIONS, TO ALLOW AN INSURED TO SELECT A VENDOR FOR SERVICES ARISING UNDER AN AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE POLICY, AND TO REQUIRE INSURERS TO UTILIZE SOUTH CAROLINA-OWNED VENDORS FOR AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT OF ITS COVERED SERVICES.

Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry

H. 3814 -- Rep. Rutherford: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 17-3-365 SO AS TO CREATE THE DIVISION OF STATEWIDE GRAND JURY DEFENSE WITHIN THE OFFICE OF INDIGENT DEFENSE AND PROVIDE FOR ITS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 17-3-5, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS FOR PURPOSES OF THE DEFENSE OF INDIGENTS, SO AS TO DEFINE THE "DIVISION OF STATEWIDE GRAND JURY DEFENSE".

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

S. 381 -- Senators Peeler, Verdin, Alexander, Martin and Malloy: A BILL TO RATIFY AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 36(A), ARTICLE III OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1895, RELATING TO THE GENERAL RESERVE FUND, SO AS TO INCREASE FROM FIVE TO SEVEN PERCENT THE AMOUNT OF STATE GENERAL FUND REVENUE IN THE LATEST COMPLETED FISCAL YEAR REQUIRED TO BE HELD IN THE GENERAL RESERVE FUND; AND TO RATIFY AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 36(B) OF ARTICLE III, RELATING TO THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND, SO AS TO INCREASE FROM TWO TO THREE PERCENT THE AMOUNT OF STATE GENERAL FUND REVENUE IN THE LATEST COMPLETED FISCAL YEAR REQUIRED TO BE HELD IN THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE FIRST USE OF THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND MUST BE TO OFFSET MIDYEAR BUDGET REDUCTIONS.

Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

**ROLL CALL**

The roll call of the House of Representatives was taken resulting as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Alexander | Anderson | Atkinson |
| Bailey | Ballentine | Bannister |
| Bauer | Beach | Bernstein |
| Blackwell | Bradley | Brewer |
| Brittain | Burns | Bustos |
| Calhoon | Carter | Caskey |
| Chapman | Chumley | Clyburn |
| Cobb-Hunter | Collins | Connell |
| B. J. Cox | B. L. Cox | Crawford |
| Cromer | Davis | Dillard |
| Elliott | Erickson | Felder |
| Forrest | Gagnon | Garvin |
| Gatch | Gibson | Gilliam |
| Gilliard | Guest | Guffey |
| Haddon | Hager | Hardee |
| Harris | Hart | Hayes |
| Henderson-Myers | Henegan | Herbkersman |
| Hewitt | Hiott | Hixon |
| Hosey | Howard | Hyde |
| Jefferson | J. E. Johnson | J. L. Johnson |
| S. Jones | W. Jones | Jordan |
| Kilmartin | King | Kirby |
| Landing | Lawson | Leber |
| Ligon | Long | Lowe |
| Magnuson | May | McCabe |
| McCravy | McDaniel | McGinnis |
| Mitchell | J. Moore | T. Moore |
| A. M. Morgan | T. A. Morgan | Moss |
| Murphy | Neese | B. Newton |
| W. Newton | Nutt | O'Neal |
| Oremus | Ott | Pace |
| Pedalino | Pope | Rivers |
| Robbins | Rose | Rutherford |
| Sandifer | Schuessler | Sessions |
| G. M. Smith | M. M. Smith | Stavrinakis |
| Taylor | Tedder | Thayer |
| Thigpen | Trantham | Vaughan |
| Weeks | West | Wetmore |
| Wheeler | White | Whitmire |
| Williams | Willis | Wooten |
| Yow |  |  |

**Total Present--121**

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The SPEAKER granted Rep. HARTNETT a leave of absence for the day due to medical reasons.

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

In accordance with House Rule 5.2 below:

**“**5.2Every bill before presentation shall have its title endorsed; every report, its title at length; every petition, memorial, or other paper, its prayer or substance; and, in every instance, the name of the member presenting any paper shall be endorsed and the papers shall be presented by the member to the Speaker at the desk. A member may add his name to a bill or resolution or a co-sponsor of a bill or resolution may remove his name at any time prior to the bill or resolution receiving passage on second reading. The member or co-sponsor shall notify the Clerk of the House in writing of his desire to have his name added or removed from the bill or resolution. The Clerk of the House shall print the member's or co-sponsor's written notification in the House Journal. The removal or addition of a name does not apply to a bill or resolution sponsored by a committee.”

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3244 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | BAUER |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3254 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | MURPHY, BREWER, ROBBINS, TEDDER, COBB-HUNTER and GATCH |

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3425 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | ROBBINS |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3448 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | HIXON, O'NEAL, HYDE, T. MOORE, NUTT, MCCRAVY, GUEST, VAUGHAN, BALLENTINE, WOOTEN and POPE |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3473 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | M. M. SMITH, LOWE, HEWITT, THAYER, MURPHY, GAGNON, HIXON, BUSTOS, WEST, CRAWFORD, LANDING, GUEST and HIOTT |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3486 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | WETMORE, DILLARD and W. JONES |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3503 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | WHITMIRE, FELDER, YOW, MITCHELL, HAGER, CONNELL and LIGON |

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3523 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | LEBER |

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3549 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | LONG |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3583 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | LANDING and CHAPMAN |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3605 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | KIRBY and OREMUS |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3682 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | MCDANIEL, WOOTEN and POPE |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3691 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | YOW, MITCHELL, CONNELL and HAGER |

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3698 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | BURNS |

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3726 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | LEBER |

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3737 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | GAGNON |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3774 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | OREMUS, YOW, M. M. SMITH, HARDEE, J. E. JOHNSON, HIXON, BUSTOS, ERICKSON, LANDING, DAVIS, CRAWFORD, B. L. COX, CONNELL, VAUGHAN, LIGON, T. MOORE, MOSS, LAWSON, HYDE, LEBER, B. J. COX, WOOTEN, WHITMIRE, LONG, HERBKERSMAN, NUTT, MITCHELL, GAGNON, BRADLEY, B. NEWTON, JORDAN, BREWER, MURPHY, GILLIAM, WILLIS, BLACKWELL, ELLIOTT and GUEST |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3779 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | HENEGAN, HENDERSON-MYERS and KING |

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3785 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | CARTER |

**CO-SPONSORS ADDED**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Number: | H. 3786 |
| Date: | ADD: |
| 01/25/23 | KIRBY, CARTER and ATKINSON |

**SPEAKER *PRO TEMPORE* IN CHAIR**

**H. 3254--AMENDED AND ORDERED TO THIRD READING**

The following Bill was taken up:

H. 3254 -- Reps. Jefferson, Murphy, Brewer, Robbins, Tedder, Cobb-Hunter and Gatch: A BILL TO AMEND ACT 593 OF 1992, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE LIMIT ON CASH RESERVES THAT MAY BE MAINTAINED BY DORCHESTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS 2 AND 4, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE LIMIT ON CASH RESERVES DOES NOT APPLY TO DORCHESTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS 2 AND 4 IN FISCAL YEARS 2023-2024 AND 2024-2025.

