

NO. 21

JOURNAL
OF THE
SENATE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

**Wednesday, February 18, 2026
(Statewide Session)**

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

The Senate assembled at 1:00 P.M., the hour to which it stood adjourned, and was called to order by the PRESIDENT.

A quorum being present, the proceedings were opened with a devotion by the Chaplain as follows:

Joel 2:12-13a

We recall how the prophet Joel proclaimed: “ ‘Even now,’ declared the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.’ Rend your heart and not your garments.”

Join me as we bow and pray, please: Today, O Lord, is that day many of us call Ash Wednesday. Indeed, some of us have already been in a setting this morning when we bowed and prayed and asked for Your forgiveness, and many of us will be doing so later this evening. And, dear God, as we pointedly seek Your forgiveness for some weakness to which we confess, some of us will have our forehead smudged with ash -- that ancient mark reminding us that you have heard our promise of confession -- that we will strive by Your grace to live as the women and men You call us to be. And may the clear result of this holy action be our unflinching determination to honor You, dear Lord. All this we humbly pray in Your blessed name. Amen.

The PRESIDENT called for Petitions, Memorials, Presentments of Grand Juries and such like papers.

Call of the Senate

Senator PEELER moved that a Call of the Senate be made. The following Senators answered the Call:

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Fernandez
Garrett	Goldfinch	Graham
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Kennedy	Kimbrell	Leber
Martin	Massey	Ott

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Peeler	Reichenbach	Rice
Sabb	Stubbs	Sutton
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

A quorum being present, the Senate resumed.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

The following appointments were transmitted by the Honorable Henry Dargan McMaster:

Statewide Appointments

Initial Appointment, Donate Life South Carolina, with the term to commence April 1, 2024, and to expire April 1, 2028

Midlands:

Gira M. Patel, 525 Shadowood Drive, Irmo, SC 29063 *VICE* Arthur L. Guerry

Referred to the Committee on Medical Affairs.

Reappointment, Governor's School of Agriculture at John de la Howe School Board of Trustees, with the term to commence April 1, 2025, and to expire April 1, 2030

At-Large:

Robert W. Bagley, 3116 Moffitt Creek Road, Blackstock, SC 29014

Referred to the Committee on Education.

Reappointment, Governor's School of Agriculture at John de la Howe School Board of Trustees, with the term to commence April 1, 2023, and to expire April 1, 2028

At-Large:

Ronald M. Davis, 106 Deadfall Road E, Greenwood, SC 29649

Referred to the Committee on Education.

Reappointment, Governor's School of Agriculture at John de la Howe School Board of Trustees, with the term to commence April 1, 2023, and to expire April 1, 2028

At-Large:

James Craig Kesler, 1970 Trinity Church Road, Newberry, SC 29108

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Referred to the Committee on Education.

Doctor of the Day

Senator TEDDER introduced Dr. Steven Vranian of Charleston, S.C., Doctor of the Day.

Leave of Absence

On motion of Senator GRAHAM, at 2:25 P.M., Senator WALKER was granted a leave of absence for today.

Leave of Absence

On motion of Senator GRAHAM, at 2:25 P.M., Senator MATTHEWS was granted a leave of absence for today.

Leave of Absence

On motion of Senator RICE, at 3:42 P.M., Senator BLACKMON was granted a leave of absence until 4:40 P.M.

Leave of Absence

On motion of Senator LEBER, at 3:45 P.M., Senator KENNEDY was granted a leave of absence until 4:40 P.M..

Expression of Personal Interest

Senator MASSEY rose for an Expression of Personal Interest.

Remarks by Senator MASSEY

I'd like to address something that's been troubling me, more so in recent days. And I'm a little bit leery of creating a precedent here where we have Senators come to the well and talk about judicial elections -- I don't want to do that -- but I do want to talk about the upcoming election for the South Carolina Supreme Court.

In many ways, this election is unique. It's not normal that we have candidates challenging an incumbent Justice. I'm not troubled by that challenge, though. We are tasked with electing Justices to the Supreme Court. Some have concerns about decisions that have been made. This is the process. I'm not here to get into that really. I'm not here to advocate for a candidate. I know all the candidates. I actually like them all personally. I get along with all of them personally. I think they are all bright. I think they are all well-versed in the law.

But they're not all deserving of a seat on the Supreme Court. Again, I'm not here to advocate for any of the candidates. Of the four candidates

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for the position, I could make an argument for three of them. I'll have a preference among those three when it's time to cast a vote, but all three of those judges are capable and would serve well in the position. But there's clearly a push for the other candidate. And that really troubles me. I'm not here to be critical of Speaker Lucas. He's a very smart guy. He's definitely a pleasant guy to be around. We worked together on several issues while he was Speaker and I served as Leader. This really isn't about him. This is about all the rest of us.

Now look, I know there are legislators who have geographic or personal loyalty and they'd vote for the former Speaker regardless of who he's running against. I don't like that. I don't think that's how we ought to make decisions about Supreme Court Justices. In fact, I think the legislature has done a very good job of selecting Justices in recent years, and this kind of decision making is a real regression.

But that's not where most of us are. This looks really bad. It looks like back room deals are being made for someone who is not as qualified for or deserving of the position. It looks like the legislature is cooking the books.

Over the course of many years, the legislature has made significant, positive changes at the Supreme Court. Ours is not an activist court. They're also not, as some would have us believe, shrinking violets and subservient to the legislature. They've shown that recently. These are serious people who tackle serious problems. And, while I disagree with some of their decisions occasionally, the Court does good work. This Court, unlike some courts we've had in the past, does not inject itself in political questions. These are respected people who have spent years -- their entire professional lives -- earning the positions they now hold.

Please, let's not screw that up. Many of our institutions are under attack. Some of that is warranted. Much of it is not. Most of the attacks on the judiciary are not sound. Overwhelmingly, we have competent, highly qualified, and ethical men and women serving in our courts. We do not have the problems that are rampant in nearly every other state. Some attack the judiciary and allege corruption or other inherent problems, and most of those accusers are uninformed or have a personal interest in the attack.

But electing a former legislative leader with no judicial experience whatsoever gives credibility to the unfounded assault. It douses the fire with accelerant. And it is wrong. But it is what many people expect. People understand giving special treatment to their friends even if their friends aren't qualified. The public thinks we don't play by the rules, that we're all corrupt, and pursue those things that are better for us even at

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their expense. Many people think we'd sell them out in a heartbeat if it benefits us or someone we know. And look, unfortunately, there have been people we've served with who have given credence to that position.

You and I know that's far from the norm. I know you all. I know most of you well. I know many House members. You're not corrupt. You pursue policies that you think are best for the most citizens. Sometimes we disagree on those policies, sometimes I think you're just completely off base, sometimes (maybe lots of times) you think that about me, but I think we're all trying to do what we think is right.

Electing a former legislative leader with no judicial experience to the Court when he is by all objective measures the least qualified for the position, if he is qualified at all, is not right. It is wrong.

It gives credence to all the suspicion and attacks. It makes the unfounded founded and the unwarranted warranted. It soils the institution itself. Ladies and gentlemen, we are honored and privileged people. The people of South Carolina have entrusted us with awesome responsibilities. We stand on the shoulders of many people, both good and bad, who've built South Carolina into the great State it is today. Let's not weaken what we've inherited. Let's not contribute to the public's suspicions of bad behavior. Let's not leave this worse than what we found it.

We have able, qualified candidates for the Supreme Court. Let's do the right thing, surprise a skeptical public, and choose one of those judges for the Supreme Court.

On motion of Senator MARTIN, with unanimous consent, the remarks of Senator MASSEY were ordered printed in the Journal.

CO-SPONSORS ADDED

The following co-sponsors were added to the respective Bills:

- S. 243 Sen. Grooms
- S. 355 Sens. Ott and Hutto
- S. 631 Sen. Zell
- S. 716 Sens. Leber, Corbin and Zell
- S. 723 Sen. Zell
- S. 728 Sen. Devine
- S. 751 Sen. Zell
- S. 768 Sen. Grooms
- S. 840 Sen. Grooms
- S. 851 Sen. Garrett

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S. 930 Sens. Climer, Zell, Verdin, Gambrell, Cromer, Bennett, Grooms, Ott and Williams

RECALLED AND COMMITTED

S. 915 -- Senators Garrett, Johnson, Adams, Bennett, Cash, Massey, Corbin, Turner, Blackmon, Kennedy, Stubbs, Reichenbach, Rice, Goldfinch and Elliott: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 43-7-60, RELATING TO THE PROHIBITION OF FALSE CLAIMS, STATEMENTS, OR REPRESENTATION BY MEDICAL PROVIDERS, SO AS TO CREATE TIERED VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES FOR THIS SECTION AND PROVIDE FOR THE USE OF CONSENT AGREEMENTS; BY AMENDING SECTION 43-7-70, RELATING TO THE PROHIBITION OF FALSE STATEMENTS OR REPRESENTATION ON APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE, SO AS TO CREATE TIERED VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES FOR THIS SECTION AND PROVIDE FOR THE USE OF CONSENT AGREEMENTS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 43-7-90, RELATING TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF SECTIONS 43-7-60 TO 43-7-80, SO AS TO AUTHORIZE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO ISSUE ADMINISTRATIVE SUBPOENAS AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTIONS.

On motion of Senator VERDIN, with unanimous consent, the Bill was recalled from the Committee on Medical Affairs and committed to the Committee on Judiciary.

RECALLED

H. 5045 -- Rep. King: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE PORTION OF SQUIRE ROAD IN THE CITY OF ROCK HILL IN YORK COUNTY FROM ITS INTERSECTION WITH OGDEN ROAD TO ITS INTERSECTION WITH FALLS ROAD "ARCHBISHOP B.R. WILSON MEMORIAL ROAD" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS LOCATION CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

Senator GROOMS asked unanimous consent to make a motion to recall the Concurrent Resolution from the Committee on Transportation.

