

NO. 46

JOURNAL
OF THE
SENATE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2026

**Thursday, April 2, 2026
(Statewide 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 JACKSON. **(This is a Statewide Session day established under the provisions of Senate Rule 1B. Members not having scheduled committee or subcommittee meetings may be in their home districts without effect on their session attendance record.)**

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator TEDDER were ordered printed in the Journal of February 18, 2026:

Remarks by Senator TEDDER

Members, I won't be before you too long. I know we are ready to get to a vote. I just want to make some remarks based on the conversations that were had. I did not engage in the questions and answers today. But for some of my constituents I spoke with regarding this matter and this Property Tax Bill, there are some things that I want them to know.

I understand that we respect and honor our seniors and the homestead exemption that protects them, but I also believe strongly that property tax relief should not be based on age alone. It should reflect our economic reality. That being said, I know Senator DEVINE had a conversation on social media with some of her constituents that were perhaps younger in age. I also appreciate Senator BENNETT'S amendment. It is important for the people watching back home to know we are having these conversations; we are trying to figure it out. I do appreciate that the chairman is going to start a committee that will study the property tax issue. I really do hope it's more than just a study committee that we sometimes have in the General Assembly. We need to take a serious look at property taxes -- particularly for our younger professionals because we want to keep them here. We compete with North Carolina and Georgia, and we have to understand that the persons between ages 25 and 40 typically face unique financial pressures -- higher interest rates, student loan debt burdens, childcare costs that rival mortgage payments, and insurance payments that continue to increase statewide.

A 30-year-old teacher or firefighter buying a home today is paying far more proportionally than someone that bought their home 25 years ago. We need to seriously take into consideration a tax structure that will

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encourage all of our young professionals to plant roots here. Also, as we talk about family stability and birthrates -- again, we should remember those whose ages range between 25 and 40 -- the things that affect people in my generation and the next generation after me.

I know we continue to talk about homestead exemptions for retirees, and I respect that population and what they have contributed but I also know personally -- as my wife and I recently purchased a home -- the cost is astronomical, particularly in the Charleston area.

I just stand here today to reiterate and to address this on a broader level. I'm grateful for the committee that will be put together and hopeful that it will provide relief for our younger generations -- those between the ages 25 and 40 -- who really experience the increasing tax costs when purchasing homes and starting families. Thank you for indulging me.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

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

Remarks by Senator SUTTON

Anybody in the Chamber that has served in the military, feel free to join me up here. I want to talk about some service members that we lost this past week. Last Thursday, as we were debating in this Chamber, we lost a 135 crew in Iraq that was supporting the operations in Iran, as well as an ROTC instructor who was an active-duty member of the military, who was attacked and unfortunately killed in his classroom training future military officers.

This does bring a bit -- a lot of, I'll say déjà vu for me as a veteran of the Global War on Terror. And what you will find in the coming weeks, as we continue the trade led with Iran, is you will see the majority of deaths will come off the battlefield. And I'm reminded of a time when I was deployed in Bagram in 2013, and that was also the last time we lost a 135. It was coming into theatre, these are very old airplanes; the KC-135 has been flying since Eisenhower was President, and this one, some of the mechanical wiring in the tail came apart in the air, and the crew perished. We also lost an F-16, we lost an MC-12 that month, Liberty, one of our smaller spy planes -- and we also lost a civilian 747 in Bagram that month carrying MRAPs that came loose and pancaked--the center of gravity shifted backwards in the plane, and a lot of people have seen that video.