Rep. MURPHY proposed the following Amendment No. 1 to H. 3254 (LC-3254.PH0002H), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, by deleting SECTION 1.

Amend the bill further, by adding an appropriately numbered SECTION read:

SECTION X. SECTION 3 of Act 593 of 1992, as last amended by Act 254 of 2022 is repealed.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Rep. MURPHY explained the amendment.

The amendment was then adopted.

The question recurred to the passage of the Bill.

The yeas and nays were taken resulting as follows:

Yeas 102; Nays 0

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Atkinson | Bailey | Ballentine |
| Bannister | Bauer | Beach |
| Bernstein | Blackwell | Bradley |
| Brewer | Brittain | Burns |
| Bustos | Calhoon | Carter |
| Chapman | Chumley | Clyburn |
| Cobb-Hunter | Collins | B. J. Cox |
| B. L. Cox | Crawford | Davis |
| Dillard | Elliott | Erickson |
| Felder | Forrest | Gagnon |
| Garvin | Gatch | Gibson |
| Gilliam | Gilliard | Guest |
| Guffey | Haddon | Hager |
| Hardee | Hart | Hayes |
| Henderson-Myers | Henegan | Herbkersman |
| Hewitt | Hiott | Hixon |
| Hosey | Hyde | Jefferson |
| J. L. Johnson | S. Jones | W. Jones |
| Jordan | Kilmartin | King |
| Kirby | Landing | Lawson |
| Leber | Ligon | Long |
| McDaniel | McGinnis | Mitchell |
| J. Moore | T. Moore | Moss |
| Murphy | Neese | B. Newton |
| W. Newton | Nutt | O'Neal |
| Oremus | Ott | Pace |
| Pedalino | Pope | Rivers |
| Robbins | Rose | Schuessler |
| Sessions | G. M. Smith | M. M. Smith |
| Stavrinakis | Taylor | Tedder |
| Thayer | Thigpen | Trantham |
| Vaughan | Weeks | Wetmore |
| White | Whitmire | Williams |
| Willis | Wooten | Yow |

**Total--102**

Those who voted in the negative are:

**Total--0**

So, the Bill, as amended, was read the second time and ordered to third reading.

RECORD FOR VOTING

I was temporarily out of the Chamber on constituent business with the South Carolina A.M.E. Church bishop and members during the vote on H. 3254. If I had been present, I would have voted in favor of the Bill.

Rep. Carl Anderson

**H. 3783--ORDERED TO THIRD READING**

The following Joint Resolution was taken up:

H. 3783 -- Reps. Sandifer and Hardee: A JOINT RESOLUTION TO ALLOW THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE REVIEW COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE LESS THAN THREE QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR THE POSITION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE FOR THE GOVERNOR'S CONSIDERATION UNTIL THE VACANCY IS FILLED OR JULY 1, 2023, WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST.

Rep. HARDEE explained the Joint Resolution.

The yeas and nays were taken resulting as follows:

Yeas 110; Nays 0

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Atkinson | Bailey | Ballentine |
| Bannister | Bauer | Beach |
| Bernstein | Blackwell | Bradley |
| Brewer | Brittain | Burns |
| Bustos | Calhoon | Carter |
| Caskey | Chapman | Chumley |
| Clyburn | Cobb-Hunter | Collins |
| Connell | B. J. Cox | B. L. Cox |
| Crawford | Cromer | Davis |
| Dillard | Erickson | Felder |
| Forrest | Gagnon | Garvin |
| Gatch | Gibson | Gilliam |
| Gilliard | Guest | Guffey |
| Haddon | Hager | Hardee |
| Harris | Hart | Henderson-Myers |
| Henegan | Herbkersman | Hewitt |
| Hiott | Hixon | Hosey |
| Hyde | Jefferson | J. L. Johnson |
| S. Jones | W. Jones | Jordan |
| Kilmartin | King | Kirby |
| Landing | Lawson | Ligon |
| Long | Lowe | Magnuson |
| McCabe | McCravy | McDaniel |
| McGinnis | Mitchell | J. Moore |
| T. Moore | A. M. Morgan | T. A. Morgan |
| Moss | Murphy | Neese |
| W. Newton | Nutt | O'Neal |
| Oremus | Ott | Pace |
| Pedalino | Pope | Rivers |
| Robbins | Rose | Rutherford |
| Sandifer | Schuessler | Sessions |
| G. M. Smith | M. M. Smith | Stavrinakis |
| Taylor | Tedder | Thayer |
| Trantham | Vaughan | Weeks |
| West | Wetmore | White |
| Whitmire | Williams | Willis |
| Wooten | Yow |  |

**Total--110**

Those who voted in the negative are:

**Total--0**

So, the Joint Resolution was read the second time and ordered to third reading.

RECORD FOR VOTING

I was temporarily out of the Chamber on constituent business during the vote on H. 3783. If I had been present, I would have voted in favor of the Joint Resolution.

Rep. Jason Elliott

RECORD FOR VOTING

I was temporarily out of the Chamber on constituent business with the South Carolina A.M.E. Church bishop and members during the vote on H. 3783. If I had been present, I would have voted in favor of the Joint Resolution.

Rep. Carl Anderson

**RECURRENCE TO THE MORNING HOUR**

Rep. FORREST moved that the House recur to the morning hour, which was agreed to.