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The Concurrent Resolution was recalled from the Committee on Transportation and ordered placed on the Calendar for consideration tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following were introduced:

S. 932 -- Senator Zell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "DIGITAL CHOICE ACT" BY ADDING CHAPTER 31 TO TITLE 37 SO AS TO DEFINE TERMS RELATED TO DIGITAL CHOICE AND SOCIAL MEDIA; TO ESTABLISH THE FORMAT IN WHICH A SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICE MUST PROVIDE A CONSUMER WITH A COPY OF THE CONSUMER'S PERSONAL DATA UPON REQUEST; TO REQUIRE A SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY TO IMPLEMENT DATA INTEROPERABILITY INTERFACES; TO ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA SHARING BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES; TO PROVIDE CIVIL PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THIS CHAPTER; AND TO ALLOW CONSUMERS CERTAIN RIGHTS.

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Senator ZELL spoke on the Bill.

Read the first time and referred to the Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry.

S. 933 -- Senators Martin, Corbin, Williams, Jackson, Leber, Hutto, Devine and Graham: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 2-3-20, RELATING TO COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE COMPENSATION AND AN IN-DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE SERVICE ALLOWANCE OF FORTY-SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE MEMBERS' SALARY SHALL BE ADJUSTED EVERY TWO YEARS BY AN INFLATION FACTOR NOT TO EXCEED FIVE PERCENT; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 9-9-10, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS CONCERNING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RETIREMENT SYSTEM, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT EARNABLE COMPENSATION FOR THE PURPOSES OF CALCULATING BENEFITS IS LIMITED TO ONLY THE MEMBERS' SALARY AS PROVIDED BY LAW.

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Read the first time and referred to the Committee on Finance.

S. 934 -- Senators Leber and Fernandez: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 16-17-520, RELATING TO DISTURBANCES OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, SO AS TO FURTHER DEFINE UNLAWFUL CONDUCT FOR PURPOSES OF THE OFFENSE OF DISTURBING RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, AND TO INCREASE THE PENALTY FOR A VIOLATION TO A FELONY.

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Read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

S. 935 -- Senator Tedder: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 44-1-320 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO CREATE A PAMPHLET ON RENDERING SEIZURE FIRST AID TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SUFFERED A SEIZURE IN THE WORKPLACE AND TO REQUIRE STATE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES TO POST THE PAMPHLET IN A CONSPICUOUS LOCATION.

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Read the first time and referred to the Committee on Medical Affairs.

S. 936 -- Senators Davis, Young and Garrett: A JOINT RESOLUTION TO AFFIRM THE COMMITMENT OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO SECURING SOUTH CAROLINA'S ROLE AS THE NATION'S PREMIER HOST FOR A NUCLEAR LIFECYCLE INNOVATION CAMPUS; TO RECOGNIZE SOUTH CAROLINA'S UNMATCHED LEADERSHIP IN NUCLEAR ENERGY, NATIONAL SECURITY, AND ADVANCED MANUFACTURING; AND TO DIRECT A UNIFIED, COMPETITIVE STATE RESPONSE TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.

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Senator DAVIS spoke on the Resolution.

Read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

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S. 937 -- Senator Devine: A SENATE RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY PALMETTO GIRLS STATE TO USE THE CHAMBER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SENATE ON FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026.

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The Senate Resolution was introduced and referred to the Committee on Operations and Management.

S. 938 -- Senators Allen, Adams, Alexander, Bennett, Blackmon, Bright, Campsen, Cash, Chaplin, Climer, Corbin, Cromer, Davis, Devine, Elliott, Fernandez, Gambrell, Garrett, Goldfinch, Graham, Grooms, Hembree, Hutto, Jackson, Johnson, Kennedy, Kimbrell, Leber, Martin, Massey, Matthews, Ott, Peeler, Rankin, Reichenbach, Rice, Sabb, Stubbs, Sutton, Tedder, Turner, Verdin, Walker, Williams, Young and Zell: A SENATE RESOLUTION TO REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF REVEREND JESSE LOUIS JACKSON, TO HONOR HIS REMARKABLE COMMITMENT AS AN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SENATE TO HIS LARGE AND LOVING FAMILY AND HIS MANY FRIENDS.

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The Senate Resolution was adopted.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Senator PEELER from the Committee on Finance submitted a favorable with amendment report on:

S. 420 -- Senator Young: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 6-5-10, RELATING TO AUTHORIZED INVESTMENTS BY POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SO AS TO ALLOW A QUALIFIED RETIREE POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFIT TRUST MAINTAINED FOR THE BENEFIT OF POLITICAL SUBDIVISION RETIREES TO INVEST IN CERTAIN CORPORATE DEBT ISSUED BY UNITED STATES CORPORATIONS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator RANKIN from the Committee on Judiciary submitted a favorable with amendment report on:

S. 631 -- Senators Walker and Zell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 23-3-535, RELATING TO LIMITATIONS ON PLACES OF

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RESIDENCE OF CERTAIN SEX OFFENDERS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR A SEX OFFENDER TO RESIDE WITHIN ONE THOUSAND FEET OF A BUS STOP; AND TO PROVIDE THAT OWNERS OR RENTERS OF IMPACTED PROPERTY NOT BE REQUIRED TO RELOCATE IF THEY OWNED OR RENTED THE PROPERTY BEFORE THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ACT.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator RANKIN from the Committee on Judiciary submitted a favorable report on:

S. 694 -- Senator Young: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 7-7-40, RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF VOTING PRECINCTS IN AIKEN COUNTY, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT IF THE BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS DETERMINES THAT A PRECINCT CONTAINS NO SUITABLE LOCATION FOR A POLLING PLACE, THE BOARD, UPON APPROVAL OF A MAJORITY OF THE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION, MAY LOCATE THE POLLING PLACE INSIDE THE COUNTY AND WITHIN FIVE MILES OF THE PRECINCT'S BOUNDARIES.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator RANKIN from the Committee on Judiciary submitted a favorable with amendment report on:

S. 723 -- Senators Blackmon, Climer, Kennedy, Reichenbach, Rice and Zell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 16-15-395, RELATING TO FIRST DEGREE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF A MINOR DEFINED; PRESUMPTIONS; DEFENSES; PENALTIES, SO AS TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM PENALTY TO FIVE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-15-405, RELATING TO SECOND DEGREE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF A MINOR DEFINED; PRESUMPTIONS; DEFENSES; PENALTIES, SO AS TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM PENALTY TO THREE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 16-15-410, RELATING TO THIRD DEGREE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF A MINOR DEFINED; PENALTIES; EXCEPTION, SO AS TO ESTABLISH PENALTIES BASED ON THE NUMBER OF IMAGES POSSESSED, INCLUDING A PENALTY OF UP TO TEN YEARS IF THERE ARE ONE TO TWENTY-FIVE

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IMAGES, ONE TO TEN YEARS IF THERE ARE TWENTY-SIX TO TWO HUNDRED FIFTY IMAGES, AND A PENALTY OF TWO TO TEN YEARS IF THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED FIFTY IMAGES; AND TO ESTABLISH THAT A PERSON WHO IS REQUIRED TO REGISTER AS A SEX OFFENDER AND VIOLATES THE PROVISIONS OF THE SECTION, UPON CONVICTION, MUST SERVE A MINIMUM OF FIVE YEARS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator RANKIN from the Committee on Judiciary submitted a favorable with amendment report on:

S. 751 -- Senators Sutton, Ott and Zell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 44-53-2510 SO AS TO DEFINE TERMS TO INCLUDE NITROUS OXIDE AND NITROUS OXIDE PRODUCTS; BY ADDING SECTION 44-53-2520 SO AS TO CREATE THE OFFENSE OF SELLING OR PROVIDING NITROUS OXIDE TO MINORS, AND TO PROVIDE PENALTIES, AND TO CREATE A CIVIL PENALTY FOR A MINOR THAT MISREPRESENTS HIS AGE TO ATTEMPT TO OR TO PURCHASE NITROUS OXIDE; BY ADDING SECTION 44-53-2530 SO AS TO CREATE A CIVIL PENALTY FOR RETAILERS THAT DISPLAY OR STORE NITROUS OXIDE IN A RETAIL LOCATION WHERE MINORS CAN ACCESS NITROUS OXIDE OR NITROUS OXIDE PRODUCTS; BY ADDING SECTION 44-53-2540 SO AS TO ESTABLISH EXCEPTIONS TO THIS ARTICLE FOR COMMERCIAL USE.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator PEELER from the Committee on Finance submitted a favorable report on:

S. 853 -- Senators Davis, Hutto, Sutton and Graham: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-67-120, RELATING TO THE ABANDONED BUILDINGS REVITALIZATION ACT DEFINITIONS, SO AS TO CLARIFY THAT THE EXISTENCE OF AN INCOME-PRODUCING USE PRIOR TO THE PERIOD OF ABANDONMENT IS NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR ELIGIBILITY; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-67-130, RELATING TO APPLICABILITY, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-67-140, RELATING TO ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CREDIT, SO AS TO CLARIFY CERTAIN

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TIMING CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO THE FILING OF A NOTICE OF INTENT TO REHABILITATE AN ABANDONED BUILDING AND TO CLARIFY THAT ABANDONED BUILDING TAX CREDITS MAY NOT SERVE AS COLLATERAL FOR ANY DEBT; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 12-67-160, RELATING TO THE CERTIFICATION OF ABANDONED BUILDING SITES, SO AS TO REMOVE A REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN CERTIFICATIONS OF STATE-OWNED ABANDONED BUILDING SITES.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator RANKIN from the Committee on Judiciary submitted a favorable with amendment report on:

H. 3556 -- Reps. B. Newton, Schuessler, Guest, Taylor and Hixon: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 7-17-560, RELATING TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF A POLITICAL PARTY TO HEAR CERTAIN PRIMARY PROTESTS AND CONTESTS, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO ALSO HEAR PROTESTS AND CONTESTS IN THE CASE OF COUNTY OFFICERS, LESS THAN COUNTY OFFICERS, AND MUNICIPAL OFFICERS, TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION TO REQUIRE THE FILING OF ANY PROTEST OR CONTEST TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A BOND WITH SURETY, AND TO PROVIDE FOR APPEALS FROM DECISIONS BY THE STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE; BY AMENDING SECTION 7-17-570, RELATING TO HEARINGS OF PRIMARY PROTESTS AND CONTESTS, SO AS TO EXTEND THE TIME IN WHICH THE STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MUST CONDUCT SUCH HEARINGS; BY AMENDING SECTION 5-15-80, RELATING TO MUNICIPAL PRIMARY PROTESTS AND CONTESTS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT SUCH PROTESTS AND CONTESTS ARE TO BE FILED, HEARD, AND DECIDED IN THE MANNER PROVIDED IN SECTIONS 7-17-560 AND 7-17-570; AND BY REPEALING SECTIONS 7-17-520, 7-17-530, 7-17-540, 7-17-550, 7-17-580, AND 7-17-590 ALL RELATING TO PRIMARY PROTESTS AND CONTESTS FOR CERTAIN OFFICES.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

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Senator RANKIN from the Committee on Judiciary submitted a favorable with amendment report on:

H. 3557 -- Reps. B. Newton, Pedalino, Taylor, Guest, Crawford, Schuessler and Hixon: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 7-11-15, RELATING TO QUALIFICATIONS TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE IN GENERAL ELECTIONS, SO AS TO SHORTEN THE CANDIDATE FILING PERIOD, TO REQUIRE ALL CANDIDATES FROM EACH POLITICAL PARTY IN THIS STATE TO PAY A FILING FEE, AND TO AUTHORIZE POLITICAL PARTIES TO CHARGE A CERTIFICATION FEE TO ALL CANDIDATES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 7-11-210, RELATING TO THE FILING OF PARTY PLEDGES BY CANDIDATES, SO AS TO CHANGE THE DATE BY WHICH A PARTY PLEDGE MUST BE FILED.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator PEELER from the Committee on Finance submitted a favorable with amendment report on:

H. 3858 -- Reps. Brewer, Pedalino, Lowe, Mitchell, M.M. Smith, B.J. Cox, Chapman, Davis, Sessions, Erickson, Guffey, B.L. Cox, Hewitt, Teeple, Hartnett, Pope, Rutherford, Brittain, Wooten, Guest, Hager, J.L. Johnson, B. Newton, Bailey, Bustos, Gagnon, Gilliam, Herbkersman, Holman, Jordan, Lawson, Martin, Murphy, Robbins, Ballentine, T. Moore, Montgomery, Sanders, Atkinson, Ligon, Gibson, J. Moore, Caskey, Moss, Huff, Beach, Terribile, Kilmartin, Hardee, Taylor, Yow, J.E. Johnson, Landing, Frank, Forrest, Oremus, Kirby, Hixon, Cromer and Gilreath: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING ARTICLE 1 OF CHAPTER 23, TITLE 50, SECTION 50-23-345, AND SECTION 50-23-375, ALL RELATING TO THE TITLING OF WATERCRAFT AND OUTBOARD MOTORS, SO AS TO DELETE THE REQUIREMENT THAT OUTBOARD MOTORS BE TITLED; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-3210, RELATING TO TAX NOTICES FOR BOATS AND BOAT MOTORS, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-3210, RELATING TO TAX NOTICES FOR BOATS, BOAT MOTORS, AND WATERCRAFT, SO AS TO ALLOW THE AUDITOR TO CONSOLIDATE THE TAX NOTICE; BY AMENDING SECTION 50-23-370, RELATING TO WATERCRAFT CERTIFICATES, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-220, RELATING TO PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS, SO AS TO PROVIDE A PROPERTY TAX

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EXEMPTION FOR FIFTY PERCENT OF THE FAIR MARKET VALUE OF WATERCRAFT.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Appointments Reported

Senator RANKIN from the Committee on Judiciary submitted a favorable report on:

Statewide Appointments

Initial Appointment, Solicitor, with term to expire upon a General Election

13th Judicial Circuit:

Cynthia S. Crick, Esquire, 416 E. North Street, Second Floor, Greenville, SC 29601 *VICE* W. Walter Wilkins III, Esquire (resigned)

Received as information.

Reappointment, South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission, with the term to commence June 30, 2026, and to expire June 30, 2032

At-Large:

Thomas Scott Beck, 1252 Gold Nugget Point, Prosperity, SC 29127

Received as information.

Reappointment, South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission, with the term to commence June 30, 2026, and to expire June 30, 2028

Chairman:

Thomas Scott Beck, 1252 Gold Nugget Point, Prosperity, SC 29127

Received as information.

Reappointment, South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission, with the term to commence June 30, 2026, and to expire June 30, 2032

At-Large:

John Gabriel Coggiola, Esquire, 3314 Heyward Street, Columbia, SC 29205

Received as information.

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Reappointment, South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission,
with the term to commence June 30, 2026, and to expire June 30, 2032

At-Large:

Aisha K. Taylor, 156 Seaton Ridge Drive, Blythewood, SC 29016

Received as information.

Message from the House

Columbia, S.C., February 18, 2026

Mr. President and Senators:

The House respectfully informs your Honorable Body that it has returned the following Bill to the Senate with amendments:

S. 477 -- Senators Davis and Ott: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 40-43-210, RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF A "SELF-ADMINISTERED HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVE" IN THE PHARMACY PRACTICE ACT, SO AS TO REVISE THE DEFINITION; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-43-230, RELATING TO PHARMACISTS PERMITTED TO DISPENSE SELF-ADMINISTERED HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, SO AS TO PROVIDE SUCH DISPENSATIONS MAY BE MADE PURSUANT TO CERTAIN WRITTEN JOINT PROTOCOLS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-43-240, RELATING TO WRITTEN JOINT PROTOCOLS BY THE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND THE BOARD OF PHARMACY TO AUTHORIZE PHARMACISTS TO DISPENSE SELF-ADMINISTERED HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES WITHOUT PATIENT-SPECIFIC WRITTEN ORDERS, SO AS TO INSTEAD PROVIDE THE DISPENSATIONS MAY BE MADE UNDER STANDING ORDERS OR WITHOUT STANDING ORDERS WHEN DISPENSED OR ADMINISTERED PURSUANT TO CERTAIN WRITTEN JOINT PROTOCOLS.

Very respectfully,

Speaker of the House

Received as information.

Placed on Calendar for consideration tomorrow.

THE SENATE PROCEEDED TO A CALL OF THE UNCONTESTED LOCAL AND STATEWIDE CALENDAR.

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**READ THE THIRD TIME
SENT TO THE HOUSE**

The following Bills were read the third time and ordered sent to the House:

S. 718 -- Senator Garrett: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 45-2-65 SO AS TO PROVIDE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH AN OPERATOR OF ANY RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK MAY HAVE ANY TRANSIENT GUEST OF THE PARK REMOVED, AND TO PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR REMOVAL OF THE GUEST.

S. 845 -- Senator Young: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-1930, RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE CHILD FATALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SO AS TO ADD THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT; BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-1930, SO AS TO INCLUDE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT, THE STATE CHILD ADVOCATE, A COUNTY CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER, AND A SOLICITOR AS MEMBERS WHO WILL SERVE EX OFFICIO AND MAY APPOINT A DESIGNEE; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-1930, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEE MUST BE APPOINTED AND DULY QUALIFIED.

S. 868 -- Senators Elliott, Young, Kimbrell, Verdin, Rice, Stubbs and Walker: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 53-3-335 SO AS TO DESIGNATE JUNE FIRST OF EACH YEAR AS "GOLD SHIELD DAY" TO HONOR FIRST RESPONDERS WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY AND THE SACRIFICE OF THEIR SURVIVING FAMILIES.

ORDERED ENROLLED FOR RATIFICATION

The following Bill was read the third time and, having received three readings in both Houses, it was ordered that the title be changed to that of an Act and enrolled for Ratification:

H. 4257 -- Reps. J.E. Johnson, Lowe, C. Mitchell, Yow, Brittain, Jordan, B. Newton, Caskey, Gilliam, Rankin, Schuessler, Hayes, Guest,

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Crawford, Gagnon, McCabe, Pedalino and Hiott: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59-5-65, RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ESTABLISH A UNIFORM SYSTEM OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT, SO AS TO PROVIDE THIS SYSTEM MUST REQUIRE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO APPROVE STUDENT ABSENCES FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED BY THE SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE ACTIVITY IS SANCTIONED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE OR OTHER INTERSCHOLASTIC SANCTIONING ORGANIZATION; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 59-65-90, RELATING TO RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ESTABLISH TO DEFINE LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL ABSENCES UNDER COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE STATUTES, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES.

OBJECTION

H. 4902 -- Reps. Hiott, G.M. Smith, Bannister, Rutherford, Brittain, Guest, Stavrinakis, Erickson, Caskey, Pope, Collins, B. Newton, Davis, Herbkersman, Hixon, Willis, Reese and Gilliard: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59-158-50, RELATING TO AN EXEMPTION OF AN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETE'S NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS COMPENSATION CONTRACT DOCUMENTATION MAINTAINED BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING FROM PUBLIC DISCLOSURE UNDER THE SOUTH CAROLINA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, SO AS TO REMOVE AN EXCEPTION TO THE EXEMPTION, AND TO PROVIDE THAT RECORDS OF AGGREGATE REVENUE FUNDS EXPENDED FOR INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS REVENUE-SHARING PROGRAMS BY A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING EACH FISCAL YEAR ARE SUBJECT TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT SUBJECT TO EXCEPTIONS FROM SUCH DISCLOSURE FOR INDIVIDUAL ATHLETE PAYMENTS, SPORT-SPECIFIC ALLOCATIONS, AND NEGOTIATION RECORDS.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

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Senator MASSEY spoke on the Bill.

