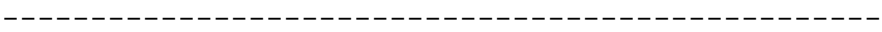


1 STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
2 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TRUSTEE
3 SCREENING COMMISSION
4 FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

5 S C R E E N I N G S
6

7 DATE: March 25, 2019
8 TIME: 1:01 p.m.
9 TIME ENDED: 2:18 p.m.
10 LOCATION: Gressette Building
11 1101 Pendleton Street
12 Committee Room 209
13 Columbia, South Carolina
14 REPORTED BY: YVONNE R. THURSTON-BOHANNON
15 Registered Merit Reporter,
16 Certified Realtime Reporter



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1 APPEARANCES:

2

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

3

- CHAIRMAN SENATOR HARVEY S. PEELER, JR.
- 4 SENATOR THOMAS C. ALEXANDER
- SENATOR JOHN L. SCOTT, JR.
- 5 SENATOR DANIEL B. "DANNY" VERDIN, III
- VICE-CHAIRMAN REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM R. WHITMIRE
- 6 REPRESENTATIVE PHYLLIS J. HENDERSON
- REPRESENTATIVE SYLLESTE DAVIS

7

8 ALSO PRESENT:

9

Martha Casto, Staff

10

Julie Price, Staff

11

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1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I'd like to call
2 the meeting to order. This is the meeting of the
3 College and University Trustee Screening Commission.

4 I pray that God continues to bless us all.

5 SENATOR SCOTT: Amen.

6 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: First of all, we
7 have the Coastal Carolina University, At-Large, Seat
8 Number 13, Mr. Lee Belcher from Lexington.

9 Mr. Belcher, if you would, please come
10 forward.

11 MR. BELCHER: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Make sure your
13 green light is on so that we know the intercom is
14 working.

15 MR. BELCHER: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I'll swear you
17 in.

18 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole
19 truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

20 MR. BELCHER: I do.

21 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to
22 make a brief statement on why you would like to serve
23 on --

24 MR. BELCHER: Absolutely.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: -- the Coastal

1 Carolina board?

2 MR. BELCHER: Yes, sir. And thank you so
3 much.

4 Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission,
5 I would like to thank you in advance for this
6 opportunity to appear before you today.

7 My name is Lee Belcher, as you know, and I
8 am originally born and raised here in Columbia, South
9 Carolina. Upon graduating from Airport High School I
10 visited multiple colleges and then decided that Coastal
11 Carolina was the best fit for me. I graduated from the
12 university in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in business.
13 I currently reside here in Lexington County with my wife
14 who also graduated from Coastal and played basketball
15 for the university. We have three beautiful children,
16 London, Madison and Tyler. I -- I currently serve at
17 the school on the school improvement council where over
18 the last two years I spent a lot of time helping
19 Lexington School District One continue to grow.

20 My career in banking started during my
21 senior year at Coastal. That initial experience
22 afforded me the opportunity to find my strengths,
23 weaknesses, but also the ability to learn how to grow.
24 My personality and people skills allow me to work very
25 well in groups to make decisions, and I feel like that

1 is a key component to working on a board.

2 In 2013 I decided that 16 years of
3 education wasn't enough, so I decided to go back and get
4 my master's degree in business at Webster University. I
5 currently work with Synovus Bank where I analyze
6 financial statements for large corporations, as well as
7 universities and colleges across this state.

8 The reason that I want to serve here at
9 Coastal Carolina is Coastal has done so much for my
10 family and I over the years. I feel like that has
11 turned me into an asset that can add value to the
12 school, to the students and to the community. So I am
13 looking -- I want to come in and I want to help not only
14 our students connect for future opportunities, but I
15 want to help connect them with those opportunities.

16 I want to be a part of Coastal Carolina
17 going forward and I want to help them continue to grow,
18 and that's why I want to serve. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

20 Questions from members of the Committee?

21 Desire of the Committee.

22 SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable.

23 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Favorable.

24 Second?

25 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: (Indicating.)

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Seconded.

2 All in favor raise your right hand.

3 Unanimous.

4 Thank you, sir --

5 MR. BELCHER: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: -- for your
7 willingness to serve, sir.

8 MR. BELCHER: Thank you so much.

9 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Hope the rest of
10 them's that easy.

11 Next we have At-Large, Seat 9, Coastal
12 Carolina University. That would be Eugene Spivey,
13 Myrtle Beach.

14 Sir.

15 MR. SPIVEY: How do you do, sir.

16 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to
17 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
18 truth so help you God?

19 MR. SPIVEY: I do.

20 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to
21 make a brief statement?