**HOUSE RESOLUTION**

The following was introduced:

H. 3815 -- Reps. Henderson-Myers, Alexander, Anderson, Atkinson, Bailey, Ballentine, Bamberg, Bannister, Bauer, Beach, Bernstein, Blackwell, Bradley, Brewer, Brittain, Burns, Bustos, Calhoon, Carter, Caskey, Chapman, Chumley, Clyburn, Cobb-Hunter, Collins, Connell, B. J. Cox, B. L. Cox, Crawford, Cromer, Davis, Dillard, Elliott, Erickson, Felder, Forrest, Gagnon, Garvin, Gatch, Gibson, Gilliam, Gilliard, Guest, Guffey, Haddon, Hager, Hardee, Harris, Hart, Hartnett, Hayes, Henegan, Herbkersman, Hewitt, Hiott, Hixon, Hosey, Howard, Hyde, Jefferson, J. E. Johnson, J. L. Johnson, S. Jones, W. Jones, Jordan, Kilmartin, King, Kirby, Landing, Lawson, Leber, Ligon, Long, Lowe, Magnuson, May, McCabe, McCravy, McDaniel, McGinnis, Mitchell, J. Moore, T. Moore, A. M. Morgan, T. A. Morgan, Moss, Murphy, Neese, B. Newton, W. Newton, Nutt, O'Neal, Oremus, Ott, Pace, Pedalino, Pendarvis, Pope, Rivers, Robbins, Rose, Rutherford, Sandifer, Schuessler, Sessions, G. M. Smith, M. M. Smith, Stavrinakis, Taylor, Tedder, Thayer, Thigpen, Trantham, Vaughan, Weeks, West, Wetmore, Wheeler, White, Whitmire, Williams, Willis, Wooten and Yow: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO COMMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTERS OF THE LINKS, INCORPORATED, FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES AND TO DECLARE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2023, AS "LINKS DAY AT THE CAPITOL."

The Resolution was adopted.

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

The following was introduced:

H. 3816 -- Rep. Leber: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE BRIDGE THAT CROSSES RUSSELL CREEK ALONG SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 174 IN CHARLESTON COUNTY "DAVID L. LYBRAND MEMORIAL BRIDGE" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

The Resolution was ordered referred to the Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions.

Rep. MAGNUSON moved that the House recede until 6:30 p.m., which was agreed to.

**JOINT ASSEMBLY**

At 7:00 p.m. the Senate appeared in the Hall of the House. The President of the Senate called the Joint Assembly to order and announced that it had convened under the terms of a Concurrent Resolution adopted by both Houses.

H. 3603 -- Rep. G.M. Smith: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION INVITING HIS EXCELLENCY, HENRY DARGAN MCMASTER, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO ADDRESS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN JOINT SESSION AT 7:00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023, IN THE CHAMBER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Governor Henry McMaster and distinguished party were escorted to the rostrum by Senators Peeler, Setzler, Bennett, Malloy and Shealy and REPRESENTATIVES BRITTAIN, ERICKSON, HIOTT, JONES, LEBER and THIGPEN. The President of the Senate introduced Governor McMaster, who then addressed the Joint Assembly as follows:

2023 State of the State Address

Governor Henry McMaster

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen of the General Assembly, my fellow South Carolinians:

We are here tonight to address challenges and opportunities.

But first, as in prior years, I’d like to recognize those in uniform whom we lost in the line of duty in 2022.

Officer Roy Andrew Barr of the Cayce Police Department

Deputy Austin Derek Aldridge of the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office

Corporal Sara K. Weaver of Florence County Emergency Medical Services, and

Master Police Officer Tyrell Owens-Riley of the Columbia Police Department

To the families and loved ones of these brave South Carolinians, with all our hearts, we offer our condolences. We are eternally grateful for their service.

I am delighted to have with us once again tonight our First Lady, my bride Peggy, our son Henry, Jr., whose wife Virginia is home with their three-month-old daughter, Margot Gray. Also, our daughter Mary Rogers, whose husband Sam is home with their six-month-old son, James Dargan. Please stand and be recognized.

Also, our Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette, and her husband David are here tonight.  Please stand and be recognized.

Our state constitutional officeholders are here with us tonight, including our new Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver.  Please stand and be recognized.

Finally, will the members of the best cabinet in the nation please stand and be recognized.  Thank you.

The people of the great State of South Carolina have given me the honor and privilege of serving as your Governor for another four years.  My family and I thank you.

My pledge to all is that we will not squander this opportunity; we will continue to act boldly, think big and continue building on our successes.

South Carolina is richly blessed with a hardworking and talented people.  Our quality of life and cultural heritage, abundant natural resources and prosperous economy make us unique and attractive to all.  In fact, South Carolina is the third fastest growing state in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau. People want to be here.

Our booming economy has once again created a record budget surplus, this year totaling over $3.5 billion in unexpected revenue.  State government is in superior fiscal shape.  Today, we have the largest rainy day reserve fund balance and lowest amount of debt than at any other time in recent memory.

So, it should come as no surprise that 2022 was the most successful year for economic growth in our state’s history, with the record for the largest capital investment project broken twice in the same year.

In 2022, we announced 120 projects which will create over 14,000 new jobs with $10.27 billion in new capital investment.  This is almost two and a half times as much as 2021.

As another sign of our economic strength, last year we almost quadrupled our foreign direct investment from the previous year.  Every day, employers are creating new jobs, entrepreneurs are opening new businesses, and companies are deciding to locate in South Carolina.

The Palmetto State has one of the nation's fastest-growing container ports, two innovative inland ports, thirty-three airports, 2,300 miles of rail lines and more than 41,000 miles of state-maintained highways. The Port of Charleston has the deepest harbor – 52 feet – on the East Coast and its volume will grow exponentially this year.

There are 208 million people - two-thirds of the U.S. population - within two days’ drive of South Carolina.  Our thriving tourism industry continues to break records.  Compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019, in the 2021-22 fiscal year, accommodations tax collections were up almost 50 percent, our state park system revenues were up 46 percent, and admissions tax collections were up 28 percent.

Not only did we drive our way through a debilitating pandemic, with our decisions based on common sense and the Constitution, we thrived.

Tonight, we will recognize several of the businesses which announced new capital investment in South Carolina during the record-breaking year of 2022.

As you will notice, the automotive industry continues moving towards electric vehicles, and South Carolina is moving along with it.  Last year I issued an executive order prioritizing the recruitment of these manufacturers to ensure that our state will continue to be seen as the ideal place for manufacturers and suppliers to do business. South Carolina will continue to adapt as the industry innovates and grows.