Senator TURNER objected to further consideration of the Bill.

RECOMMITTED

S. 236 -- Senators Kimbrell and Zell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 40-47-1250, RELATING TO SUPERVISION OF ANESTHESIOLOGIST'S ASSISTANTS, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ANESTHESIOLOGIST'S ASSISTANTS THAT AN ANESTHESIOLOGIST MAY SUPERVISE; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-47-1240, RELATING TO LICENSURE OF ANESTHESIOLOGIST'S ASSISTANTS, SO AS TO REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT THAT LICENSURE APPLICANTS MUST APPEAR BEFORE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND PRESENT EVIDENCE OF CERTAIN RELEVANT ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS AND KNOWLEDGE.

On motion of Senator HUTTO, the Bill was recommitted to Committee on Medical Affairs.

CARRIED OVER

S. 76 -- Senators Hembree, Grooms, Young, Goldfinch, Sabb, Alexander, Kennedy, Cromer, Zell, Williams and Garrett: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 16-8-230, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS, SO AS TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE DEFINITIONS; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-8-240, RELATING TO USE OF OR THREAT OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY CRIMINAL GANG MEMBERS AND PENALTIES, SO AS TO ESTABLISH UNLAWFUL CRIMINAL GANG ACTIVITY; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-245 SO AS TO PROVIDE ADMISSIBILITY OF CRIMINAL GANG AND CRIMINAL GANG ACTIVITY EVIDENCE DURING A TRIAL OR PROCEEDING; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-8-250, RELATING TO PREVENTING WITNESSES OR VICTIMS FROM TESTIFYING AND PENALTIES, SO AS TO PROVIDE A MECHANISM TO ABATE A PUBLIC NUISANCE OF REAL PROPERTY USED BY A CRIMINAL GANG; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-275 SO AS TO PROVIDE ADMISSIBILITY IN A CRIMINAL PROCEEDING OF THE ACCUSED'S COMMISSION OF CRIMINAL GANG ACTIVITY; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-520 SO AS TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE DEFINITIONS FOR THE ANTI-RACKETEERING

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ACT; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-530 SO AS TO MAKE IT UNLAWFUL FOR ANY PERSON TO ENGAGE IN RACKETEERING ACTIVITY; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-540 SO AS TO PROVIDE CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR ENGAGING IN RACKETEERING ACTIVITY; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-550 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE CIRCUIT COURT MAY ENJOIN VIOLATIONS OF THE ANTI-RACKETEERING ACT BY ISSUING APPROPRIATE ORDERS; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-560 SO AS TO ESTABLISH JURISDICTION FOR RACKETEERING ACTIVITY; BY ADDING SECTION 16-8-570 SO AS TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF INFORMANTS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 14-7-1630, RELATING TO JURISDICTION OF JURIES, NOTIFICATION TO IMPANEL JURIES, POWERS AND DUTIES OF IMPANELING AND PRESIDING JUDGES, THE TRANSFER OF INCOMPLETE INVESTIGATIONS, EFFECTIVE DATES AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO ORDERS OF JUDGE, AND APPEALS, SO AS TO ADD THE CRIME OF RACKETEERING TO THE JURISDICTION OF THE STATE GRAND JURY.

On motion of Senator BRIGHT, the Bill was carried over.

CARRIED OVER

H. 4216 -- Reps. Bannister, Pope, G.M. Smith, B. Newton, Hiott, Murphy, Moss, Crawford, Bradley, Hager, M.M. Smith, Bustos, Landing, Lowe, Lawson, B.J. Cox, Jordan, Brittain, Forrest, Neese, Vaughan, Long, Montgomery, Davis, Sessions, C. Mitchell, Gatch, Herbkersman, Schuessler, Caskey, T. Moore, Hewitt, Erickson, Bowers, Gilliam, Teeple, Guest, Bailey, Guffey, Holman, Yow, Ballentine, Martin, Calhoon, Taylor, Hartnett, Robbins, Willis, B.L. Cox, Ligon, Brewer, Gagnon, Hartz, Hixon and Pedalino: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-510, RELATING TO INCOME TAX RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS, ESTATES, AND TRUSTS, SO AS TO REDUCE THE INCOME TAX RATE TO A FLAT 3.99 PERCENT AND TO SET FORTH STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-50, RELATING TO INTERNAL REVENUE CODE SECTIONS SPECIFICALLY NOT ADOPTED BY THE STATE, SO AS TO NOT ADOPT THE FEDERAL STANDARD DEDUCTION AND ITEMIZED DEDUCTION; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-1140, RELATING TO INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS, SO AS TO ALLOW FOR A SOUTH CAROLINA INCOME

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ADJUSTED DEDUCTION (SCIAD); BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-4910, RELATING TO PERSONS REQUIRED TO FILE A TAX RETURN, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE TO THE CALCULATION; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-1720, RELATING TO ADJUSTMENTS TO THE TAXABLE INCOME OF NONRESIDENT INDIVIDUALS, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE.

On motion of Senator PEELER, the Bill was carried over.

DEBATE INTERRUPTED

H. 4216 -- Reps. Bannister, Pope, G.M. Smith, B. Newton, Hiott, Murphy, Moss, Crawford, Bradley, Hager, M.M. Smith, Bustos, Landing, Lowe, Lawson, B.J. Cox, Jordan, Brittain, Forrest, Neese, Vaughan, Long, Montgomery, Davis, Sessions, Mitchell, Gatch, Herbkersman, Schuessler, Caskey, T. Moore, Hewitt, Erickson, Bowers, Gilliam, Teeple, Guest, Bailey, Guffey, Holman, Yow, Ballentine, Martin, Calhoon, Taylor, Hartnett, Robbins, Willis, B.L. Cox, Ligon, Brewer, Gagnon, Hartz, Hixon and Pedalino: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-510, RELATING TO INCOME TAX RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS, ESTATES, AND TRUSTS, SO AS TO REDUCE THE INCOME TAX RATE TO A FLAT 3.99 PERCENT AND TO SET FORTH STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-50, RELATING TO INTERNAL REVENUE CODE SECTIONS SPECIFICALLY NOT ADOPTED BY THE STATE, SO AS TO NOT ADOPT THE FEDERAL STANDARD DEDUCTION AND ITEMIZED DEDUCTION; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-1140, RELATING TO INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS, SO AS TO ALLOW FOR A SOUTH CAROLINA INCOME ADJUSTED DEDUCTION (SCIAD); BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-4910, RELATING TO PERSONS REQUIRED TO FILE A TAX RETURN, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE TO THE CALCULATION; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-1720, RELATING TO ADJUSTMENTS TO THE TAXABLE INCOME OF NONRESIDENT INDIVIDUALS, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

Senator TURNER explained the Bill.

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Senator HUTTO proposed the following amendment (SMIN-4216.MW0003S), which was carried over:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 7, by striking Section 12-6-3632 and inserting:

Section 12-6-3632. (A) There is allowed as a nonrefundable credit against the tax imposed pursuant to Section 12-6-510 on a full-year resident individual taxpayer an amount equal to one hundred twenty-five percent of the federal earned income tax credit (EITC) allowed the taxpayer pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 32, but not to exceed two hundred dollars.

(B) In addition to the credit allowed pursuant to subsection (A), there is allowed as a refundable credit against the tax imposed pursuant to Section 12-6-510 on a full-year resident individual taxpayer an amount equal to ten percent of the federal earned income tax credit (EITC) allowed the taxpayer pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 32, but not to exceed four hundred dollars. To claim the credit allowed by this subsection, the taxpayer must have at least one qualifying dependent and an adjusted gross income of no more than eighty thousand dollars. Each year, for credits claimed pursuant to this subsection, the department shall issue a report to the General Assembly detailing the total number of credits claimed, the average credit amount, and a geographic distribution of where such taxpayers reside.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

On motion of Senator HUTTO, the amendment was carried over.

Debate interrupted by adjournment.

CARRIED OVER

S. 832 -- Senators Sutton, Graham, Goldfinch and Zell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 53-1-20, RELATING TO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES EXEMPT FROM THE PROHIBITION ON SUNDAY PUBLIC SPORTS, SO AS TO DEFINE TERMS PERTAINING TO CAMPUS EVENTS AND LAND USE APPROVAL, TO PROVIDE THAT NO COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY MAY PROHIBIT, RESTRICT, CONDITION, DELAY, OR REQUIRE LAND USE APPROVAL FOR EVENTS HELD ON THE CAMPUS OF A STATE-SUPPORTED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING BASED ON ZONING

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ORDINANCES OR LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS, AND TO CLARIFY THE APPLICATION OF GENERALLY APPLICABLE SAFETY LAWS.

On motion of Senator SUTTON, the Bill was carried over.

READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 160 -- Senator Verdin: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS SO AS TO ENACT THE “DIETITIAN LICENSURE COMPACT ACT”; BY ADDING ARTICLE 1 TO CHAPTER 21, TITLE 40, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE PURPOSES, FUNCTIONS, OPERATIONS, AND DEFINITIONS FOR THE COMPACT; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-20-20, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS IN THE DIETETICS LICENSURE ACT, SO AS TO REVISE A DEFINITION; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-20-60, RELATING TO APPLICATIONS FOR LICENSURE UNDER THE DIETETICS LICENSURE ACT, SO AS TO REQUIRE CERTAIN CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS OF APPLICANTS.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

Senator DAVIS explained the Bill.