22 MR. SPIVEY: Very brief. My name is Gene
23 Spivey. I've served on the board of trustees at Coastal
24 since 2002. I'm a Coastal grad. I live in Myrtle Beach
25 with my -- sharing time with a six-year-old daughter. I

1 work in the real estate development business, and I just
2 would like to continue serving on the Coastal board to
3 keep doing what we've been doing.

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You got the memo.
5 Brevity is a plus.

6 Does the Committee have any questions?

7 SENATOR SCOTT: I have a question.

8 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

9 SENATOR SCOTT: Mr. Spivey, let me -- let
10 me -- as a seated member of Coastal, let me say you guys
11 have been doing a very good job with Coastal, especially
12 with the help coming from additional funds that you
13 received from local government there.

14 What would you like to see different occur
15 at Coastal that's not already ongoing? I know you've
16 got some capital needs and some other requests that
17 y'all have --

18 (The court reporter interjected.)

19 SENATOR SCOTT: I'm sorry.

20 What would you like to see different occur
21 at Coastal that's not ongoing since you're already on
22 the board and have been on the board for a while?

23 Can you hear me now? Is that better? A
24 little bit better?

25 MR. SPIVEY: I would like to -- I mean, for

1 instance, the -- the bill that's currently working its
2 way through, you know --

3 SENATOR SCOTT: The Higher Ed Bill?

4 MR. SPIVEY: Yes, sir, where -- where more
5 of the money follows the student. I think that's
6 something that would be beneficial to Coastal, get more
7 of that type of fund -- funding. We're also going to
8 need to be here in a couple of years working with the
9 local school board and -- to protect the school to
10 get -- that one percent money that we just talked about,
11 they extended that. That comes to an end here in a few
12 years, but those would be two of the big issues I would
13 say right now.

14 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

16 Questions or comments?

17 SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable.

18 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Favorable.

19 Seconded.

20 Any other discussion?

21 Hearing none, bring it to a vote. All in
22 favor raise your right hand.

23 Thank you, sir.

24 MR. SPIVEY: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next, 7th

1 Congressional District, Seat 7, Coastal Carolina
2 University, Natasha Hanna, Conway.

3 MS. HANNA: Good afternoon.

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to
5 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
6 truth so help you God?

7 MS. HANNA: Yes, sir, I do.

8 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to
9 make a brief statement?

10 MS. HANNA: Yes, sir, I would.

11 My name is Natasha Hanna and I'm from
12 Conway. I'm actually one of those out-of-state students
13 that came to Coastal Carolina University in 1990 and
14 never left. I got my feet in the sand, discovered
15 Coastal, and I've been involved with the school since
16 1990.

17 I've served as a trustee for almost ten
18 years now, and while I paused and thought for a second
19 that maybe I should give someone else a turn, I don't
20 feel that my service and my work there is done. We are
21 getting ready to go through a transition, and with the
22 new education opportunity act hopefully getting
23 approved, there's still going to be a lot going on and I
24 feel like my service is -- is still needed and I'm
25 hopeful that I can continue. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Questions?

2 Senator Scott.

3 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you for your service.

4 Anything in the -- the new Higher Ed Bill that you see that
5 you would like to -- would -- would help to improve
6 Coastal? Have you been keeping up with it? And if you
7 have not, it's okay.

8 MS. HANNA: I have. I know that there's
9 been a couple of different forms of the bill, but one of
10 the things that I really like is that the money follows
11 the student. I think that is tremendously important and
12 I think it kind of works both ways because I know the
13 legislature is very concerned that we not displace an
14 in-state student for an out-of-state student, and I
15 think by doing that I think you would solve that
16 problem.

17 SENATOR SCOTT: Keep in mind you used to be
18 an out-of-state student.

19 MS. HANNA: Yes, I did, and I'm still in
20 support of it.

21 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

22 MS. HANNA: Yes.

23 SENATOR VERDIN: Mr. Chairman.

24 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Verdin.

25 SENATOR VERDIN: So I -- I could -- I'm

1 trying to flip back and see which one of the previous
2 two screened candidates was favoring an enrollment
3 higher than ten. I see that you are not.

4 MS. HANNA: That's right.

5 SENATOR VERDIN: That's an interesting
6 discussion I guess you all were already having. It's
7 just like everything else, whether it's higher ed or
8 more business or more industry or whatever else you're
9 trying to pack in down there. They'll start double
10 stacking. I'm try -- I'm -- I'm anticipating your
11 answer, and I -- I should be quiet.

12 MS. HANNA: Yeah, well, you know, I do -- I
13 have an opinion about that. When I was at Coastal, it
14 was very small, and that was one of the things that
15 appealed most to me is the -- the student-professor
16 ratio. So I'm worried that if we get too big we're
17 going to be too big for our britches, so to speak. And
18 I'm concerned that we're growing too fast.

