



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

WWW.RFA.SC.GOV • (803)734-3793

This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.

Bill Number: H. 4762 Introduced on January 13, 2026
Subject: School Volunteer Chaplains and Historical Displays
Requestor: House Judiciary
RFA Analyst(s): Bryant
Impact Date: January 21, 2026

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill authorizes school districts and charter schools to implement certain volunteer school chaplain policies. Each volunteer school chaplain must meet the background check requirements required of school district employees and volunteers. The bill also provides for the display of the Ten Commandments and other historical documents in public schools and postsecondary classrooms.

The bill will have no expenditure impact on the S.C. Department of Education (SCDE). The department indicates that it will manage the provisions of the bill with existing appropriations.

The Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe, the Governor's School for Arts and Humanities, the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, the School for the Deaf and the Blind, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact, as the provisions of the bill can be managed with existing appropriations.

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) indicates that this bill will have no expenditure impact on the agency, as any increase in name-based searches and checks can be managed with existing appropriations. SLED further indicates that the bill does not authorize fingerprint-based federal background checks.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) will vary. Clemson University (Clemson) indicates that while it expects this bill to have a fiscal impact, as it has more than 385 classes across its campuses statewide, it anticipates that the impact will be minimal and can be managed with existing appropriations. College of Charleston (CofC) anticipates that this bill will have no expenditure impact. Lander University (Lander) does not anticipate that the bill will have an expenditure impact as the University will attempt to utilize free or donated materials. The University of South Carolina (USC) anticipates that it will seek donors willing to provide the necessary funds or materials. However, USC reports that there may be undetermined costs associated with searching for and managing any donations. If USC does not receive donated funds or materials, it may cost up to \$8,400 to place the required materials in approximately 900 classrooms throughout the USC system. Winthrop University (Winthrop) anticipates a cost between \$7,000 and \$10,000 to place the required materials in each campus classroom. Winthrop reports that its development officers will have to dedicate time and effort to find a donor willing to provide the materials as a monetary or non-monetary gift. If it is unable to

find a donor, Winthrop will need to use existing unrestricted donor funds. The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) indicates that it will cost approximately \$15,000 to display the Ten Commandments in 183 classrooms. MUSC reports that while no donated funds or materials are currently identified, MUSC anticipates that it will seek donors willing to provide the necessary funds or materials.

The State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (Tech Board) indicates that this bill will increase costs by an amount up to \$20,000 to display the Ten Commandments in thousands of classrooms. However, the Tech Board reports that it considers this cost to be minimal and can manage the expenses with existing appropriations.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the local school districts will vary. SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular school districts and three charter school districts and received responses from fourteen districts. Seven of the responding districts indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact. One district indicates that the bill will have a minimal impact, and reports that they will manage the provisions of the bill with existing resources. Five districts indicate that the bill will increase costs by an amount ranging from \$250 to approximately \$14,700 to implement a volunteer school chaplain policy due to background checks and staff time required to manage the list of volunteers and website and communicate with parents. One of these districts further indicates that the bill will increase expenses by approximately \$60,000 to print, frame, and place the Ten Commandments in each classroom. The one remaining district indicates that the bill will increase expenses by \$5,000 to implement a volunteer school chaplain policy and place the Ten Commandments in each classroom. However, we anticipate that the school districts will attempt to use donated funds or donated displays.

The cost to run a name-based SLED Citizen Access to Criminal Histories (CATCH) check as required by this bill is \$25. This fee is retained by SLED. Pursuant to Section 23-3-115(A), revenue generated by criminal records checks performed by SLED up to an amount of \$4,461,000 must be deposited in the General Fund. Any revenue over that amount is retained by SLED. SLED previously indicated that the three-year average in fees collected for background checks totals approximately \$17,541,968, of which \$4,461,000 is deposited to the General Fund, and the remainder is retained by SLED. The potential increase in fee revenue for SLED will depend on the number of additional CATCH checks done as a result of this bill. Therefore, the impact to Other Funds revenue for the increase in criminal record checks fee is undetermined.

This bill specifies that a public school governing authority and a public institution of higher learning or its governing board is not required to spend funds to purchase the displays required or authorized in the bill. In order to fund the displays free of charge, donated funds may be used to purchase the displays or donated displays may be utilized. The amount of donations that may be received for the purposes of this bill is unknown. Therefore, the revenue impact on local school districts and on Other Funds of the IHLs for this purpose is undetermined.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 13, 2026

State Expenditure

This bill authorizes school districts and charter schools to adopt a policy to authorize volunteer school chaplains assigned by the district school board or charter school governing board to provide support, services, and programs to students. The policy must meet certain specified conditions. Each volunteer school chaplain must meet the background check requirements required of school district employees and volunteers pursuant to Section 59-19-117, and any school district or charter school that adopts a volunteer school chaplains policy must publish the list of volunteer school chaplains, including any religious affiliation, on the school district or charter school's website.

This bill also requires each public school governing authority to display the Ten Commandments in each classroom in each school under its jurisdiction by no later than January 1, 2027. The display must meet certain specified requirements. A public school may also display other historical documents, including the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, and articles I through VI of the Northwest Ordinance. The bill specifies that a public school governing authority is not required to spend funds to purchase the displays required or authorized in the bill. In order to fund the displays free of charge, the public school governing authority may accept donated funds to purchase the displays or donated displays. The State Board of Education is required to adopt rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to ensure the proper implementation of the provisions of the bill, and SCDE must identify appropriate resources to comply with the provisions of the bill that are free of charge. Once identified, the department must list the free resources on its internet website.