The question then being the second reading of the Bill.

The “ayes” and “nays” were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 43; Nays 1

AYES

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Gambrell	Garrett	Goldfinch
Graham	Grooms	Hembree
Hutto	Jackson	Johnson
Kennedy	Kimbrell	Leber
Martin	Massey	Ott
Peeler	Rankin	Reichenbach
Rice	Sabb	Stubbs
Sutton	Tedder	Turner
Verdin	Williams	Young

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Zell

Total--43

NAYS

Fernandez

Total--1

The Bill was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 70 -- Senator Hembree: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59-19-710 SO AS TO ENHANCE LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE; BY ADDING SECTION 59-19-720 SO AS TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS; BY ADDING SECTION 59-19-730 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT AND REVISE AS NECESSARY A MODEL CODE OF ETHICS FOR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, AND REQUIRE THAT A LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD SHALL ADOPT A LOCAL CODE OF ETHICS AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING AND SUBMIT A COPY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WITHIN THIRTY DAYS OF ADOPTION; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 59-19-45, RELATING TO MANDATORY ORIENTATION FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES AND COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT A MODEL TRAINING PROGRAM, WHICH MUST INCLUDE A LOCAL TRAINING PROGRAM.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

Senator TURNER explained the Bill.

The question being the second reading of the Bill.

Motion Adopted

Senator TURNER asked unanimous consent to make a motion to give the Bill a second reading, carry over all amendments and waive the provisions of Rule 26B in order to allow amendments to be considered on third reading.

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There was no objection.

The Bill was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ADOPTED

READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 858 -- Senator Young: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-700, RELATING TO THE DIVISION FOR REVIEW OF THE FOSTER CARE OF CHILDREN'S BOARD, SO AS TO CHANGE THE STANDARDS FOR SERVING ON THE BOARD AND THE PROCEDURE FOR TERMS OF OFFICE; TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY TO ESTABLISH CERTAIN STANDARDS FOR LOCAL REVIEW BOARDS; BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-710, RELATING TO LOCAL BOARDS FOR REVIEW, SO AS TO GIVE THE DIRECTOR AUTHORIZATION TO APPOINT OR REMOVE A MEMBER OF A LOCAL BOARD; BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-740, RELATING TO MEETINGS OF LOCAL BOARDS AND STAFFING, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO EACH LOCAL BOARD FOR MEETINGS; BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-760, RELATING TO IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY, SO AS TO CLARIFY THAT TRAINING WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-770, RELATING TO COOPERATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES, SO AS TO INCLUDE ALL PUBLIC AGENCIES PROVIDING SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

The Committee on Family and Veterans' Services proposed the following amendment (SR-858.QG0001S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 63-11-700(A) and inserting:

(A) There is created, within the Department of Children's Advocacy, the ~~Division for Review of the Foster Care of Children~~ Foster Care Review Division. The division must be supported by a board consisting of seven members, all of whom must be past or present members of local review boards. There must be one member from each congressional

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district, all appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 2, by striking Section 63-11-710(B) and inserting:

(B) A member of a local board who is guilty of malfeasance, misfeasance, incompetency, absenteeism, conflicts of interest, misconduct, persistent neglect of duty in office, or incapacity must be subject to removal by the director upon any of the foregoing causes being made to appear to the satisfaction of the director. Before removing any such member, the director shall inform him and the local legislative delegation in writing of the specific grounds for removal brought against him and give him an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard. The consent of the majority of the local legislative delegation is needed to remove a member of a local board. The state board may recommend to the director that a member of a local board be removed pursuant to this section.

~~—(B) If the board of directors determines that additional local review boards are necessary in a judicial circuit because of an excessively large case load for review or if the local board is no longer necessary because of a reduced case load, the board may create or dissolve local review boards by resolution, and the boards created have all authority and duties provided for the boards by the provisions of this article.~~

(C) If the department determines that a local board is no longer necessary, then the department may dissolve that local review board with the consent of the majority of the local legislative delegation.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator REICHENBACH explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

The question then being the second reading of the Bill.

The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 44; Nays 0

AYES

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin

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Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Fernandez	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Graham	Grooms
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Johnson	Kennedy	Kimbrell
Leber	Martin	Massey
Ott	Peeler	Rankin
Reichenbach	Rice	Sabb
Stubbs	Sutton	Tedder
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

Total--44

NAYS

Total--0

There being no further amendments, the Bill, as amended, was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

**COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ADOPTED
AMENDED, READ THE SECOND TIME**

H. 3798 -- Reps. Murphy, G.M. Smith, Brewer, T. Moore, Guest, Hager, Yow, C. Mitchell, W. Newton, Lawson, Stavrinakis, Govan, Erickson, Bradley, Weeks, Hart, Williams, Rivers and Gilliard: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 25-1-180 SO AS TO PROVIDE CERTAIN CRITERIA FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT MILITARY CHAPLAINS HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO REFUSE TO DISCLOSE CERTAIN CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

The Committee on Family and Veterans' Services proposed the following amendment (SR-3798.QG0002S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 25-1-180(A) and inserting:

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(A) Military chaplains serving in any of the ~~three~~ militia classes, National Guard, State Guard, organized militia not in National Guard Service, ~~or and the~~ unorganized militia, shall:

(1) be properly ordained and endorsed for militia service by a recognized military-endorsing agency, as well as any specific qualifications required by any of the ~~three~~ militia classes; ~~and~~

(2) wear uniforms properly identifying their status as chaplains appropriate to their militia status and as defined by their militia class;
and

~~(2)~~(3) possess privileged communication with all militia members, authorized dependents, and authorized personnel as defined by each militia class. The privilege also may be claimed on behalf of the person by the chaplain who received the communication.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, Section 25-1-180, by adding a subsection to read:

(F) The State shall recognize the clergy-penitent privilege for all militia classes, as well as for any active duty or reserve chaplain, whether in status or not, as long as the communication is with a member who would normally be covered under the clergy-penitent privilege and as long as that communication is made as a formal act of religion or as a matter of conscience.

Re-number sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator GAMBRELL explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

Senator SUTTON proposed the following amendment (SR-3798.QG0006S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 25-1-180(A)(1) and inserting:

(1) be properly ordained and endorsed for militia service by a ~~recognized military-endorsing agency~~the Department of Defense or an approved Department of Defense affiliate, the Adjutant General or his designee, or the Commander of the South Carolina State Guard or his designee, as well as any specific qualifications required by any of the militia classes;

Re-number sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

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Senator SUTTON explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

Senator LEBER proposed the following amendment (SR-3798.QG0004S), which was withdrawn:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 25-1-180(A)(1) and inserting:

(1) be properly ordained and endorsed for militia service ~~by a recognized military endorsing agency~~ by the Adjutant General for South Carolina or his designee, or the Commander of the South Carolina State Guard or his designee, as well as any specific qualifications required by any of the militia classes;

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

On motion of Senator LEBER, with unanimous consent, the amendment was withdrawn.

The question being the second reading of the Bill.

The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 44; Nays 0

AYES

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Fernandez	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Graham	Grooms
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Johnson	Kennedy	Kimbrell
Leber	Martin	Massey
Ott	Peeler	Rankin
Reichenbach	Rice	Sabb
Stubbs	Sutton	Tedder
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

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Total--44

NAYS

Total--0

There being no further amendments, the Bill, as amended, was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

CARRIED OVER

H. 3974 -- Reps. Calhoun, Bernstein, Erickson, Schuessler, Bauer, Guffey and McGinnis: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING ARTICLE 5 TO CHAPTER 10, TITLE 59 SO AS TO AUTHORIZE EVALUATORS TO EVALUATE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR HEALTH, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, OR THERAPEUTIC NEEDS, TO AUTHORIZE PRIVATE PROVIDERS TO PROVIDE RELATED SERVICES AT SCHOOLS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, TO SPECIFY THESE EVALUATIONS AND SERVICES ONLY MAY OCCUR UPON REQUEST OF THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF THE STUDENT, TO PROVIDE SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY NOT PROHIBIT SUCH EVALUATIONS OR SERVICES IN SCHOOLS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, TO PROVIDE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL ADOPT A RELATED MODEL POLICY, TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MODEL POLICY, TO PROVIDE SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHALL ADOPT RELATED POLICIES, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS.

On motion of Senator HUTTO, the Bill was carried over.

READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 619 -- Senators Gambrell and Turner: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 38-27-610, RELATING TO PRIORITY OF DISTRIBUTION FOR CLAIMS, SO AS TO ADD FUNDING AGREEMENTS.

The Senate proceeded to a consideration of the Bill.

Senator BENNETT explained the Bill.

The question being the second reading of the Bill.

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The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 44; Nays 0

AYES

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Fernandez	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Graham	Grooms
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Johnson	Kennedy	Kimbrell
Leber	Martin	Massey
Ott	Peeler	Rankin
Reichenbach	Rice	Sabb
Stubbs	Sutton	Tedder
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

Total--44

NAYS

Total--0

The Bill was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ADOPTED

READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 697 -- Senator Gambrell: A BILL TO TRANSFER THE SOUTH CAROLINA 211 NETWORK TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS; TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 37-6-515 SO AS TO CREATE THE SOUTH CAROLINA 211 NETWORK WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 1-11-770, RELATING TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA 211 NETWORK, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

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The Committee on Banking and Insurance proposed the following amendment (LC-697.SA0001S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, by striking SECTIONS 2 and 3 and inserting:

SECTION X. Chapter 6, Title 37 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Part 7
211

Section 37-6-710. (A) As used in this section:

(1) “211” means the abbreviated dialing code assigned by the Federal Communications Commission for consumer access to community information and referral services.