19 I think to cap it out at about ten-five is
20 where we need to be. I think the overall general plan
21 is about 12-five, but for me personally I think ten-five
22 is where we need to be.

23 SENATOR VERDIN: You're the break in the
24 room. I gotcha. All right.

25 MS. HANNA: Yes, sir.

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
2 Whitmire.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 What's the enrollment now at Coastal?

6 MS. HANNA: We are actually right about
7 ten-four, and that includes our graduates as well as our
8 undergraduates.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And the ratio is
10 50/50 now pretty much or --

11 MS. HANNA: For out-of-state/in-state, it's
12 close to 50/50. I think at one point within the last
13 year it was 49/51, but I think we're pretty close to
14 50/50, yes, sir.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And that's your
16 desire to keep it about 50/50 or would you like less?

17 MS. HANNA: I actually like 50/50. And --
18 and I may be the minority in the room, but I think that
19 out-of-state students are super important to Coastal and
20 some of our other institutions. I mean, I think what I
21 brought -- brought to school -- and I'm just one of many
22 who came to South Carolina and never left.

23 And I own three, four businesses and I'm a
24 lawyer. I went to the University of South Carolina,
25 and, you know, I -- I see other students who come here,

1 and guess what they bring? They bring their parents who
2 bring their pocketbooks who buy houses, who buy second
3 homes. So I -- I like having a 50/50 ratio, yes, sir.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Questions or
6 comments?

7 Senator Scott.

8 SENATOR SCOTT: Just keep in mind as we
9 tweak 50/50, if your numbers stay 50/50, and as we look
10 at the amount of money that you're going to receive for
11 in-state coming from the state, it will probably be a
12 lot smaller. I know the 50/50 gives you that extra
13 money for those kids coming from out of state. The
14 tuition is -- what's the difference between tuition
15 in-state and out-of-state students?

16 MS. HANNA: Tuition for in-state is about
17 11-five. Tuition for out-of-state is around 27,000 I
18 believe.

19 SENATOR SCOTT: I mean, because the goal is
20 for us -- the state supported schools is to remind y'all
21 these schools are not -- they're not designed to --
22 to -- to -- to educate all these out of state students
23 but, again, to educate South Carolina students, so --

24 MS. HANNA: Yes, sir. And it's something
25 important to note that at Coastal we never reject an

1 in-state student for an out-of-state student. We pride
2 ourselves on absolutely accepting every qualified in --
3 in-state student that knocks on our door.

4 SENATOR SCOTT: So in essence you're saying
5 enrollment -- the enrollment process is not broken.
6 It's working. You just have the extra space?

7 MS. HANNA: Yes, sir.

8 SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?
10 Desire of the Committee.

11 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Favorable.

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is
13 favorable.

14 Second?

15 SENATOR SCOTT: (Indicating.)

16 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other discussion?
17 Hearing none, we'll take it to a vote. All
18 in favor raise your right hand. It's unanimous.

19 Thank you. Thank you so much for your
20 willingness to serve.

21 MS. HANNA: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you for
23 staying in South Carolina.

24 MS. HANNA: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next, 5th

1 Congressional District. That would be Charles "Chuck"
2 Lewis from Gaffney.

3 Good afternoon, sir.

4 MR. LEWIS: First of all, good afternoon to
5 everybody. Thank you, Senator Peeler, and for the
6 Commission on higher education. I appreciate you
7 meeting with us today and ready to answer any questions
8 that you have, hopefully.

9 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you
10 in first, Chuck.

11 MR. LEWIS: Excuse me?

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear
13 you --

14 MR. LEWIS: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to
16 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
17 truth so help you God?

18 MR. LEWIS: I do.

19 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Now, would you
20 like to make further comments?

21 MR. LEWIS: Well, I -- I've been interested
22 in Coastal Carolina since about 1990 when my daughter
23 went to Coastal Carolina on a basketball scholarship.
24 She graduated in 1994. It only took her four years to
25 get out, which was wonderful, and she had grades enough

1 to get into law school which she is now an attorney and
2 a prosecutor in Gaffney, South Carolina.

3 I feel like she got a great education,
4 number one, at Coastal Carolina being able to go to law
5 school. She graduated number three in her class. So we
6 were very proud of that.

7 And we have been supporting Coastal
8 Carolina ever since she went there, and when the
9 opportunity came for me to represent the board of
10 trustees in 2013, I jumped at the idea, and I have
11 enjoyed the board of trustees in learning how higher
12 education works and the abilities of people working
13 together that you can create and do great things.