Additionally, the bill requires each public institution of higher learning to display the Ten Commandments in each classroom on the institution's campus by no later than January 1, 2027. The display must meet certain specified requirements. A public institution of higher learning or its governing board is not required to spend funds to purchase the displays required or authorized in the bill. In order to fund the displays free of charge, the institution or its governing body may accept donated funds to purchase the displays or donated displays.

S.C. Department of Education. The bill will have no expenditure impact on SCDE. The department will manage the provisions of the bill with existing appropriations.

State Agency Schools. The Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe, the Governor's School for Arts and Humanities, the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, the School for the Deaf and the Blind, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact, as the provisions of the bill can be managed with existing appropriations.

State Law Enforcement Division. SLED indicates that this bill will have no expenditure impact on the agency, as any increase in name-based searches and checks can be managed with existing

appropriations. SLED further indicates that the bill does not authorize fingerprint-based federal background checks.

State Institutions of Higher Learning. The expenditure impact of this bill on IHLs will vary. Clemson indicates that while it expects this bill to have a fiscal impact, as it has more than 385 classes across its campuses statewide, it anticipates that the impact will be minimal and can be managed with existing appropriations. CofC anticipates that this bill will have no expenditure impact. Lander does not anticipate that the bill will have an expenditure impact as the University will attempt to utilize free or donated materials. USC anticipates that it will seek donors willing to provide the necessary funds or materials. However, USC reports that there may be undetermined costs associated with searching for and managing any donations. If USC does not receive donated funds or materials, it may cost up to \$8,400 to place the required materials in approximately 900 classrooms throughout the USC system. Winthrop anticipates a cost between \$7,000 and \$10,000 to place the required materials in each campus classroom. Winthrop reports that its development officers will have to dedicate time and effort to find a donor willing to provide the materials as a monetary or non-monetary gift. If it is unable to find a donor, Winthrop will need to use existing unrestricted donor funds. MUSC indicates that it will cost approximately \$15,000 to display the Ten Commandments in 183 classrooms. MUSC reports that while no donated funds or materials are currently identified, MUSC anticipates that it will seek donors willing to provide the necessary funds or materials.

State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. The Tech Board indicates that this bill will increase costs by an amount up to \$20,000 to display the Ten Commandments in thousands of classrooms. However, the Tech Board reports that it considers this cost to be minimal and can manage the expenses with existing appropriations.

State Revenue

This bill requires each volunteer chaplain to meet the background check requirements required of school district employees and volunteers. The cost for a SLED CATCH check is \$25, which is retained by SLED. Pursuant to Section 23-3-115(A), revenue generated by criminal records checks performed by SLED up to an amount of \$4,461,000 must be deposited in the General Fund. Any revenue over that amount is retained by SLED. SLED previously indicated that the three-year average in fees collected for background checks totals approximately \$17,541,968, of which \$4,461,000 is deposited to the General Fund, and the remainder is retained by SLED. The potential increase in fee revenue for SLED will depend on the number of additional CATCH checks done as a result of this bill. Therefore, the impact to Other Funds revenue for the increase in criminal record checks fee is undetermined.

This bill specifies that a public institution of higher learning or its governing board is not required to spend funds to purchase the displays required or authorized in the bill. In order to fund the displays free of charge, the institution or its governing body may accept donated funds to purchase the displays or donated displays. The amount of donations that may be received for the purposes of this bill is unknown. Therefore, the revenue impact on Other Funds is undetermined.

Local Expenditure

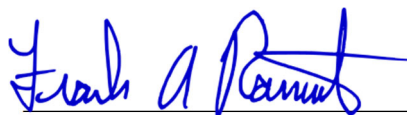
This bill authorizes school districts and charter schools to adopt a policy to authorize volunteer school chaplains to provide support, services, and programs to students assigned by the district school board or charter school governing board. Any school district or charter school that adopts a volunteer school chaplains policy must publish the list of volunteer school chaplains, including any religious affiliation, on the school district or charter school's website.

This bill also requires each public school governing authority to display the Ten Commandments in each classroom in each school under its jurisdiction by no later than January 1, 2027. A public school may also display other historical documents, including the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, and articles I through VI of the Northwest Ordinance. The bill specifies that a public school governing authority is not required to spend funds to purchase the displays required or authorized in the bill. In order to fund the displays free of charge, the public school governing authority may accept donated funds to purchase the displays or donated displays.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the local school districts will vary. SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular school districts and three charter school districts and received responses from fourteen districts. Seven of the responding districts indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact. One district indicates that the bill will have a minimal impact, and reports that they will manage the provisions of the bill with existing resources. Five districts indicate that the bill will increase costs by an amount ranging from \$250 to approximately \$14,700 to implement a volunteer school chaplain policy due to background checks and staff time to manage the list of volunteers and website and communicate with parents. One of these districts further indicates that the bill will increase expenses by approximately \$60,000 to print, frame, and place the Ten Commandments in each classroom. The one remaining district indicates that the bill will increase expenses by \$5,000 to implement a volunteer school chaplain policy and place the Ten Commandments in each classroom. However, we anticipate that the school districts will attempt to use donated funds or donated displays.

Local Revenue

This bill specifies that a public school governing authority is not required to spend funds to purchase the displays required or authorized in the bill. In order to fund the displays free of charge, the public school governing authority may accept donated funds to purchase the displays or donated displays. The amount of donations that may be received for the purposes of this bill is unknown.



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director