(2) “211 services” means information and referral services provided through the use of 2-1-1 and intended to promote and provide access to health and human services and to aid in disaster response and recovery.

(3) “Approved 211 service provider” means a public or nonprofit agency or other organization designated by the lead entity to provide 211 services.

(4) “Lead entity” means a South Carolina 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency or organization designated by the department to manage the use of the 211 dialing code for the purposes of providing the public access to information about services provided by government, nonprofit, or other designated organizations to ensure the health and well-being of South Carolina residents and to aid in disaster response and recovery.

Section 37-6-720. (A) Subject to appropriations, the department is authorized to implement the statewide South Carolina 211 Network, which must serve as the single point of coordination for information and referral for health and human services. The objectives for the South Carolina 211 Network are to:

(1) provide comprehensive and cost-effective access to health and human services information;

(2) improve access to accurate information by simplifying and enhancing state and local health and human services information and referral systems and by fostering collaboration among information and referral systems;

(3) electronically connect local information and referral systems to each other, to service providers, and to consumers of information and referral services;

(4) establish and promote standards for data collection and for distributing information among state and local organizations;

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(5) promote the use of a common dialing access code and the visibility and public awareness of the availability of information and referral services;

(6) provide a management and administrative structure to support the South Carolina 211 Network and establish technical assistance, training, and support programs for information and referral-service programs;

(7) test methods for integrating information and referral services with local and state health and human services programs and for consolidating and streamlining eligibility and case-management processes;

(8) provide access to standardized, comprehensive data to assist in identifying gaps and needs in health and human services programs; and

(9) provide a unified systems plan with a developed platform, taxonomy, and standards for data management and access.

Section 37-6-730. (A)(1) The department shall contract with the state's established 211 lead entity for the continuation of services required by this section.

(2) The lead entity shall:

(a) implement, study, support, coordinate, and evaluate a statewide 211 system;

(b) establish standards consistent with prevailing national standards established for providing information about and referrals to human services agencies to 211 callers. The standards shall prescribe the technology or manner of delivering 211 calls and shall not exceed any requirements for 211 systems set by the Federal Communications Commission. The standards shall be consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring accessibility for users of Teletypewriters for the Deaf (TTY);

(c) develop and maintain a statewide resources database for the 211 system that meets prevailing national standards for information and referral systems databases and that are integrated with databases maintained by approved 211 providers;

(d) provide periodic programmatic and fiscal reports to the department. The initial report shall be submitted on or before December 31, 2026. Thereafter, the lead entity shall provide a report to the department on or before March first each year for the prior calendar year's activities. The report must include, at a minimum, the following:

(i) call volume and interactions. The total number of inquiries, including calls, chats, texts, or web inquiries, along with trends in

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monthly, quarterly, and annual call volumes, and average response times for handling inquiries;

(ii) caller demographics. The demographic information of callers, including age, gender, and location, and any other relevant identifiers, highlighting any notable shifts or patterns in demographic data over time;

(iii) reasons for contact. A breakdown of inquiries by category or type of referral request, including the demand for, and need for, human services;

(iv) referrals made and service outcomes. The total number of referrals made, specifying the programs or services to which clients were referred;

(v) service referral gaps. The total number of requests for services or programs for which referral to an existing service provider is not able to be made, including description of services requested; and

(vi) trends and comparisons. Year-over-year trends of the data outlined in subitems (i) through (v).

(3) The Department of Consumer Affairs shall report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on the number of individuals by region and county of the State using the system and the type of inquiries made.

(B) The department shall seek the assistance and guidance of the Public Service Commission and the Federal Communications Commission in resolving any disputes arising over jurisdiction related to 211 numbers.

(C) The procurement of services necessary to implement the 211 Network shall be exempt from the entirety of the South Carolina Procurement Code and all of its attendant regulations.

Section 37-6-740 (A) Only a service provider approved by the lead entity may provide 211 telephone services. The lead entity shall approve 211 service providers after considering all of the following:

(1) the ability of the proposed 211 service provider to meet the prevailing national 211 standards and receive and retain accreditation;

(2) the financial stability and health of the proposed 211 service provider;

(3) the community support for the proposed 211 service provider and the relationships with other information and referral services;

(4) ability of the proposed 211 service provider to demonstrate that programs, policies, and procedures are in place to adequately provide for the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the information systems;

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(5) ability of the proposed 211 service provider to comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA); and

(6) any other criteria as the lead entity and department deems appropriate.

(B) A lead entity may remove an approved 211 service provider for failure to meet or otherwise maintain minimum qualifications or for failure to perform activities required in this section or its contract with the lead entity.

SECTION X. Section 1-11-770 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

Section 1-11-770. ~~(A) Subject to appropriations, the General Assembly authorizes the board to plan, develop, and implement a statewide South Carolina 211 Network, which must serve as the single point of coordination for information and referral for health and human services. The objectives for establishing the South Carolina 211 Network are to:~~

~~— (1) provide comprehensive and cost effective access to health and human services information;~~

~~— (2) improve access to accurate information by simplifying and enhancing state and local health and human services information and referral systems and by fostering collaboration among information and referral systems;~~

~~— (3) electronically connect local information and referral systems to each other, to service providers, and to consumers of information and referral services;~~

~~— (4) establish and promote standards for data collection and for distributing information among state and local organizations;~~

~~— (5) promote the use of a common dialing access code and the visibility and public awareness of the availability of information and referral services;~~

~~— (6) provide a management and administrative structure to support the South Carolina 211 Network and establish technical assistance, training, and support programs for information and referral service programs;~~

~~— (7) test methods for integrating information and referral services with local and state health and human services programs and for consolidating and streamlining eligibility and case management processes;~~

~~— (8) provide access to standardized, comprehensive data to assist in identifying gaps and needs in health and human services programs; and~~

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~~—(9) provide a unified systems plan with a developed platform, taxonomy, and standards for data management and access.~~

~~—(B) In order to participate in the South Carolina 211 Network, a 211 provider must be certified by the board. The board must develop criteria for certification and must adopt the criteria as regulations.~~

~~—(1) If any provider of information and referral services or other entity leases a 211 number from a local exchange company and is not certified by the agency, the agency shall, after consultation with the local exchange company and the Public Service Commission, request that the Federal Communications Commission direct the local exchange company to revoke the use of the 211 number.~~

~~—(2) The agency shall seek the assistance and guidance of the Public Service Commission and the Federal Communications Commission in resolving any disputes arising over jurisdiction related to 211 numbers. The South Carolina 211 Network program authorized by this section is transferred to the Department of Consumer Affairs and is established thereto as set forth in Section 37-6-710.~~

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator GAMBRELL explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

The question being the second reading of the Bill.

The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 44; Nays 0

AYES

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Fernandez	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Graham	Grooms
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Johnson	Kennedy	Kimbrell
Leber	Martin	Massey
Ott	Peeler	Rankin

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Reichenbach	Rice	Sabb
Stubbs	Sutton	Tedder
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

Total--44

NAYS

Total--0

There being no further amendments, the Bill, as amended, was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 780 -- Senator Gambrell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 37-23-20, RELATING TO HIGH-COST AND CONSUMER HOME LOANS DEFINITIONS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE CONVENTIONAL MORTGAGE RATE MEANS THE AVERAGE PRIME OFFER RATE.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

Senator GAMBRELL explained the Bill.

The question being the second reading of the Bill.

The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 44; Nays 0

AYES

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Fernandez	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Graham	Grooms
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Johnson	Kennedy	Kimbrell
Leber	Martin	Massey

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Ott	Peeler	Rankin
Reichenbach	Rice	Sabb
Stubbs	Sutton	Tedder
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

Total--44

NAYS

Total--0

The Bill was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

CARRIED OVER

S. 787 -- Senator Gambrell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 37-3-110 SO AS TO DEFINE BRIDGE LOANS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 37-3-402, RELATING TO BALLOON PAYMENTS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO BRIDGE LOANS.

On motion of Senator GAMBRELL, the Bill was carried over.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ADOPTED

READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 857 -- Senator Turner: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 38-1-20, RELATING TO INSURANCE LAW DEFINITIONS, SO AS TO DEFINE THE TERM "CONTINGENT DEFERRED ANNUITY"; BY AMENDING SECTION 38-69-220, RELATING TO EXCEPTIONS FROM OPERATION OF THE STANDARD NONFORFEITURE LAW FOR INDIVIDUAL DEFERRED ANNUITIES, SO AS TO ADD AN EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE STANDARD NONFORFEITURE LAW FOR INDIVIDUAL DEFERRED ANNUITIES, AND TO PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE MAY PROMULGATE REGULATIONS FOR NONFORFEITURE BENEFITS FOR CONTINGENT DEFERRED ANNUITIES IN THE DISCRETION OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 38-44-20, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS IN

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THE MANAGING GENERAL AGENTS ACT, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE.

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Bill.

The Committee on Banking and Insurance proposed the following amendment (LC-857.WAB0001S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 2, by striking Section 38-69-220(B) and inserting:

(B) Sections 38-69-230 through 38-69-280 do not apply to contingent deferred annuities. Notwithstanding this exemption, the department may promulgate regulations for establish by order or regulation nonforfeiture benefits for contingent deferred annuities that are, in the opinion of the director, equitable to the contract holder, appropriate given the risks insured, and to the extent possible, consistent with general intent of this article.

Re-number sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator GAMBRELL explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

The question being the second reading of the Bill.