14 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

15 Questions or comments from members of the
16 Committee?

17 Senator Verdin.

18 SENATOR VERDIN: 23 years in South
19 Carolina, is that all in Cherokee County?

20 MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir, all in Cherokee
21 County.

22 SENATOR VERDIN: But probably not long --
23 are you multilingual?

24 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: He speaks
25 Gaffney-ian.

1 MR. LEWIS: I do speak Virginian also.

2 SENATOR VERDIN: Well, that's a good one to
3 have. I will leave it hanging.

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: A hanging chad.
5 What's the desire of the Committee?

6 SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable.

7 SENATOR VERDIN: Seconded.

8 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Favorable and
9 seconded.

10 Any discussion?

11 Hearing none, we'll take it to a vote. All
12 in favor raise your right hand. Unanimous.

13 Thank you, sir.

14 MR. LEWIS: Thank you all very much.
15 Appreciate being here today.

16 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

17 Next, 3rd Congressional District, Seat 3,
18 William Biggs, Salem.

19 MR. BIGGS: Afternoon, Chairman and
20 Committee members.

21 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to
22 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
23 truth so help you God?

24 MR. BIGGS: I do.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to

1 make a brief statement?

2 MR. BIGGS: Yes, sir. Thank you.

3 I've served on the Coastal Carolina board
4 since 2006. I've had the -- the pleasure and the
5 opportunity to serve as its vice chair in the last two
6 years as its chairman. I'm the father of a Coastal grad
7 myself. My daughter Brittany got her business degree,
8 studied and got her MBA, and now is finishing up her
9 second year of law school. She chose to go to Coastal
10 and not play softball in college from a few of the
11 schools that offered her and went and ended up managing
12 the men's basketball team. Currently loves Coastal and
13 just went on the Coastal athletic foundation.

14 During that time I've come to -- to love
15 Coastal, to see what we're doing. Been able to hire a
16 few of the graduates. I currently operate the state
17 veterans nursing homes here in South Carolina. I've
18 done that for 25 years. I also manage the ones in
19 Maryland, Alabama and some of Texas. That company is
20 headquartered in Anderson, South Carolina. And
21 education is so important for all businesses. Having
22 qualified candidates that come out of our universities
23 is so important to all of us that operate businesses in
24 this state, and I'm seeing that with the caliber of
25 students that we're having graduate from Coastal

1 Carolina.

2 Very proud of them. Proud of the board
3 members I serve with and the hard work that is put into
4 that university from their perspective. And I would
5 just love to have the opportunity to continue serving at
6 Coastal Carolina. Thank you, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Questions or
8 comments?

9 Senator Scott.

10 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

11 And thank you for your willingness to
12 contin -- thank you for your willingness to continue to
13 serve.

14 At one meeting we had asked the
15 president -- you may have been there -- who's your
16 diversity officer now at Coastal?

17 MR. BIGGS: Our diversity officer? I'm --
18 I'm sorry, I can't answer that. I know we have a chief
19 of staff that works very closely with all of those
20 issues, Travis Overton and --

21 SENATOR SCOTT: He's -- he's a chief of
22 staff -- it's a little different than the chief of
23 staff, but I tried to explain that to your president
24 before. There's a big difference between having a
25 diversity officer and a chief of staff.

1 MR. BIGGS: Yes, sir.

2 SENATOR SCOTT: And so maybe the next time
3 we have this conversation --

4 MR. BIGGS: I know when we have issues,
5 Travis is the one who takes the lead on investigation.

6 SENATOR SCOTT: That's legal counsel.

7 MR. BIGGS: No. No, sir, he's not our
8 counsel.

9 SENATOR SCOTT: Well, if you don't have a
10 diversity officer, y'all need to get a diversity
11 officer --

12 MR. BIGGS: Yes, sir.

13 SENATOR SCOTT: -- and take a look at what
14 some of the other schools are doing as a result of
15 diversity officer -- although your school is very
16 diverse --

17 MR. BIGGS: Yes, sir.

18 SENATOR SCOTT: -- still do need a
19 diversity officer. Okay?

20 MR. BIGGS: Yes, sir.

21 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, sir.

22 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other
23 questions or comments?

24 Representative Davis.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you.

1 Knowing that you are involved in veterans
2 services -- and it looks like specifically nursing home
3 services; is that correct?

4 MR. BIGGS: State veterans nursing homes,
5 yes, ma'am.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Okay. I'm wondering
7 does Coastal have any specific programs for educating
8 veterans after they retire from the service?

9 MR. BIGGS: We -- of course we have an ROTC
10 program, but we -- we encourage our veterans in the
11 community that come back -- last graduating class we had
12 12 veterans graduate.

