

NO. 63

**JOURNAL**  
**OF THE**  
**SENATE**  
**OF THE**  
**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

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FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026

**Friday, May 1, 2026**  
**(Local Session)**

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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.

**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator CHAPLIN were ordered printed in the Journal of March 24, 2026:

**Remarks by Senator CHAPLIN**

Mr. PRESIDENT, members of the Senate, I rise today to speak about a document that was recently distributed to everyone regarding our new Revolutionary War commemorative license plates. As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War, it is essential to remember that South Carolina is where that war was effectively won.

More battles took place in South Carolina than in the other twelve colonies combined. Our persistent resistance here kept the British general pinned in the South, preventing him from uniting with General Howe to capture George Washington. We stopped that advance here, and we did not do it with conventional armies alone; we did it in the way South Carolinians do best -- in our own unique way.

This history has prompted me to reflect further on our state's legacy. As many of you know, one of our neighbors to the north features a license plate claiming, "First in Freedom," referencing May 1775, when citizens in Mecklenburg declared their independence. However, South Carolina beat them to the punch.

On November 15, 1774 -- six months prior -- in a place called Long Bluff, South Carolina, our citizens were stirred to action by the words of Christopher Gadsden, of the famous "Gadsden Flag." They declared that the colonies needed to break free from the king and strike out on their own. We beat North Carolina by a solid six months.

South Carolina is truly where the Revolutionary War was won. We are "First in Freedom" -- the first to declare our independence from the king. As we continue the work of the 250th Anniversary Commission to commemorate our great country's founding, these historical milestones must be brought back to life so that all citizens can learn of our state's pivotal role. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

**FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026**

**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator TURNER were ordered printed in the Journal of April 15, 2026:

**Remarks by Senator TURNER**

Mr. PRESIDENT, it is my honor to stand before you today to discuss SC 250 and share a story of our state's history. While researching our past, I came across an account of July 1781 -- a time of many small but significant conflicts. There were several skirmishes stretching from Orangeburg to Berkeley County. History records British troops marching in the intense July heat -- losing fifty men to heat exhaustion alone. It is a sobering reminder of the conditions our ancestors endured.

During this period, a soldier was granted a 48-hour furlough to return home to his family. His name was George Walter Summers. Born in Cheshire, England, in 1735, he migrated to America in 1760. He enlisted with General Francis Marion, operating in the Lowcountry and conducting guerrilla warfare against British forces, primarily around the Santee River and Moncks Corner.

On July 17, 1781, while on that two-day leave of absence to see his family, George was killed by British forces after local Loyalists betrayed his location. Because no coffins were available at the time, a tree was cut down and hollowed out to serve as his casket. He was buried right where he fell.

At the time of his death, his wife was pregnant with their son, George Michael Summers, Jr. That baby was my three-times great-grandfather. It is a profound experience to uncover your family history and realize the identity and contributions of those who came before you. To think that a young man would board a ship at twenty-five years old, come to a new country, and ultimately give his life fighting for freedom is truly an amazing story. Thank you.

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**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator OTT were ordered printed in the Journal of April 21, 2026:

**Remarks by Senator OTT**

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT. Ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate the remarks from the Chairman of Agriculture, and I want to stand before

**FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026**

you today and reiterate some of that. Like many I see around this room, I am also tied to agriculture in some form or fashion.

Many of you know I grew up on a farm and still farm with my family today. I want to echo what the Chairman of Agriculture just said. Nobody wants to come before you and tell the story of an entire industry that is on the brink and then have to extend a hand and ask for help. But that is exactly what I am doing today on behalf of our farmers across the State of South Carolina.