In Berkeley County, Redwood Materials will invest $3.5 billion – the single largest announcement in the history of South Carolina – and create 1,500 jobs for a new battery materials recycling facility.

In the Upstate, BMW will invest $1.7 billion – the second largest investment in state history: $1 billion of which will prepare Plant Spartanburg to produce electric vehicles and $700 million to build a new, high-voltage battery assembly facility in Woodruff, which will create 300 new jobs.

Envision AESC will invest $810 million in Florence to build a new, state-of-the-art battery cell gigafactory and employ over 1,000 residents to supply technology-leading battery cells to power the next generation of electric vehicles.

In Colleton County, Kontrolmatik Pomega will build a 3 gigawatt-hour capacity lithium-ion battery factory that will produce grid-scale energy storage. The company’s $279 million investment will create approximately 575 new jobs.

Bosch made two announcements in 2022 that continue to develop the company’s nearly 50-year history in the State of South Carolina.

In Anderson County, Bosch plans to invest $200 million and create up to 350 new jobs to expand operations to become the company’s first production operation of fuel cell technology in the United States.

And in Dorchester County, Bosch launched the production of electric motors to support the U.S. market demand for electrified vehicles, with plans for future growth. Bosch plans to invest $260 million and create 350 jobs at its site in North Charleston.

With a combined investment of $625 million and 50 new jobs, Nucor Steel is expanding in Berkeley County to include a new galvanizing line to meet the increased demand for steel, and an air separation unit to modernize the mill.

E.A. Sween, a leading supplier in the “ready-to-eat” sandwich industry, will invest $38 million and create 300 new jobs in Greenwood County.

In Greenville County, Health Supply U.S. is investing $150 million and creating 600 new jobs for a new manufacturing facility that will produce American-made personal protective equipment.

KION North America will invest $40 million and create 450 jobs to reshore the manufacturing of core components for industrial lift trucks from China to Summerville.

Will the leaders from these companies here with us tonight please stand and be recognized when I call your name. We will hold our applause until all are standing.

Mr. Jason Thompson, the Chief Financial Officer of Redwood Materials.

Ms. Sherry McCraw, the Vice President of Human Resources of BMW.

Mr. Jeff Deaton, the Managing Director for North America of Envision AESC.

Mr. Bahadir Yetki, the Chief Executive Officer of Kontrolmatik Pomega.

Mr. Mike Mansuetti, the President of Bosch North America.

Mr. Nathan Pranger, the Vice President and General Manager of Nucor Steel.

Ms. Kristi Broadwater, the Senior Vice President of Human Resources for E.A. Sween.

Mr. Chris Garcia, the Chief Executive Officer of Health Supply U.S.

Mr. Jonathan Dawley, the President and Chief Executive Officer of KION North America.

And finally, our Secretary of Commerce, Harry Lightsey, and his remarkable team which worked around the clock to produce these successes, are here tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for making 2022 a record-breaking year in South Carolina. And this year, let’s do it again.

Last year presented numerous challenges for the people of South Carolina, including those resulting from the misguided and unconstitutional policies of the Biden Administration, such as dramatic inflation and sharp interest rate hikes.  Left unchecked, run-away federal spending has created the specter of a recession on the horizon.

Yet I remain confident about the future of our State because I have faith in our people and in those they elected to represent them in the General Assembly.  And I am excited to renew our successful partnership - one based on working together through collaboration, communication, and cooperation.

Today, we are presented with an opportunity to take bold, transformative actions that will build prosperity for generations to come.

The foundations of our successes rest on three pillars: economic strength, education, and our natural environment.

This past November, South Carolinians overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment increasing the minimum required balance in the rainy-day reserve fund. It was increased from 5 percent to 7 percent of the total amount of General Appropriations Act funds available to be appropriated in any year.

I now ask the General Assembly to set aside an additional $500 million to voluntarily increase the rainy-day reserve fund minimum balance from 7 percent to 10 percent.  By saving this money instead of spending it, we will once again be prepared for any future economic uncertainties, should they arise.

Until recently, South Carolina had the highest personal income tax rate in the southeast and the 12th highest in the nation.  No more.

Last year, we worked together to pass the largest income tax cut in state history. This made South Carolina even more competitive with other states for new jobs and capital investment.  A tax cut has the impact of a pay raise, letting people keep and spend more of their hard-earned money, which itself is a catalyst for even more economic growth and prosperity.

In February, the state Board of Economic Advisors is scheduled to issue an updated revenue forecast.  Should an increase in future revenues allow, I ask the General Assembly to use additional funds to speed up the income tax cut schedule, so taxpayers can keep even more of their hard-earned money.

In addition, I recommend setting aside a significant amount of funds to re-invest in our state’s record-breaking economic development efforts, rather than borrowing it through the issuance of bonds, which increases our state’s debt.  A one-time appropriation of $500 million will allow the Department of Commerce to satisfy all outstanding obligations and incentives without borrowing money. The House recently approved this appropriation, and it is my hope that the Senate will follow suit.

An additional one-time appropriation of $200 million will allow the department to identify and secure properties for future mega-site development.

Rural South Carolina has everything it needs for beauty and tranquility.  But what it needs for good public and economic health is water and sewer.  The right water and sewer systems in a county can transform a tax base.  That means jobs, good schools, strong families, and a safe and vibrant community.

In 2022, the state Rural Infrastructure Authority received $800 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds. Their purpose: to replace, repair, and consolidate our state's aging and outdated rural water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure, through competitive grants.  The demand exceeded the supply, and RIA received grant applications in 2022 for almost $2 billion.  This year, I am recommending that a minimum of $380 million in remaining ARPA funds be used to continue making these transformative water and sewer grants in our rural communities.

There is no infrastructure more in need of big, bold, and continued investment than our state’s roads, bridges, highways, and interstates.   Our successes are outrunning our infrastructure.

Last year, the Department of Transportation got almost $1 billion to accelerate and jump start construction, expansion, and improvements to our state-owned roads, bridges, highways, and to widen interstates. However, in the immortal words of Jerry Reed, “we’ve got a long way to go and a short time to get there.”  So, we must invest more.