13 And one of the things I've done as the
14 chairman, at graduation I try to recognize some of our
15 graduates, and I was able to take one of our female
16 veterans, talk to her beforehand and talk about her
17 service during graduation and what that means, not only
18 to her to have served our country but then to come back
19 to Coastal to get her degree, and her goal was to
20 continue serving her country after she graduated.

21 So we do look -- I wish we had
22 opportunities -- more opportunities for veterans, more
23 scholarship programs for them. I'm a veteran myself.
24 My dad was a World War II veteran, and last year for
25 five months I was a spouse of a deployed veteran. My

1 wife is a flight nurse in the air guard and spent five
2 months in the Middle East going in and out of
3 Afghanistan.

4 So what we do for veterans and the more
5 programs we can offer them I think the better we are
6 because they've served us.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I agree, and thank
8 you for your service and the service of your family as
9 well.

10 Is there anything that we need to be doing
11 on a state level to address veterans' opportunities --
12 university opportunities as opposed to the options that
13 you may have as a board member at Coastal?

14 MR. BIGGS: I would love to see
15 statewide -- I know the university -- Mississippi State
16 University offers, you know, in-state tuition or no
17 tuition to many of their veterans who come back. I
18 would love to see a program for our veterans -- if -- if
19 you're an out-of-state veteran and you've served at Fort
20 Jackson, you've served at Shaw Air Force Base,
21 Charleston Air Force Base, and you come out of the
22 military there, that we would -- even if you kept your
23 driver's license in your home state and you've lived
24 here, that we would offer in-state tuition to you.

25 I would love to see us offer programs like

1 other states do through their Veterans Affairs program
2 where children of our active duty members are offered
3 reduced rates. Any program like that that help --
4 because as most of us know, our military, they do not
5 make the money that the private industry pays. They are
6 honestly serving.

7 So anything we can do to help their
8 children while they're serving or help them when they
9 come out of the military, especially our South Carolina
10 veterans that want to further their education that --
11 that we could do would be awesome.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I -- I agree. I
13 know that we've had some discussions along those lines,
14 but I'm not sure -- have we actually passed the
15 legislation?

16 SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah, we passed that two
17 years ago.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Okay.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: In-state tuition
20 now.

21 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Okay. All right.
22 Thank you. I appreciate that.

23 MR. BIGGS: I think that --

24 SENATOR SCOTT: I think that coupled with
25 what they receive, the other side for the GI bill,

1 should be adequate. The children of those veterans have
2 been the real -- have been the concern.

3 I want to go back to a question that's been
4 kind of puzzling to me. Tell me a little bit about the
5 staff, administration and student breakdown and ratio.
6 You've been chair -- vice chairman and not chairman.
7 Tell me what those numbers look like.

8 MR. BIGGS: Our student to instructor ratio
9 is still what I think very low. That's one of the
10 things that encouraged my daughter to go. She -- she
11 was scared to death of the classes that she heard at
12 South Carolina where there would be three or 400
13 students in a class. We average right now 17 to one.
14 Very few classes do we have over 30 students.

15 SENATOR SCOTT: What's -- what is
16 your ratio -- your ratio --

17 MR. BIGGS: 17 to one.

18 SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah, I understand that's
19 the class size ratio. What is your ratio -- race ratio
20 with students along with staff and faculty at the
21 school? What percentage of African American students
22 attend your school? What percentage of staff --

23 MR. BIGGS: The actual -- the actual
24 percentage I -- I don't know. I could find that out
25 very quickly. I would guess that it's somewhere in the

1 20 percent range.

2 SENATOR SCOTT: What about staff and
3 faculty?

4 MR. BIGGS: I don't know that ratio.

5 SENATOR SCOTT: So that's where your
6 diversity officer would help you with those numbers --

7 MR. BIGGS: Yes, sir.

8 SENATOR SCOTT: -- and also help to
9 maintain some balance and also helps in some of your
10 recruiting.

11 When we began talking about this five or
12 six years ago, a lot of folks thought this was off the
13 chain and now some of our major institutions are winning
14 national awards because we are now understanding how to
15 balance the schools, and as a result --

16 MR. BIGGS: Yes.

17 SENATOR SCOTT: -- we are keeping more of
18 our students as students here at home. And so you --
19 you know, you may want to -- you're going to be the
20 chairman. You may want to ask those kind of questions
21 and kind of -- kind of catch up to where -- where we
22 are.

23 MR. BIGGS: And -- and I agree, Senator. I
24 think we should. I know Clemson is doing that. They're
25 having a program with diversity next month --

1 SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

2 MR. BIGGS: -- and our company is actually
3 one of the sponsors of that.

4 SENATOR SCOTT: Right, but I'd like to see
5 Coastal --

6 MR. BIGGS: And Coastal should do the same
7 thing.

8 SENATOR SCOTT: That's correct.

9 Thank you now.

10 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Clary.