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So, we are at a time of war again, and we are going to unfortunately lose more Americans in this conflict. I want to talk about this crew and recognize them individually. It was led by Captain Alex Kilner of Auburn, Alabama. He leaves behind a wife and three small children, a two-year-old son and twins that are seven months old. Captain Ariana Sevino of Covington, Washington, was a pilot with the 99th Air Refueling Squadron. She was recognized as a rising star and a mentor to Latino youth. Tech Sergeant Ashley Puret of Bardstown, Kentucky, was a boom operator and assistant flight chief operator for the KC-135 Boom Instructor School. She is survived by her husband, a three-year-old daughter and a stepson. Captain Seth Cavall of Morristown, Indiana, 121st Air Fueling Wing, was a husband and leaves behind a son as well. Curtis Angst of Wilmington, Ohio, also a pilot, KC-135 and the 166th Air Fuel Wing Squadron, known for his love of flying. And lastly, Tech Sergeant Tyler Simmons of Ohio, was a Boom Operator with the 121st Air Refueling Wing, was known to have a million-dollar smile and was his parents' only child.

Now, in these coming weeks and months, we don't know what's going to happen. I will say that it is appropriate to question the mission -- why are we at war, what's the strategy? But we must remember the most important thing is the honor of the people that served. None of us, when Senator LEBER, Senator ZELL and I signed up -- we didn't choose the wars we fought. We signed up because we are patriotic veterans. That is important to remember in these coming months, hopefully not years, when we have these debates that we don't point the finger at the military. That is the wrong thing to do. We need to honor folks who have raised their hand and put their butt on the line for service of the Nation. I'm going to turn it over to Senator GOLDFINCH who will talk about the service members we lost.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator SABB were ordered printed in the Journal of March 18, 2026:

Remarks by Senator SABB

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT and members, and I'll be brief. I guess I'll begin by picking up where Senator TEDDER left off when he talked about this being a healthy conversation that he got an opportunity to have with the Body. And I realize that it is 6:07 p.m., according to my watch, so it is getting late, and so here we are in the Senate.

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So, I want to make three points as it relates to the discussion and then I'll take my seat. Many of us don't serve on some of the subcommittees, and I think every once in a while, we have to remind ourselves that unfortunately, we don't get a chance to read everything that is before us. And we don't have the benefit of being a part of the subcommittees and all of those kinds of things. So, it becomes necessary that we allow each other to analyze, question and engage in conversation about legislation.

What I worry about, and quite frankly the reason why I decided to talk now, is because here we go again. We've got X amount of days left in the session, and we might be about the business of just wanting to check boxes and say that we've done some things. I would submit at this point in this legislative session that it needs to be said we ought not deal with quantity rather than quality. And if this amendment were to have passed without the conversation, I'm satisfied that we would look back and not be proud of our work.

So, if we're going to be about the business of legislating responsibly, I would submit that we can't rush. We can't just ask the question about whether or not Senator TEDDER has been up here for thirty minutes or forty minutes, if it is meaningful -- if it is substantive. I was moved by the comments by Senator DAVIS and he didn't have to do it, but he was kind enough to say, "Wait a minute, I was thinking one way, then I heard something and I changed my mind." That's what we're supposed to do. That's responsible legislating. And I would venture to say that often times when we offer an amendment or when we author a Bill, I don't believe we always know all of the consequences of what we author. And I think that I would want my colleagues to analyze what I do to make sure I get it right.

So, I just want to call our attention to our responsibility real quick-- in a hurry. And I'm talking to myself while I'm talking to you all. The things that came out of and surfaced as a result of -- I mean, we'd be on all fours if we didn't think about things that were originally -- and I'm not speaking for my seatmate, he's right next door to me -- but I doubt that he thought about all of the things that surfaced in this conversation. And, in my mind, it gives him an opportunity to be better equipped, to narrowly focus his idea and see whether or not he can obtain his objective by getting enough of us to go along with it.

So, I just, Mr. PRESIDENT, wanted to caution as I listened to the debate, and quite frankly was educated by a number of things that came out of it -- members please, let's not rush what we're doing. Think about it. We've got an opportunity to protect our children. We've got an opportunity to have another business that operates responsibly in our

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State which provides jobs -- a tax base. We've got an opportunity -- and I actually jotted a few of them down -- to help our farmers, and an opportunity to make certain that when we look at penalties, they align with the conduct. I mean, that's what we do. That's what we do day in and day out. And just because it is late in the evening, or because we've got some other boxes that we want to check, I would urge us not to move speedily, but rather to move deliberately. Thank you.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator GROOMS were ordered printed in the Journal of March 25, 2026:

Remarks by Senator GROOMS

Members, it took a while to get here today. Earlier today, Senator OTT talked about how he just wanted a couple of questions asked and answered, and I understand that. I was getting a little bit upset and a little bit antsy, like many of you. I wanted to get on to something else. In my mind, it was like if you don't understand this issue, you're never going to understand it.