This year, my Executive Budget provides an additional $850 million to continue speeding up the completion of projects which will relieve traffic congestion on interstates and highways, repair or repave local roads and fix over 400 bridges across the State.

Working together, we have taken bold steps to improve the education our children receive in the classroom.

Until last year, South Carolina’s system for funding K-12 education was archaic and confusing, a piecemeal system consisting of 29 separate line-item appropriations.  Now, a consolidated formula makes sure that funding follows the child.

It keeps pace with student enrollments and provides financial resources to support a state average student-teacher ratio of 11.2 students per teacher, with an average teacher salary, including fringe benefits, of $72,991.  My Executive Budget also increases State Aid to Classrooms by $254 million.

To increase the percentage of children who enter our public schools ready to learn, we unleashed the free market and expanded full-day, four-year-old kindergarten to all at-risk children in the State. Parents may now choose the public, private, or for-profit childcare provider that best suits their child’s educational needs.

Today, we are serving 16,103 “at-risk” children in the program, which is an all-time high.

Last year, there were 18 children eligible to participate in the state-funded, full-day 4K program at St. Martin de Porres Catholic School, located in Columbia.

St. Martin is a private school participating in the full-day 4K program.

This year, parents of nine of those children wanted to enroll their children in five-year-old kindergarten at the school but could not afford to pay the tuition. Thanks to the generosity of the Catholic Church, they were able to continue their education at St. Martin at no cost to the families.

Jonathan McMillan is one of those children: He participated in the full-day 4K program last year and is now enrolled in five-year-old kindergarten at St. Martin.

According to his mother and teachers, Jonathan has been saved from further struggle and challenge by staying at St. Martin. “He had challenges upon his arrival. He had different social skills that required the intentionality of our educational team. Jonathan is not shy; he is brilliant and a determined leader.” His teacher, Ms. Hare, says that her goal is to help him find his light so he can brightly shine to the world around him.

Jonathan is here tonight accompanied by his mother Ms. Djenabou along with the principal of St. Martin, Ms. Delores Gilliard. Ms. Gilliard has served as principal for five years. She completed a 40-year career in the public schools in Richland One school district, spending 22 years as a principal.

Jonathan and ladies, please stand and be recognized.

My Executive Budget also provides $25 million in lottery dollars for the creation of education scholarship accounts, or ESAs, pending a change in the law by the General Assembly.  These funds will allow lower-income parents to choose the type of education environment and instruction that best suits their child’s unique needs.

My Executive Budget also proposes to continue the remarkable progress we have made in raising teacher pay.  And we must do more.  New teaching positions are being created every year at new schools constructed to keep up with our growing population.

Six years ago, the minimum starting salary of a teacher in South Carolina was $30,113 and the average teacher salary was below the southeastern average.

Today, the minimum starting salary of a teacher in South Carolina is $40,000 and the average teacher salary now exceeds the southeastern average.

My Executive Budget proposes increasing teacher salaries by $2,500 at every step of the state salary schedule, making the new minimum starting teacher salary $42,500. My goal by 2026 is a minimum starting salary of at least - at least - $50,000.

In addition, my Executive Budget provides every eligible public-school teacher for the upcoming school year, with a one-time $2,500 retention supplement, half in December and the other half in May.

Miss MyKenna Blankenship is a first-year teacher at Bay Road Elementary School in the Darlington County School District. She teaches first grade. Miss Blankenship was a Teaching Fellow at Francis Marion University where she completed her bachelor’s degree.

She is the daughter of Ms. Jennifer Blankenship, also a teacher in the Darlington County School District. She teaches English and the Teacher Cadet Program at the Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology. The Teacher Cadet Program is a high school course which encourages academically talented high school students to consider teaching as a career.

MyKenna always wanted to be a teacher. As she said, “my mom was a lot of inspiration for my journey. I enjoy seeing students make connections with their life and what they are learning in school, but also the ‘Ah-Ha’ moment when they truly understand a concept. My first year is going awesome and I could not have been more blessed with the community I chose. These students are bright and always begin the day with a surprise. I learn more as a teacher and person every day. This career and opportunity with the students fulfill my life in more than one way.”

MyKenna and her mother are here with us tonight. Ladies, please stand and be recognized.

Placing an armed, certified school resource officer – SRO - in every school, in every county, all day, every day, has been one of my top priorities.  At my request, the General Assembly began funding a grant program administered by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to provide school districts with funds to hire more resource officers for our 1,283 public schools.

The grant program has been very successful and has more than doubled the number of officers assigned to a school, going from 406 to 982 in just four years. This year I am recommending an additional $27.3 million to provide an additional 188 schools with an SRO. With this appropriation, 90 percent of South Carolina’s public schools will have an SRO assigned to their campus.

In July of 2021 Michael Tucker was named Program Manager for the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program at DPS. During Mr. Tucker’s first year as the SRO Program Manager, working with school districts and local law enforcement agencies, the number of state-funded School Resource Officers increased by 74 percent.

For his exemplary work to improve school safety in our state, Mr. Tucker was recognized in October as the DPS’s Public Servant of the Year.

Joining Michael tonight is the Director of the Department of Public Safety Rob Woods and Chief of Staff Michael Oliver. Gentlemen, please stand and be recognized.

To train our state’s SROs, I recommend providing the State Law Enforcement Division with $3.5 million to create the *Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence*.  Located at the old Gilbert Elementary School, this partnership with Lexington School District One will provide a state-of-the-art training center in a real life setting for law enforcement and school personnel.

Last year, we expanded the investigative jurisdiction of the state Inspector General to reflect concerns that South Carolinians have regarding the management of our public schools, especially the management of taxpayer funds by school boards. It was a good first step toward restoring the public’s confidence in the actions of school boards. We should expand this transparency.

To this end, the public should also know who is getting paid to influence decisions made by county, municipal, or school board officials.  These “lobbyists” should be required to register with the State Ethics Commission, just like those who are paid to lobby the legislature.  What’s good for the Statehouse - is good for the Schoolhouse. Members of the General Assembly, send me this legislation and I will sign it into law.

We know that access to an affordable degree or skilled trade certificate is essential to ensure that our state has the trained and educated workforce to compete for jobs and investment in the future. Manufacturers in particular view the availability of skilled labor as critical to their decision to invest here.

To address the critical labor shortage affecting key sectors of our economy, I am asking the General Assembly to invest an additional $78 million in lottery funds to expand Workforce Scholarships for the Future through the South Carolina Technical College System.