11 SENATOR CLARY: Mr. Biggs, you say the
12 biggest weakness at -- at Coastal is your administration
13 is stretched. Tell me about that.

14 MR. BIGGS: When you -- when you have a
15 university -- we've been growing very quickly. When I
16 first started on -- on this board, we were probably a
17 little over 6,000 students. Now we're over 10,000
18 students. I think growth does stretch your -- your
19 leadership.

20 We're also going through a time when our
21 president has informed us that he will be retiring in
22 two years. So we're -- I have put together a search
23 committee to look for our new president. At that same
24 time our provost will be retiring. Our chief of the
25 police department there will be retiring. We're going

1 to have a lot of leadership changes, and I think that
2 also stretches our -- our leadership as we move forward.

3 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: And -- and when we
4 talk about abatements, what kind of a percentage of
5 abatements do y'all have at Coastal?

6 MR. BIGGS: I don't know that right
7 offhand, sir.

8 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Thank you, sir.

9 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
10 Whitmire.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 Mr. Biggs, thank you, like Representative
14 Davis said for your military service.

15 MR. BIGGS: Thank you, sir.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Very fortunate to
17 have people like you willing to serve.

18 How many veterans do you serve in your
19 nursing homes?

20 MR. BIGGS: In South Carolina the two
21 veterans homes we have are 220 beds each. They're --
22 they're both full. They -- we have over 600 people on
23 the waiting list to get in. The Maryland facility
24 has -- we serve over 400 veterans a day. The Alabama
25 homes, three of them are 150 beds. One of them is 256

1 beds, and then in Texas we serve about 400 beds total.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Is this mostly
3 Vietnam era veterans?

4 MR. BIGGS: The majority of our veterans
5 we're caring for now are Vietnam era. When I first
6 started when Governor Campbell was in office and I went
7 out to tour the home, not sure if I was even interested
8 in the position, it was mostly World War II veterans.
9 And when I toured that home, I saw a little bit of my
10 dad in every one of them, and I knew that's where I
11 needed to be and it was the greatest move I've ever made
12 in my career.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you so much
14 for that.

15 And how long have you lived in Salem?

16 MR. BIGGS: I just moved to Salem two years
17 ago. I lived in Anderson for 20-something years before
18 that. I lived in Aiken County for a little while. I
19 lived in Union for a few years running a private nursing
20 home there.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Well, welcome to
22 God's country. You picked the right place.

23 MR. BIGGS: We love it there.

24 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other
25 questions or comments?

1 Desire of Committee?

2 Motion is favorable.

3 SENATOR VERDIN: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Second's heard.

5 Any other discussion? Then we'll take it
6 to a vote.

7 All in favor raise your right hand. It's
8 unanimous.

9 Thank you, sir.

10 MR. BIGGS: Thank you, sir.

11 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you for
12 your willingness to serve.

13 Next, 1st Congressional District of
14 Carolina University, Seat 1, George Mullen, Hilton Head
15 Island.

16 Afternoon, sir.

17 MR. MULLEN: Good afternoon.

18 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to
19 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
20 truth so help you God?

21 MR. MULLEN: I do.

22 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to
23 make a brief statement?

24 MR. MULLEN: Thank you. I'm George Mullen
25 from Hilton Head. I've had the pleasure of being on

1 this board for the last six years. I became interested
2 in Coastal because I had a son there in a special
3 program that they had for special needs kids. He's now
4 graduated that program, but we -- we make a point of
5 going back a number of times a year to football games,
6 basketball games and of course the baseball games,
7 including going out to Omaha which was probably one of
8 the more exciting things I've had happen during my six
9 years on the board.

10 Coastal is a dynamic place. It is growing
11 both in programs that we offer, academic programs, as
12 far as facilities that are growing, and -- and a slight
13 growth in the -- the number of students, but it's --
14 it's an exciting time. We have a dynamic admin --
15 administration there that unfortunately is getting ready
16 to turn over in 2021. That brings new challenges. I'd
17 like to have the opportunity to be on the board to -- to
18 help see the school through that transition.

19 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

20 Questions or comments?

21 Senator Scott.

22 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you so much.

23 Thank you, Mr. Mullen, for your -- thank
24 you so much for your willingness to serve.

25 Tell me a little bit about what you know

1 about Coastal and its diversity program. It appears
2 that your --

3 MR. MULLEN: Well --

4 SENATOR SCOTT: -- chairman/vice chair
5 didn't know very much.

6 MR. MULLEN: Well, we started the program
7 at the beginning of the academic year last August.

8 SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

9 MR. MULLEN: Dr. Stokes-Brown retired as
10 the director of that program. I'll be honest with you,
11 when you asked that question, I did not know her name,
12 so we quickly Googled it while I was back there.