Then I heard Senator HUTTO talk about people hurting, inflation and gasoline prices. Why are we doing this right now? I just want to take a minute to remind the Senate that we've passed DUI reform this year, something that was very difficult that needed to have been done for years. We passed a D.O.T. Modernization Bill, something that's been in the works for years. We've cut the property taxes on boats, and we've cut the property taxes for seniors. We've actually cut the income tax rates for all South Carolinians and we've even regulated CBD products. I think we have been doing some good things.

Then the question was, why are we doing this and I have to scratch my head. I think why are we doing this? I was thinking about what Senator HUTTO was saying. Well, why are we doing this? I'm going to tell you. I think we've lost something. We've lost something in this country -- we've lost something in this State where we must debate something like what room a boy can relieve himself in, and what room a girl can relieve herself in and change their clothes. We shouldn't have to, and I regret that we're to this point where we are, but we are, so let's face it. We are where we are. We've done some things that are hard and we shouldn't have to do this, but here we are, we are doing this. I think we've done it in a respectful way, understanding or at least trying to understand everybody's perspective and coming to a point where we can

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all agree that this is the right thing to do. We are doing it for the right reason. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator DAVIS were ordered printed in the Journal of March 25, 2026:

Remarks by Senator DAVIS

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT. Members, I had the opportunity this morning to speak to a group of nuclear advocates at the third annual Nuclear Summit and I prepared notes and remarks. I wanted to share with you the status of VC Summer Two and Three in Fairfield County because that was something I brushed up on for my talk this morning. VC Summer Two and Three, as you know, were subject to an RFP by Santee Cooper. Brookfield was the successful bidder. Brookfield has committed to completing VC Summer Two and Three with their own money, at their own risk. At the completion of the units, 25% of the completed assets will be owned by Santee Cooper. As part of the transaction, Brookfield will make a cash payment to Santee Cooper of approximately \$2.7 billion. That will go to pay down existing debt that Santee Cooper has, which will then translate into rate relief for ratepayers who are currently carrying that burden as part of their monthly bills. I wanted to let you know that there has been, in recent months, a top-to-bottom thorough inspection of VC Summer Two and Three to identify what Santee Cooper calls any fatal flaws. Is there anything in the condition of these assets that would prevent it from being completed? The results of that were clean. They are in good condition. Santee Cooper has maintained them in good condition over the past several years and if you recall Senator CROMER, this General Assembly, this Senate, had a role in asking Santee Cooper to maintain those assets. We can recover the benefit of that. So, I wanted to let you know that we are on track toward an MoU. That is the next step in the process. To move from the existing bid to a memorandum of understanding which would identify all the of the component actors in the consortium that will build the asset. Brookfield has been actively soliciting those participants. Project managers, contractors and things of that nature. So that has been ongoing.

Concurrently, with all of that, there has been dialogue with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and with the Department of Energy's loan project office to qualify this program for the various incentives, grants,

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loan guarantees and other things that are available for projects of this type. Those are ongoing concurrently with the finalization of this deal with Brookfield. In other words, it is not consecutively. We are not holding off on anything; we are moving forward on all of this.

The last comment I want to make is the extraordinary importance and the unique opportunity that completing VC Summer Two and Three presents for us as a State. The Trump administration has made it clear that the future of energy in the United States is going to be materially dependent upon nuclear. In particular, at least for the next ten years, the building of these AP1000 Westinghouse units, the so-called ten pack. They have a ten pack of these units that they want to build. Senator PEELER, I feel like the next one might be in Cherokee County and Duke Power.