In the last two years, this highly successful program has empowered over 10,000 South Carolinians to earn an industry credential in high-demand careers like manufacturing, healthcare, computer science, information technology, transportation, logistics, or construction.

Geena Rocanella, a graduate of Airport High School in Lexington School District Two, is pursuing an Associate Degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Midlands Technical College.  In the afternoons, she works in an after-school program, caring for preschool and elementary-age students. After-school programs provide activities for students and allow mothers and fathers to work.

After completing her Associate Degree, Ms. Rocanella plans to transfer to a four-year college to complete her teacher certification requirements and become a teacher.

She received a Workforce Scholarship to attend Midlands Technical College because all regions of our state face a critical shortage of child-care workers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 100,000 fewer child-care workers today in America than before the pandemic.  They are in high demand.

Ms. Rocanella is joining us tonight, and with her is Dr. Ron Rhames, President of Midlands Technical College.

And this would not have been possible without the tremendous leadership of Dr. Tim Hardee, President of the State Technical College System who is also here tonight.

Will you all please stand and be recognized.

My Executive Budget marks the fourth consecutive year that I have asked the General Assembly to freeze college tuition for in-state students, with an appropriation to our institutions of higher education of $43 million. This represents the 5.2 percent increase in the Higher Education Price Index for 2022 and is based on the number of in-state students enrolled at each public institution.

We are also providing a record amount of financial aid and scholarships for students in need.  I propose providing $80 million so that every South Carolinian who qualifies for federal need-based financial aid - as measured by federal Pell Grants – receives sufficient state financial assistance to attend any in-state public college, university, or technical college.

And students at private, independent, and historically black colleges and universities will receive an additional $20 million for tuition grants and assistance.

In just two years, the University of South Carolina (USC) has almost doubled the number of in-state students receiving need-based grants from 2,000 students to more than 3,900 students from every county in the State.

With us tonight is Jazmine Lara Guerrero, a junior at the University of South Carolina majoring in Political Science.  Upon graduating, she plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Political Science. For the past three years, she has received a need-based grant.

Miss Guerrero is a first-generation college student.  She is an Opportunity Scholar, a Ronald E. McNair Scholar, and a Magellan Scholar. She is part of the Gamecock Guarantee Program, which provides financial and academic support to first-generation college students. And she will graduate having no student loan debt.

Before entering USC, Miss Guerrero attended the Academy for the Arts, Science and Technology, a public magnet high school in Myrtle Beach. Jazmine, please stand and be recognized.

We must continue to address the repairs needed at the aging, state-owned buildings, and infrastructure on the campuses of our four-year colleges, technical colleges, and universities. I ask the General Assembly to join me in paying down the state’s deferred maintenance liability with $209 million in Capital Reserve funds to be distributed pro-rata based on each institution’s in-state enrollment. Let’s pay for this right now, rather than borrowing it and creating more debt.

In addition, I ask that the General Assembly complete the funding of the Battelle Alliance, a collaborative nuclear sciences research partnership between the University of South Carolina, Clemson University, South Carolina State University, and the Savannah River National Laboratory.  With an appropriation of $100 million in addition to the $20 million appropriated last year, the alliance will develop workforce training programs designed to develop a pipeline of new talent to fill engineering, science, research, and management positions for private industry and nuclear facilities, including those operated by the Department of Energy. The impact on our research campuses will be far-reaching and dramatic.

It’s clear that a mental health crisis exists in South Carolina following the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among our young people. Many are still struggling with the effects of disruptions, virtual instruction, isolation, and constant changes to normal routines.

South Carolinians in crisis must have access to professional mental health counseling and services.

To meet the growing demand for mental and behavioral health services, I am recommending an allocation of nearly $45 million to the Department of Mental Health. These funds will support the agency’s ability to recruit and retain mental health professionals, provide inpatient services, increase access to crisis services such as suicide prevention hotlines – including one specifically for veterans – and community-based treatment services.

Last year, I directed Health and Human Services Director Robbie Kerr to initiate an immediate review of our State’s behavioral health funding and delivery system.

It became clear from Director Kerr’s efforts that the time has come to modernize and restructure South Carolina’s siloed healthcare delivery agencies: the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Environmental Control, among others.

My Executive Budget includes a $5 million appropriation to the Department of Administration for the purpose of procuring the professional expertise necessary to analyze and provide the General Assembly, by June 30, 2024, with a comprehensive plan to restructure these agencies, consolidating and privatizing services where possible.

Our booming economy sometimes puts our state agencies at a disadvantage with the private sector in recruiting and retaining good employees.

My Executive Budget provides $78 million for recruitment and retention salary increases for state employees; $2 million for a one-time $2,500 “sign on bonus” for new, first-time state government hires; and $2 million to the Department of Administration so they may assist smaller state agencies with marketing and advertising efforts to fill those “hard to hire” positions.

I am also recommending there be no increase in employee-paid premiums for State Health Plan participants and that we add - at no cost to state employees - an annual OBGYN exam for all females, similar to the existing no-cost adult wellness visit which was added two years ago.

Finally, the South Carolina Retirement System, often called the “state pension plan,” has one of the largest unfunded liabilities in the nation, at nearly $24 billion. The system only has assets equal to 64 percent of what is required to pay beneficiaries, which places our pension system fifth worst in the nation.

Once again, I ask that the state plan be closed to new beneficiaries as of December 31, 2023, and that new state employees prospectively enrolled in the State Optional Retirement Program, which is a defined contribution 401(k) plan. Another year of inaction is another year in which the unfunded liability in the pension plan will increase. We cannot “kick this can down the road” any further.

To keep South Carolinians safe, we must maintain a robust law enforcement presence - and properly “fund the police.”  Our state law enforcement agencies continue to lose valuable and experienced people because they are unable to remain competitive with pay and benefits.

Thanks to the compensation review conducted by Ms. Marcia Adams, Director of the Department of Administration, our state law enforcement and criminal justice agencies have begun to stem the tide of personnel loss with $40 million in recruitment and retention pay raises provided in last year’s General Appropriations Act.

I am proposing that we continue to build on this momentum, by providing an additional $21.5 million for recruitment and retention pay raises this year with the understanding that we will continue doing it.