13 I didn't know when we started the program,
14 but I knew that we -- we had that. As far as you asked
15 about the racial diversity of the school --

16 SENATOR SCOTT: So that means that you --
17 you -- that means that the board has not asked your
18 diversity officer to come and update you to what's going
19 on in the school?

20 MR. MULLEN: Our diversity officer I
21 believe has appeared before the board twice --

22 SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

23 MR. MULLEN: -- once when she was first
24 hired and then shortly thereafter.

25 SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

1 MR. MULLEN: But no, other than that during
2 this academic year, that's the -- the only two times
3 that she has appeared before the board.

4 Various members of administration come and
5 make presentations. I would say the presentations on
6 the diversity issues are usually presented by Travis
7 Overton who is the chief of staff at the school. He has
8 I guess sort of held that role without that title prior
9 to beginning the diversity program that we started. So
10 prior to all this, we didn't have a formal diversity
11 officer.

12 SENATOR SCOTT: Do you think that diversity
13 officer now can do their job and so they can give you
14 some input so you look at some of both your -- some of
15 both of your programs with how you look faculty-wise,
16 the direction that the school is going in?

17 Sometimes as a school grow, we lose track
18 of some of the mission, especially when a school that
19 has 50 percent of its out-of-state students. Looking at
20 those young students -- and I heard earlier that those
21 who wanted to come come, and eventually that won't be
22 the case as the school continue to grow and especially
23 being able to attract both faculty and -- and staff to
24 balance your school off.

25 So I don't know what you walked away with

1 from the second meeting from that first. It sounds like
2 not very much.

3 MR. MULLEN: Let's talk first look at the
4 positive of this. Our school is extremely diverse.
5 Almost 30 percent of our students are from a diverse
6 background. 20 percent are African American. Five
7 percent are of multicultural. Less than four percent
8 are Hispanic.

9 And I can remember this as a very specific
10 question that I talked with the officer when she was at
11 our board meeting. For a state that now has a rapidly
12 growing Hispanic population, less than four percent is
13 an area that you have an opportunity to target South
14 Carolinians in. Hilton Head High School, where my son
15 went, today has a Hispanic population of 38 percent, and
16 yet -- and I'm assuming that for Hilton Head's
17 population that is probably not that unusual across the
18 state of South Carolina.

19 SENATOR SCOTT: That's correct. That's
20 correct.

21 MR. MULLEN: And yet less than four percent
22 of our student body being Hispanic, it -- it makes me
23 wonder if we are missing targeting not only for the
24 growth of our school but for the opportunity of these
25 very students to give them the opportunity come there.

1 SENATOR SCOTT: Multicultural is correct.

2 MR. MULLEN: So that is an area that I
3 think that we can certainly do better at.

4 SENATOR SCOTT: Tell me about --

5 MR. MULLEN: And I think that clearly
6 having a diverse -- a diversity officer, the program
7 focus -- needs to focus on that.

8 SENATOR SCOTT: I -- I really appreciate
9 you knowing numbers for your student -- your student
10 body.

11 Tell me about faculty and staff. Are you
12 up to date on that as well?

13 MR. MULLEN: I can tell you that the
14 discussions that we've had is that we have issues on our
15 faculty like many universities do --

16 SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

17 MR. MULLEN: -- attempting to attract
18 quality faculty of minorities with quite frankly the
19 level of pay that we pay our faculty in South Carolina.
20 We are competing with schools across the country for
21 that, and probably we do not have the progress that --
22 that you would like for me to be sitting here telling
23 you we have. As far as numbers, I cannot tell you that.
24 I can tell you that in our administration there is a
25 lack of diversity there.

1 SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

2 MR. MULLEN: Our chief of staff is a
3 minority member. We have an opening for our general
4 counsel which I have strongly recommended a member of
5 our board currently who I think would make a great
6 addition. And certainly one of the issues is that we
7 need to increase our -- our minority presence in that --
8 the administration area.

9 SENATOR SCOTT: Mr. Mullen, I really
10 appreciate -- really appreciate your openness to be
11 there -- to be there and sit there and talk about it.
12 Thank you so much.

13 MR. MULLEN: Yes, sir.

14 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
15 Clary.

16 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Good afternoon,
17 Mr. Mullen. In -- in your information you -- you
18 pointed out that your biggest weakness that you view
19 at -- at Coastal is the endowment. What kind of steps
20 are being taken to -- to grow that endowment --
21 endowment, Mr. Mullen?