As the Chairman said, this situation is real. It is the result of many factors converging at once. We could stand here all day and debate how we got to this point -- there are plenty of opinions on that -- but we are here, nonetheless. And as I think about the comments from my colleagues, this situation has been exacerbated by unfortunate weather conditions. We have had virtually no rain across much of the State for close to a month. As a result, many farmers who would typically have planted more corn this year stopped planting weeks ago because there simply is not enough moisture to bring the crop up. Some argue that not planting may save money, but the reality is that you run the numbers and none of it pencils out to a profit.

When I refer to commodity crops, I am talking about crops priced on the Chicago Board. As you know, farmers do not get to set their own prices -- they must sell their corn, cotton and other commodities at whatever the market dictates. That is what makes this situation so difficult. I cannot think of another business model where producers purchase inputs at retail prices and then turn around and sell their product at wholesale prices. Yet that is exactly what farmers are required to do year after year.

To put this into perspective, Senator CHAPLIN and I were just looking at the numbers. In 1990, it cost roughly \$400 to produce an acre of cotton. In 2026, that cost is closer to \$1,000 per acre. Meanwhile, cotton is selling today for essentially the same price it did in 1990, which was around 70 cents per pound. In other words, production costs have more than doubled, while prices have remained flat for over three decades.

The story is similar for corn. In the mid-1990s, corn was selling for about \$4.65 per bushel, which is roughly where it is today. Back then, it cost between \$200 and \$250 to grow an acre of corn; today, that same acre costs about \$900 to produce.

When you put all of this together, ladies and gentlemen, it becomes clear why this situation is so serious. There is nothing we can do here

**FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026**

this week that will save everyone. The hard truth is that there will be farmers in your communities who go out of business this year. That is the reality we are facing.

I agree with the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, we need to do everything we can to help as many as possible. Not to “save” them outright, but to provide a bridge to get them to next year. That is the best we can hope for. We hope that broader economic conditions improve, that input costs like fertilizer and seed come down and that action at the federal level recognizes the challenges of operating in a global economy where we depend on others to purchase the products we produce.

I would simply ask that you consider doing what you can to help these farmers hold on as long as possible. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

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#### **ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator CHAPLIN were ordered printed in the Journal of April 21, 2026:

##### **Remarks by Senator CHAPLIN**

Mr. PRESIDENT, I want to take this opportunity to focus on a crisis the agricultural community is dealing with at this very moment. Growing up, I used to hear horror stories about the 1980s -- the struggles on the farm when interest rates were sky high. Today, I am being told by several of my colleagues in the agricultural community that what we are facing right now is actually worse than what was faced in the 80s.

The Farm Bureau maintains a hotline for farmers struggling with mental health issues. As many of you know, the suicide rate within the agricultural community is among the highest of any occupation. Years of living in isolation, combined with the immense stress of maintaining a generational farm take a heavy toll. There is a constant, crushing weight, “Am I going to be the one to lose the land for my son, after inheriting it from those who came before me?”

That hotline is being blown up right now -- it is seeing more activity than ever before. Many people in my industry are discovering that right now, they are literally worth more dead than alive. I grew up hearing stories of the terrible things my father's friends did in the 80s, and honestly, every time my phone rings, I’m concerned I’m going to get a call about a friend of mine doing the same.

**FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026**

It is incredibly difficult in our industry right now. It is easy to stand up here, give you numbers, and say, "This is what we need to fix it." But it is going to take a whole lot more than numbers. What is the answer? I cannot stand here today and tell you exactly what the single "fix" is, but I can tell you what we desperately need -- time. We need time to fix it, and right now, the clock has run out. As you have heard the PRESIDENT say many times in this Chamber, "Time has run out." We often ask for unanimous consent for more time here on the floor, but I promise you, there is no unanimous consent for more time from a bank. There is no unanimous consent for more time to make it rain, or for the fields to ripen and the harvest to come in. That is not an option out there.

That time is out, and we are looking for any way we possibly can to extend it. This is about more than numbers -- this is about the future of our State as a whole. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:05 A.M., on motion of Senator KENNEDY, the Senate adjourned to meet next Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 12:00 P.M.

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