I am also proposing a $2,000 state income tax credit for every active-duty law enforcement officer, firefighter, first responder, and emergency medical technician.  This nonrefundable tax credit will provide a total of $38.4 million in income tax relief for those who put their lives on the line each day to protect and serve our people.

Additionally, I recommend that we maintain a proviso suspending the $10,000 retirement cap for anyone enrolled in the Police Officers Retirement System. This will allow retired officers to return to work and fill existing vacancies and make our state safer.

Our law enforcement officers know who the repeat criminals are.  They commit over 80 percent of the crimes.

Sixteenth Solicitor Kevin Brackett shared a shocking example of how bad this problem has become.

On September 30, 2018, a repeat criminal, whose name I shall not repeat, who had a prior record of drugs, assault and battery, burglary, and illegal gun possession, was arrested and charged with possession of two stolen pistols, possession with intent to distribute crack and fentanyl - and to distribute it near a park or school - resisting arrest and possession of a stolen M16A4 machine gun. He was released on a $10,000 bond.

Less than four months later, he was charged with domestic violence of a high and aggravated nature for violently assaulting his pregnant girlfriend.  Once again, he was released on bond.

Then, a few weeks after that, this repeat criminal, out on bond, shot two people, killing one. The surviving gunshot victim was the same pregnant girlfriend he assaulted weeks earlier. He also held four people at gunpoint, assaulting three of them with a hammer. He fled and then shot a third victim later that same day.  She survived.

After all that, he was finally arrested, convicted, and was eventually sentenced to life in prison.

Unfortunately, this is happening every day. How long are we going to let this happen?

Law enforcement needs our help. They need stronger laws to keep illegal guns out of the hands of criminals and juveniles, and new laws to “close the revolving door” and keep career criminals behind bars and not out on bond.

That means no bond for repeat criminals.  Those who commit a crime while out on bond will receive an automatic mandatory five-year felony sentence with no early release or parole – on top of the sentence for their previous crimes.

Currently, there are no graduated criminal penalties for illegal gun possession in state law.  That means the penalty is the same no matter how many times the criminal gets caught, which provides no deterrent. Graduated felony penalties, with no bond, will help keep repeat criminals behind bars and not out on bail where they can commit more crimes.

We also need to stop on shady bail bond practices.  Last October, I directed the Department of Insurance to crack down on these practices within its authority.  Today I propose the establishment of minimum standards for court-ordered GPS or electronic monitoring, and the imposition of penalties on bondsmen who fail to maintain electronic monitoring or fail report to violations of bond conditions to court.

We have no means to carry out a death sentence in South Carolina – and the murderers know it.

The families and loved ones of these murderers’ victims know it, too.

The Department of Corrections has been unable to carry out the death penalty by lethal injection since 2011 because the companies which make the drugs will not sell them unless their identities are shielded by state law from anti-death penalty activists.  Fourteen states have enacted such a shield law. Director Bryan Stirling and I have asked the General Assembly to address this for over five years.

In an effort to solve this problem, we amended the death penalty law to make the electric chair the default method if lethal injection was unavailable and added the firing squad as a new means of execution.

It was immediately challenged in court, scheduled executions were halted, and we now - once again - await a decision by our state Supreme Court.

Ladies and gentlemen, we cannot keep waiting.

I ask the General Assembly again: pass a shield law. We must give these grieving families and loved ones the justice and closure they are owed by law and tell the people of South Carolina that their government believes in the rule of law - just like they do.

We must also re-examine those issues, practices, and laws that make our State less competitive and make it difficult for families, businesses and entrepreneurs to invest, grow, and thrive.

One issue in need of re-examination is in the area of civil litigation known as “joint and several liability.” Nobody, including business owners should be penalized for the actions of others, simply because they have more money.  Nor should anyone be absolved of responsibility for their own actions. I am confident that we can find a commonsense formula which will provide accountability and just compensation without damaging our economy.

In addition, I suggest that it’s time for members of the General Assembly who are attorneys - to stop suing the bodies in which they serve, stop suing state agencies in plaintiff actions, and stop suing elected officials. This is absurd. It diminishes the public’s confidence not only in the lawyer legislators – but the rest of state government as well.

We must also ensure that the public has confidence in whom and how all our state’s judges are selected, by making the processes more transparent and accountable.  South Carolina is one of two states in which the General Assembly selects the members of the judiciary.  It appears that the public’s confidence in this arrangement is waning. Too often, the people’s business is unattended.  “Justice delayed is justice denied.”

I suggest that our Founding Fathers prescribed a method for judicial selection that has served our federal government well and with which the public is quite familiar. Gubernatorial appointment of all judges, with the advice and consent of the state Senate, requires no “re-invention of the wheel,” will inspire the confidence of our people, and will encourage more excellent attorneys to seek public service.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization gave us cause for confidence when it recognized that Roe v. Wade was “egregiously wrong” on “the day it was decided” and that the U.S. Constitution does not prohibit States from regulating or prohibiting abortion.

Unfortunately, the South Carolina Supreme Court delivered a temporary setback earlier this month.  In a 3–2 decision, the court struck down the Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act, concluding that it violated a constitutional provision that was proposed and adopted before Roe v. Wade, at a time when nearly all abortions were illegal in South Carolina.  Respectfully, the court’s decision is at odds with the law and the facts, and the lead opinion’s results-oriented reasoning threatens to disrupt our constitutional separation of powers.

When I signed the Heartbeat Act into law, I was confident that it was constitutional. I still am.  Therefore, I will be filing a petition for rehearing next week, along with other state officials, and I remain optimistic that we will prevail in our historic fight to protect and defend the right to, and the sanctity of, life.

Finally, our shared cultural and natural heritage, abundant natural resources and prosperous economy make us the envy of others and attractive to all.

Explorers for kings and queens marveled at our mountains, beaches, sea islands, and marshes. They reported back that the land was lush, fertile, and brimming with abundance. And I have no doubt that they would have the same reaction today.

When the French, Spanish, and English settlers began arriving in South Carolina over 450 years ago, there were around two dozen groups or “tribes” of indigenous peoples, or Native Americans, residing in the Lowcountry.

The Ashepoo, Bohicket, Combahee, Edisto, Kiawah, Sewee, St. Helena, Wando, among others lived and thrived here and their names live on today as majestic rivers, sea islands, towns, and entities.