The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 44; Nays 0

AYES

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Fernandez	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Graham	Grooms
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Johnson	Kennedy	Kimbrell
Leber	Martin	Massey
Ott	Peeler	Rankin
Reichenbach	Rice	Sabb
Stubbs	Sutton	Tedder

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Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

Total--44

NAYS

Total--0

There being no further amendments, the Bill, as amended, was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

CARRIED OVER

S. 925 -- Banking and Insurance Committee: A JOINT RESOLUTION TO APPROVE REGULATIONS OF THE STATE BOARD OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, RELATING TO NON-INTEREST BEARING NEGOTIABLE ORDER OF WITHDRAWAL (NINOW) ACCOUNTS BY STATE-CHARTERED SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS, DESIGNATED AS REGULATION DOCUMENT NUMBER 5393, PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 1, CHAPTER 23, TITLE 1 OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS.

On motion of Senator GAMBRELL, the Resolution was carried over.

ADOPTED

H. 4959 -- Reps. Sanders, Alexander, Anderson, Atkinson, Bailey, Ballentine, Bamberg, Bannister, Bauer, Beach, Bernstein, Bowers, Bradley, Brewer, Brittain, Burns, Bustos, Calhoon, Caskey, Chapman, Chumley, Clyburn, Cobb-Hunter, Collins, Cox, Crawford, Cromer, Davis, Dillard, Duncan, Edgerton, Erickson, Ford, Forrest, Frank, Gagnon, Garvin, Gatch, Gibson, Gilliam, Gilliard, Gilreath, Govan, Grant, Guest, Guffey, Haddon, Hager, Hardee, Harris, Hart, Hartnett, Hartz, Hayes, Henderson-Myers, Herbkersman, Hewitt, Hiott, Hixon, Holman, Hosey, Howard, Huff, J.E. Johnson, J.L. Johnson, Jones, Jordan, Kilmartin, King, Kirby, Landing, Lastinger, Lawson, Ligon, Long, Lowe, Luck, Magnuson, Martin, McCabe, McCravy, McDaniel, McGinnis, C. Mitchell, D. Mitchell, Montgomery, J. Moore, T. Moore, Morgan, Moss, Neese, B. Newton, W. Newton, Oremus, Pace, Pedalino, Pope, Rankin, Reese, Rivers, Robbins, Rose, Rutherford, Schuessler, Scott, Sessions, G.M. Smith, M.M. Smith, Spann-Wilder, Stavrinakis,

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Taylor, Teeple, Terrible, Vaughan, Waters, Weeks, Wetmore, White, Whitmire, Wickensimer, Williams, Willis, Wooten and Yow: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE HEROISM AND SACRIFICE OF PRIVATE CURTIS ADAMS AND THE “WERETH 11,” AND TO DESIGNATE DECEMBER 17 OF EACH YEAR AS “WERETH 11 REMEMBRANCE DAY” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

The Resolution was adopted, ordered returned to the House.

ADOPTED

H. 5055 -- Reps. Kirby, Cox, Holman, Davis, M.M. Smith, J. Moore, Anderson and Pace: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME THE PORTION OF HARRISTOWN ROAD FROM ITS INTERSECTION WITH MENDELL RIVERS ROAD TO ITS INTERSECTION WITH HARRIS LANE IN THE TOWN OF ST. STEPHEN IN BERKELEY COUNTY “J.B. HARRIS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY” AND ERECT APPROPRIATE SIGNS OR MARKERS AT THIS LOCATION CONTAINING THESE WORDS.

The Resolution was adopted, ordered returned to the House.

THE CALL OF THE UNCONTESTED CALENDAR HAVING BEEN COMPLETED, THE SENATE PROCEEDED TO THE MOTION PERIOD.

MOTION ADOPTED

At 3:06 P.M., on motion of Senator MASSEY, the Senate agreed to dispense with the balance of the Motion Period.

THE SENATE PROCEEDED TO THE INTERRUPTED DEBATE.

AMENDED, READ THE SECOND TIME

S. 768 -- Senators Peeler, Alexander, Kimbrell, Verdin, Massey, Hembree, Turner, Williams, Rice, Stubbs, Davis, Garrett, Campsen, Martin, Leber, Zell and Grooms: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-250, RELATING TO THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, SO AS TO INCREASE THE EXEMPTION TO ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS AND TO REDUCE THE AGE ELIGIBILITY TO SIXTY; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-266, RELATING TO THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING

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CHANGE; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-280, RELATING TO THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-290, RELATING TO THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-220, RELATING TO GENERAL EXEMPTION FROM TAXES, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; BY AMENDING SECTION 11-11-150, RELATING TO DEDUCTIONS FOR THE TRUST FUND FOR TAX RELIEF, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE; AND BY REPEALING SECTION 12-37-245 RELATING TO THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION.

The Senate proceeded to a consideration of the Bill, the question being the second reading of the Bill.

Amendment No. 4

Senators GOLDFINCH, KIMBRELL, MARTIN and PEELER proposed the following amendment (LC-768.DG0005S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, by adding an appropriately numbered SECTION to read:

SECTION X. Chapter 45, Title 12 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Section 12-45-72. In addition to the requirements provided in Section 12-60-2510, a property tax notice or assessment must include an itemized list of any homestead exemption received by the taxpayer and a notation of State Legislature Aiding in Saving Homes (SLASH), the amount in which the individual's property tax bill was reduced, and the amount, if any, in which the State reimbursed the local taxing authorities on behalf of the individual.

Re-number sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator GOLDFINCH explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

Amendment No. 6

Senators BRIGHT, FERNANDEZ, LEBER, TEDDER and CLIMER proposed the following amendment (SR-768.CEM0004S), which was tabled:

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Amend the bill, as and if amended, by striking SECTIONS 1, 2, and 3 and inserting:

SECTION X. Section 12-37-250 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

Section 12-37-250. (A)(1) The first ~~fifty~~one hundred thousand dollars of the fair market value of the dwelling place of a person is exempt from county, municipal, school, and special assessment real estate property taxes. ~~when the person:~~

~~— (i) has been a resident of this State for at least one year and has reached the age of sixty five years on or before December thirty first;~~

~~— (ii) has been classified as totally and permanently disabled by a state or federal agency having the function of classifying persons; or~~

~~— (iii) is legally blind as defined in Section 43-25-20, preceding the tax year in which the exemption is claimed and holds complete fee simple title or a life estate to the dwelling place. A person claiming to be totally and permanently disabled, but who has not been classified by one of the agencies, may apply to the state agency of Vocational Rehabilitation. The agency shall make an evaluation of the person using its own standards.~~

~~— (2) The exemption includes the dwelling place when jointly owned in complete fee simple or life estate by husband and wife, and either has reached sixty five years of age, or is totally and permanently disabled, or legally blind pursuant to this section, before January first of the tax year in which the exemption is claimed, and either has been a resident of the State for one year.~~

~~(3)~~(2) The exemption must not be granted for the tax year in which it is claimed unless the person or his agent makes written application for the exemption before July sixteenth of that tax year. If the person or his agent makes written application for the exemption after July fifteenth, the exemption must not be granted except for the succeeding tax year for a person qualifying pursuant to this section when the application is made. However, if application is made after July fifteenth of that tax year but before the first penalty date on property taxes for that tax year by a person qualifying pursuant to this section when the application is made, the taxes due for that tax year must be reduced to reflect the exemption provided in this section.

~~(4)~~(3)(a) The application for the exemption must be made to the auditor of the county and to the governing body of the municipality in which the dwelling place is located upon forms provided by the county and municipality and approved by the department. A failure to apply constitutes a waiver of the exemption for that year. The auditor, as directed by the department, shall notify the municipality of all

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applications for a homestead exemption within the municipality and the information necessary to calculate the amount of the exemption.

(b) The application required may be:

(i) made in person at the auditor's office;

(ii) by mail, when accompanied by a copy of documentation of age, or disability, or legal blindness; or

(iii) by internet in those instances where the auditor has access to official records documenting the appropriate eligibility standard.

The department shall assist auditors with compliance with the provisions of this subitem and by means of the approval required pursuant to subitem (a) of this item ensure uniform application procedures.

~~(S)~~(4) "Dwelling place" means the permanent home and legal residence of the applicant.

(B) If a person would be entitled to a homestead tax exemption pursuant to this section except that he does not own the real property on which his dwelling place is located and his dwelling place is a mobile home owned by him but located on property leased from another, the mobile home is exempt from personal property taxes to the same extent and obtained in accordance with the same procedures as is provided for in this section for an exemption from real property taxes; provided, however, that a person may not receive the exemption from both real and personal property taxes in the same year.

(C) If a dwelling house and legal residence is located on leased or rented property and the dwelling house is owned and occupied by the owner even though at the end of the lease period the lessor becomes owner of the residence, the owner lessee qualifies for and is entitled to a homestead exemption in the same manner as though he owned a fee simple or life estate interest in the leased property on which his dwelling house is located.

(D) When a person who was entitled to a homestead tax exemption pursuant to this section ~~dies or any person who was not sixty five years of age or older, blind, or disabled on or before December thirty first preceding the application period, but was at least sixty five years of age, blind, or disabled at the time of his death and was otherwise entitled~~ dies and the surviving spouse acquires complete fee simple title or a life estate to the dwelling place within nine months after the death of the spouse, the dwelling place is exempt from real property taxes to the same extent and obtained in accordance with the same procedures as are provided for in this section for an exemption from real property taxes, so long as the spouse remains unmarried and the dwelling place is utilized as the

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permanent home and legal residence of the spouse. A surviving spouse who disposes of the dwelling place and acquires another residence in this State for use as a dwelling place may apply for and receive the exemption on the newly acquired dwelling place. The spouse shall inform the county auditor of the change in address of the dwelling place.

~~—(E) The term “permanently and totally disabled” as used in this section means the inability to perform substantial gainful employment by reason of a medically determinable impairment, either physical or mental, that has lasted or is expected to last for a continuous period of twelve months or more or result in death.~~

~~—(F) The department shall reimburse from funds appropriated for homestead reimbursement the state agency of Vocational Rehabilitation for the actual expenses incurred in making decisions relative to disability.~~

~~(G)~~(E) The department shall develop advisory opinions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

~~(H)~~(F) Nothing in this section intends to cause the reassessment of a person's property.

