

NO. 27

JOURNAL
OF THE
SENATE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**Friday, February 27, 2026
(Local Session)**

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

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

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator MATTHEWS were ordered printed in the Journal of February 5, 2026:

Remarks by Senator MATTHEWS

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT. I'd like to take this opportunity to provide some introductory remarks on this legislation. In 2025, there were 2,255 measles cases in the United States. The highest number since 1991. There were 49 outbreaks of measles in the U.S. previously -- 89% of the measles cases were associated with an outbreak in 2025, 93% of all measles cases in the U.S. had no history or unknown history of measles vaccination. That is 95 of the people who contracted measles had never been vaccinated. Just 7% had one or two doses. I'm here to tell you -- and I passed an update out yesterday, that measles aren't just a rash that kids simply recover from -- last year, 11% of measles cases were hospitalized for complications -- such as brain infection, but mostly from diarrhea, dehydration, and pneumonia.

Three people died from measles last year. The first deaths from measles in over a decade. We have to analyze this. I know we've gotten together in the last few weeks in a bipartisan way to solve the state's problems. I'm here to tell you that South Carolina leads the Nation in the number of measles cases -- with 789 reported cases. That's ridiculous. During the State of the State address, I heard nothing about that distinction and how we're going to solve it. I'd ask that we do what the Department of Public Health (DPH) has done. We're in trouble with this measles spread. South Carolina DPH declared measles, the current measles outbreak on October 8th -- but we've done nothing. We're in week 17 -- well 18 now as of January 27th with 789 cases. Guess what? 786 of those cases are in Spartanburg County alone. What are we doing about that? The remaining 33 cases are in Greenville, Anderson and Cherokee counties. We just learned that there is a case in Sumter County.

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It is touching all of us. Over 200 cases are under the age of five -- 44% are ages 5 - 11, and 19% are ages 12 - 17.

What happens when you have measles? First you have to be quarantined -- that means the child or the children are losing time from school. Twenty-seven public exposure sites have been identified. Most of these sites are in schools. Some are at restaurants. Some are at public places like stores. There is nothing we can do about that -- but we can do something about our schools. Currently there are two exemptions -- one for medical reasons and one for religious reasons. My Bill removes the religious exemption. I have a printout from DPH that I will be glad to share with you. Seventeen weeks into our response, South Carolina cases have now surpassed the total number of cases reported over a 7-month period in Texas -- in the large state of Texas before that outbreak was even declared. It is likely that South Carolina will have the largest measles outbreak in the United States since 1990 and 1991. The ultimate trajectory for South Carolina's measles outbreak is unknown. However, based on the number of people currently in quarantine -- with the latest quarantine existing period and extending into mid-February vaccination coverage remains below 95% -- the threshold needed for herd immunity in some areas. The outbreak is expected to continue for several more weeks and possibly months. We have got to get a grip on this outbreak. The reason I'm bringing this forward is because we need to do something about measles. We need to protect our children. We need to protect our adults.

I come to you because someone I loved very much -- she was originally from Horry County, and her name was Esther Gore. She was my sister-in-law. She had German Measles as a child, and it caused heart damage. Esther didn't make it -- she wasn't supposed to make it to her 20's but she died at age 47. What we're dealing with is serious. Let's do something about it here. Our children shouldn't have to go to school and worry about contracting measles. What are we going to do? If you don't agree with my Bill, come up with something. I'll be willing to work with you, but we have to protect our children. Thank you.

The following remarks by Senator SABB were ordered printed in the Journal of February 17, 2026:

Remarks by Senator SABB

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT. Thank you, Senator ALLEN, I was

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wondering at what moment you would lead us in this opportunity to pay homage to Reverend Jackson on the floor.

My story is a wee bit different. When I was in college, you looked to people in the Nation who are leading as you're considering fraternities. When I looked around, there were great men that were involved in all of them. It's all about service, leadership, scholarship, uplift and manhood and all those kinds of principles. So, there was Vernon Jordan, President of the National Urban League and there was Jesse Jackson with PUSH and there was Benjamin Hooks with NAACP. I decided I would pledge Omega Psi Phi Fraternity like Reverend Jackson. Not knowing that this little boy from Greeleyville, South Carolina, would at some point find himself in the company of Reverend Jackson, Bill Clinton, Janet Reno and Jim Clyburn because we had a church burning in Greeleyville and President Clinton came to speak and I got the opportunity to meet Reverend Jackson.

Like Senator JACKSON indicated, sometimes you don't appreciate some things that you witness. I later came to appreciate that moment. And some of you may or may not know, but often times people look at folks that are a darker complexion in a different way than they look at folks that are a lighter complexion. I have a daughter who has my complexion, and I had a niece who was living with me at the time who was darker in complexion, and we were in the church taking pictures and Reverend Jackson was close to my niece and he kept telling her how beautiful she was. He said at least three times to her that she was beautiful. I think that he understood blackness, and how you encourage folks of color to just know that they are beautiful and that they are somebody and that there is hope in their lives.

I would hasten to say that my story and Senator JACKSON's story is echoed throughout this Nation because of the extraordinary man and extraordinary leadership and example that he set for us all. I woke up to a text this morning as well, from one of my cousins in St. Louis, Missouri, alerting me to the news and obviously we are saddened. But I got to meet Reverend Jackson on another occasion, and I'll explain that and then I'll ease out. He was preaching and I can't remember where we were at this moment but after he finished preaching, we all got a chance to shake his hand and talk to him and so for whatever reason he started telling me about preaching. And what he said was, I start off slow and I walk them into it, and he says I just keep building. And that's exactly what he did to us. And so, he was a master preacher and just an extraordinary individual and I'm proud to call him a fraternity brother.

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ADJOURNMENT

At 11:05 A.M., on motion of Senator WALKER, the Senate adjourned to meet next Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 12:00 Noon.

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