We have an enormous opportunity here. I wanted to take the time to update you on the status of it and then to make one other observation. We currently have thirty-two million gallons of nuclear waste that is being stored at the Savannah River site. We are obligated to continue to take nuclear waste under an existing Atlantic Compact that we have with two other states. There is an opportunity for this State to participate in a very ambitious federal program called a Nuclear Life Cycle Campus. This would bring to our State cutting edge ways of reprocessing nuclear waste so we can start chipping away at that thirty-two million gallons of nuclear waste we have stored at the Savannah River site. Having us designated as a campus brings us cutting edge technologies without obligating ourselves to take any more nuclear waste. This is not about more nuclear waste. We are talking about dealing with the defined universe of waste that we have and that we are currently obligated to accept under the compact. So, it is extraordinarily important. There is a deadline for applying for that campus designation which opens the doors to billions of dollars of federal investments. Commerce has filed that application with the Feds. We have a Joint Resolution pending in Judiciary that the Judiciary Chairman has been kind enough to move through subcommittee into full committee. This Joint Resolution can be submitted, along with that application, or to supplement that application, to further strengthen our chances of being designated as this campus.

So, I wanted to let you know about these things that are taking place. I think it is all incredibly encouraging. I think this General Assembly is to be commended for its foresight in maintaining those assets at VC Summer and I think the future is going to be bright for us in the nuclear space.

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

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

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

S. 893 -- Senators Verdin and Zell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 44-2-20, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS PERTAINING TO THE STATE UNDERGROUND PETROLEUM ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE BANK ACT OF 1988, SO AS TO DEFINE A PIPELINE FACILITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH 49 U.S.C. CHAPTER 601; BY AMENDING SECTION 44-2-40, RELATING TO THE SUPERB ACCOUNT AND SUPERB FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FUND, SO AS TO ADJUST THE ALLOWABLE COSTS FOR SITE REHABILITATION BY THE FUND AND MAKE OTHER CONFORMING CHANGES; BY AMENDING SECTION 44-2-60, RELATING TO THE REGISTRATION OF UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT FEE, SO AS TO SET CERTAIN YEARS FOR THE RENEWAL FEE TO BE ADJUSTED; BY AMENDING SECTION 44-2-130, RELATING TO COMPENSATION FROM THE SUPERB ACCOUNT, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 44-2-150, RELATING TO THE SUPERB ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SO AS TO DEFINE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SUPERB ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

On motion of Senator GAMBRELL.

S. 812 -- Senators Rankin and Walker: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 56-5-970, RELATING TO THE TRAFFIC-CONTROL SIGNAL LEGEND, SO AS TO REQUIRE A PERSON RIDING A BICYCLE TO STOP FULLY AT A RED LIGHT BUT TO ALLOW THE PERSON TO PROCEED WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO; AND BY ADDING SECTION 56-5-3530 SO AS TO ALLOW A PERSON RIDING A BICYCLE TO YIELD AT STOP SIGNS WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.

On motion of Senator RANKIN.

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S. 863 -- Senators Grooms, Cromer, Martin, Bennett, Rankin, Tedder, Sutton and Matthews: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59-103-15, RELATING TO THE STATE'S MISSION AND GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR AN APPLIED BACCALAUREATE IN CULINARY ARTS MANAGEMENT DEGREE FROM INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE PART OF THE STATE TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 59-103-15, RELATING TO FUNDING FOR CERTAIN DEGREES, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT APPLIED BACCALAUREATE IN CULINARY ARTS MANAGEMENT DEGREE PROGRAMS ARE ONLY ALLOWED IF STATE FUNDS ARE NOT APPROPRIATED TO FUND THE PROGRAMS.

On motion of Senator MARTIN.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:05 A.M., on motion of Senator KENNEDY, the Senate adjourned to meet Monday, April 6, 2026, at 11:00 A.M., under the provisions of Rule 1B.

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