~~(H)~~(G) The provisions of this section apply to life estates created by will and also to life estates otherwise created.

~~(J)~~(H) The homestead tax exemption must be granted in the amount in this paragraph to a person who owns a dwelling in part in fee or in part for life when the person satisfies the other conditions of the exemption. The amount of the exemption must be determined by multiplying the percentage of the fee or life estate owned by the person by the full exemption. For purposes of the calculation required by this paragraph, a percentage of ownership less than five percent is considered to be five percent. The exemption may not exceed the value of the interest owned by the person.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator BRIGHT explained the amendment.

Senator VERDIN moved to lay the amendment on the table.

The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 32; Nays 10

AYES

Adams

Alexander

Allen

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Bennett	Campsen	Chaplin
Cromer	Davis	Elliott
Gambrell	Garrett	Goldfinch
Graham	Grooms	Hembree
Hutto	Jackson	Johnson
Kimbrell	Martin	Massey
Peeler	Rankin	Rice
Sabb	Stubbs	Sutton
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

Total--32

NAYS

Bright	Cash	Climer
Corbin	Devine	Fernandez
Leber	Ott	Reichenbach
Tedder		

Total--10

The amendment was laid on the table.

Amendment No. 7

Senator JOHNSON proposed the following amendment (LC-768.DG0009S), which was withdrawn:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, by adding appropriately numbered SECTIONS to read:

SECTION X.A. Section 12-37-220(B) of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

(54)(a) 33.33 percent of the property tax value of property assessed pursuant to Section 12-43-220(e).

(b)(i) The revenue loss resulting from the exemption allowed by this item must be reimbursed and allocated to the political subdivisions of this State, including school districts, in the same manner as the Trust Fund for Tax Relief. In calculating estimated state individual and corporate income tax revenues for a fiscal year, the Board of Economic Advisors shall deduct amounts sufficient to account for the reimbursement required by this item.

(ii) Notwithstanding subitem (b)(i), beginning in property tax year 2030, the reimbursement rate shall decrease by ten permanent and

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cumulative percentage points each property tax year, calculated from the initial reimbursement rate of one hundred percent, until the reimbursement rate equals fifty percent.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, property exempted from property taxes in the manner provided in this item is considered taxable property for purposes of bonded indebtedness pursuant to Section 15, Article X of the Constitution of this State.

B. Notwithstanding the exemption amount allowed pursuant to item (54) added pursuant to subsection A of this SECTION, the percentage exemption amount is phased-in in four equal and cumulative percentage installments, applicable for property tax years beginning after 2025.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator JOHNSON explained the amendment.

On motion of Senator JOHNSON, with unanimous consent, the amendment was withdrawn.

Amendment No. 8

Senator DEVINE proposed the following amendment (LC-768.SA0001S), which was withdrawn:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, by adding an appropriately numbered SECTION to read:

SECTION X. Section 12-37-220(B) of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

(54)(a) to the extent not already exempt, the first one hundred thousand dollars of the fair market value of the dwelling place, as defined in Section 12-37-250, of a person whose South Carolina taxable income is less than sixty thousand dollars each year.

(b) A person only may claim the exemption provided for in this item or the exemption provided for in Section 12-37-250 or 12-37-253, not both.

(c) The revenue loss resulting from the exemption allowed by this item must be reimbursed and allocated to the political subdivisions of this State, including school districts, in the same manner as the Trust Fund for Tax Relief. In calculating estimated state individual and corporate income tax revenues for a fiscal year, the Board of Economic Advisors shall deduct amounts sufficient to account for the reimbursement required by this item.

Renumber sections to conform.

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Amend title to conform.

Senator DEVINE explained the amendment.

On motion of Senator DEVINE, with unanimous consent, the amendment was withdrawn.

Amendment No. 9

Senators HUTTO, SABB, SUTTON, OTT, MATTHEWS, PEELER, RANKIN, RICE, KIMBRELL and MARTIN proposed the following amendment (LC-768.DG0010S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 12-37-253(A) and inserting:

(A) Any eligible person may claim an exemption from county, municipal, school, and special assessment real property equal to ~~one hundred fifty thousand dollars~~ an amount of the fair market value on the person's dwelling place as set forth in subsection (C). A person may not claim this exemption and the exemption set forth in Section 12-37-250 and a person must be eligible for this exemption to claim the exemption set forth in Section 12-37-250. For purposes of eligibility, application, and reimbursement, this exemption must be administered in the same manner as the exemption allowed pursuant to Section 12-37-250, including the application of other laws affecting the exemption allowed pursuant to Section 12-37-250, mutatis mutandis. For a person eligible for this exemption pursuant to subsection (B)(1), the previous application for the exemption allowed pursuant to Section 12-37-250 must be considered the application for this exemption.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, by striking Section 12-37-253(B)(1) and inserting:

(1) if the person was eligible to claim the exemption pursuant to Section 12-37-250 in Property Tax Year 2025 and remains eligible thereafter; ~~or~~

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, by striking Section 12-37-253(B)(2)(b) and inserting:

(b) when the person has been a resident of this State for the entire five property tax years immediately preceding the application; or

(3)(a) when the person meets the requirements of Section 12-37-250(A)(1)(i), (ii), or (iii); and

(b) when the person has been a resident of this State for the entire ten property tax years immediately preceding the application.

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(C) A person who qualifies for this exemption pursuant to item (B)(1) or (B)(3) qualifies for a one hundred fifty thousand dollar exemption. A person who qualifies for this exemption pursuant to item (B)(2) qualifies for a seventy-five thousand dollar exemption. The exemption amounts set forth in this subsection are not cumulative and may not be combined.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator HUTTO explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

Amendment No. 10

Senator MASSEY proposed the following amendment (SR-768.KM0005S), which was adopted:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 4, by striking Section and inserting:

SECTION 4. If any section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this act is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, ~~such holding shall not affect the constitutionality or validity of the remaining portions of this act, the~~ General Assembly hereby ~~declaring~~ declares that it would not have passed this act, ~~and each and every section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, and word thereof, irrespective of the fact that~~ without the ~~any one or more other~~ sections, subsections, paragraphs, subparagraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, or words ~~hereof may be~~ declared to be unconstitutional, invalid, or otherwise ineffective.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator MASSEY explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

Amendment No. 11

Senator BENNETT proposed the following amendment (SR-768.CEM0005S), which was tabled:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 12-37-253(A) and inserting:

(A) Any eligible person may claim an exemption from county, municipal, school, and special assessment real property equal to one

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hundred ~~fifty~~-thousand dollars of the fair market value on the person's dwelling place. A person may not claim this exemption and the exemption set forth in Section 12-37-250 and a person must be eligible for this exemption to claim the exemption set forth in Section 12-37-250. For purposes of eligibility, application, and reimbursement, this exemption must be administered in the same manner as the exemption allowed pursuant to Section 12-37-250, including the application of other laws affecting the exemption allowed pursuant to Section 12-37-250, mutatis mutandis. For a person eligible for this exemption pursuant to subsection (B)(1), the previous application for the exemption allowed pursuant to Section 12-37-250 must be considered the application for this exemption.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator BENNETT explained the amendment.

Senator VERDIN moved to lay the amendment on the table.

The amendment was laid on the table.

On motion of Senator BENNETT, with unanimous consent, Amendment No. 2 was withdrawn.

Motion Adopted

Senator MASSEY asked unanimous consent to withdraw the motion to reconsider Amendment No. 1 made on February 11, 2026.

Senator TEDDER spoke on the Bill.

Remarks to be Printed

On motion of Senator BRIGHT, with unanimous consent, the remarks of Senator TEDDER, when reduced to writing and made available to the Desk, would be printed in the Journal.

The question then was second reading of the Bill.

The "ayes" and "nays" were demanded and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes 44; Nays 0

AYES

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Adams	Alexander	Allen
Bennett	Blackmon	Bright
Campsen	Cash	Chaplin
Climer	Corbin	Cromer
Davis	Devine	Elliott
Fernandez	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Graham	Grooms
Hembree	Hutto	Jackson
Johnson	Kennedy	Kimbrell
Leber	Martin	Massey
Ott	Peeler	Rankin
Reichenbach	Rice	Sabb
Stubbs	Sutton	Tedder
Turner	Verdin	Williams
Young	Zell	

Total--44

NAYS

Total--0

There being no further amendments, the Bill, as amended, was read the second time, passed and ordered to a third reading.

Motion Adopted

On motion of Senator MASSEY, the Senate agreed to stand adjourned.

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MOTION ADOPTED

On motion of Senators ALLEN, JACKSON, ALEXANDER, DEVINE, GRAHAM, HUTTO, MATTHEWS, OTT, SABB, SUTTON, TEDDER, WALKER and WILLIAMS, with unanimous consent, the Senate stood adjourned out of respect to the memory of Reverend Jessie Louis Jackson, born in Greenville, S.C. Reverend Jackson was an American civil rights activist, politician and ordained Baptist minister who became one of the most prominent civil rights leaders of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Reverend Jackson went to Illinois Urbana-Champaign on a football scholarship but transferred after his freshman year to attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University where he was a leader in his fraternity and student body president. After college graduation, he enrolled at the Chicago Theological Seminary. He fought for economic and political inclusion for the marginalized. As a protégé of Martin Luther King, Jr., he was a pivotal figure in the civil rights movement. He founded Operation Rainbow/PUSH where he fought tirelessly for equality. Reverend Jackson was a loving husband, devoted father, doting grandfather and activist who will forever be remembered.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:39 P.M., on motion of Senator MASSEY, the Senate adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11:00 A.M.

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