Currently, a number of tribes are officially recognized. The Catawba Indian Nation, the Beaver Creek Indians, the Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe of South Carolina, the Pee Dee Indian Nation of Upper South Carolina, the Pee Dee Indian Tribe, the Piedmont American Indian Association, the Santee Indian Organization, the Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians, the Waccamaw Indian People, and the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians.

Many of the leaders of South Carolina’s tribes are here with us tonight.  Please stand and be recognized.

By the time the English established the permanent settlement of Charles Towne on the banks of the Ashley River in 1670, a global network for trading and selling West Africans into slavery was well established by European nations, sending enslaved people to Brazil, the West Indies, and the American colonies.

Between 1700 and 1775, forty percent of enslaved West Africans entering the colonies did so through Gadsden’s Warf in Charleston, which today is the location of the new International African American Museum.

They came from the Winward Coast, the Ivory Coast, and the Gold Coast areas of Western Africa, known today as Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Republic of Congo, and Ghana. The importation of enslaved persons was criminalized in the United States in 1808.

Descendants of these people are proudly represented today by the Gullah Geechee Nation, some living on the sea island properties owned by their ancestors. The Penn Center, on St. Helena Island, with its national landmark designation, serves as the cultural “capitol” and historical repository for the preservation of our Gullah heritage.

Queen Quet Marquetta L. Goodwine, Chieftess of the Gullah Geechee Nation, is with us tonight.  Please stand and be recognized.

It is believed that the first European Jewish settlers arrived in Charleston around 1700 to take advantage of the civil and religious liberty afforded in the colony of South Carolina. The congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim has the oldest synagogue in continuous use in North America and is known as the cornerstone of American Reform Judaism.  By 1800, South Carolina had the largest Jewish population of any state in the United States.

More battles and skirmishes were fought during the Revolutionary War in South Carolina than in any other state. The victory at Cowpens over the British Army turned the tide of the American Revolution and secured life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for a new nation. And the term “Sandlapper” was born as a colloquial nickname bestowed upon South Carolinians by retreating British troops. Efforts are underway now to preserve the stories and places of these historic events.

Clearly, South Carolina has an incomparable cultural and natural heritage which distinguishes our state and people from all others.  We must honor, preserve and be good stewards of that which we have been given.

Economic growth and the preservation of our shared heritage are not opposing objectives which must be balanced as in a competition, one against the other. Instead, they are complementary, intertwined, and inseparable, each dependent on the other. To strengthen one is to strengthen the other.

The question today is: Will anyone recognize South Carolina in 100 years?

Will we allow our state’s culturally and environmentally significant structures, monuments, lands, islands, and waters to be lost - to over-development, mismanagement, flooding, erosion, or storm damage?

Or will we preserve and protect our history, our culture and our environment, and the public’s access to them, before they are lost forever.  This is our moment to act.  While we still can.

To that end, I am recommending that a total of $266 million be appropriated to the Conservation Land Bank, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Office of Resilience, for the purpose of identifying and preserving culturally or environmentally significant properties and tracts in which public access is in jeopardy of being lost forever.

In closing, to the members of the General Assembly, I say let us continue our successful partnership, one that has been based on communication, collaboration, and cooperation.

Let us embrace civility and comity through our thoughts, our actions, and our words – and urge our people, especially the young people, to be proud of their State.

And let us set our State on a course that will provide the opportunity for prosperity, success, and happiness for generations of South Carolinians.

The best is yet to come.

May God continue to bless America, and our Great State of South Carolina.

**JOINT ASSEMBLY RECEDES**

The purposes of the Joint Assembly having been accomplished, the PRESIDENT announced that under the terms of the Concurrent Resolution the Joint Assembly would recede from business.

The Senate accordingly retired to its Chamber.

**THE HOUSE RESUMES**

At 8:06 p.m. the House resumed, the SPEAKER in the Chair.

Rep. FORREST moved that the House do now adjourn, which was agreed to.

**RETURNED WITH CONCURRENCE**

The Senate returned to the House with concurrence the following:

H. 3768 -- Reps. M. M. Smith, Davis, Pace, B. L. Cox, Leber, Alexander, Anderson, Atkinson, Bailey, Ballentine, Bamberg, Bannister, Bauer, Beach, Bernstein, Blackwell, Bradley, Brewer, Brittain, Burns, Bustos, Calhoon, Carter, Caskey, Chapman, Chumley, Clyburn, Cobb-Hunter, Collins, Connell, B. J. Cox, Crawford, Cromer, Dillard, Elliott, Erickson, Felder, Forrest, Gagnon, Garvin, Gatch, Gibson, Gilliam, Gilliard, Guest, Guffey, Haddon, Hager, Hardee, Harris, Hart, Hartnett, Hayes, Henderson-Myers, Henegan, Herbkersman, Hewitt, Hiott, Hixon, Hosey, Howard, Hyde, Jefferson, J. E. Johnson, J. L. Johnson, S. Jones, W. Jones, Jordan, Kilmartin, King, Kirby, Landing, Lawson, Ligon, Long, Lowe, Magnuson, May, McCabe, McCravy, McDaniel, McGinnis, Mitchell, J. Moore, T. Moore, A. M. Morgan, T. A. Morgan, Moss, Murphy, Neese, B. Newton, W. Newton, Nutt, O'Neal, Oremus, Ott, Pedalino, Pendarvis, Pope, Rivers, Robbins, Rose, Rutherford, Sandifer, Schuessler, Sessions, G. M. Smith, Stavrinakis, Taylor, Tedder, Thayer, Thigpen, Trantham, Vaughan, Weeks, West, Wetmore, Wheeler, White, Whitmire, Williams, Willis, Wooten and Yow: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR WILLIAM JOSEPH "BILL" HEALY, BAILIFF OF HANAHAN CITY HALL, AND TO CONGRATULATE HIM UPON RECEIVING THE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD FROM THE CITY OF HANAHAN.

H. 3791 -- Rep. Howard: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR REVEREND HENRY LEON "HANK" EDMONDS, JR, PASTOR AT UNION BAPTIST CHURCH, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER FORTY YEARS OF FAITHFUL MINISTRY AND TO WISH HIM CONTINUED SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS IN ALL HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:06 p.m. the House, in accordance with the motion of Rep. ANDERSON, adjourned in memory of Mr. Norman L. Deas of Georgetown, to meet at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.

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