22 MR. MULLEN: Well, we currently have a
23 program that is called the I'M IN endowment program.
24 The -- the goals of that program are 20 million dollar
25 increments which I thought was not as -- as aggressive

1 as I would like to see, but they point out that when
2 we -- when I first got on the board six years ago our
3 endowment was about 25 million. Today it's about 45
4 million. It's still woefully inadequate, but it is
5 going in the right direction.

6 You know, I look back and see that Carolina
7 can have a billion dollar program and Clemson can have a
8 billion dollar program. I suggested that our goal
9 should be a hundred million, and in talking with our
10 development officers, they simply said part of the
11 problem is that we do not have an alumni base that will
12 support that type of giving at this time.

13 So, you know, we -- we've started -- we're
14 making incremental steps. Hopefully it will get more
15 aggressive as the university staff begins to grow.

16 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: When -- when -- when
17 you mentioned that hundred million to your development
18 officers, you probably had to revive them.

19 MR. MULLEN: They -- they -- they -- they
20 were not pleased with what my aspirations were in that
21 area.

22 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Thank you, sir.

23 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?

24 Desire of the Committee?

25 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Favorable.

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Favorable.

2 Second?

3 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: (Indicating.)

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any discussion?

5 Hearing none, take it to a vote. All in
6 favor raise your right-hand. Unanimous.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. MULLEN: Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Finished Coastal
10 Carolina. Now we will move to The Citadel, At-Large.

11 Eugene Pinson from Greenwood.

12 MR. PINSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Glad
13 to be here with you.

14 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Yes, sir. Good
15 to see you, sir.

16 Swear you in.

17 MR. PINSON: Wonderful looking committee
18 you have here.

19 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to
20 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
21 truth so help you God?

22 MR. PINSON: I do.

23 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to
24 make a brief statement?

25 MR. PINSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman and -- and

1 fellow board members. I appreciate the opportunity to
2 be here with you.

3 The last six years at The Citadel have been
4 dynamic, flexible, successful. A lot of positive things
5 taking place. Since I've been on the board for the last
6 six years we were voted the number one college in the
7 south, offering the master's with -- with -- compared
8 with schools offering master's degrees. And there's a
9 lot of talk about veterans just a few minutes ago.
10 We're the number one school in the south as far as
11 service to our veteran population also.

12 So a lot of good things. New building
13 programs going on. Mechanical engineering as a response
14 to industrial growth in the state of South Carolina. We
15 started our first full year last year, our new bach --
16 bachelor's degree in nursing also, as well as cyber
17 security. So we're into those three programs very
18 heavily. We -- we maintain an atmosphere of being
19 flexible and ready to meet the needs of the state, as
20 well as the nation.

21 My dad's a graduate in 1931. My uncle
22 graduated in '55. My brother graduated in '65. I
23 graduated in '72. My two sons graduated from there in
24 '01 and '04. My first cousin graduated in 1970 and his
25 son graduated in 2003. So there -- there have been a

1 number of Pinsons through those walls at The Citadel.

2 And the state is very proud of The Citadel.

3 We're very proud of our heritage and the state of South
4 Carolina.

5 And we're also an international
6 institution. We've got people from countries all over
7 the world as well as 38 rep -- 38 states being
8 represented.

9 It's fun. It's the greatest group of guys
10 and -- and ladies that you ever deal with, believe me.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

13 Questions or comments?

14 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Got one.

15 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
16 Whitmire.

17 MR. PINSON: I've heard of you.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you for
19 your service, Gene. You've done an outstanding job.

20 Gene and I came in together way back when.

21 In just a few minutes I'm going to ask for
22 a favorable report because a lot of the House members
23 have asked me to please keep him on The Citadel board.
24 They don't want him back in the House.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: There's a method

1 to this madness.

2 SENATOR VERDIN: Mr. Chairman.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: There you go.

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Verdin.

5 SENATOR VERDIN: I would be remiss in not
6 also noting a personal interest that -- that Mr. Pinson
7 takes in not just the family as it exists but the future
8 of the family. He's very active in student recruitment
9 and developing the interest among prospective students
10 there in the -- I was going to say Eighth Circuit, lower
11 Piedmont County, I'll put it that way.

12 So -- and I'm the beneficiary of some of
13 that nurturing. He was counseling with one of my
14 children that's a 2016 graduate. So appreciate that.

15 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
16 Davis.

17 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you.

18 Good afternoon.

19 MR. PINSON: Good to see you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Good to see you
21 again. My son, as you know, graduated in May of 2018,
22 and so I'm very familiar with the need -- the capital
23 needs at The Citadel and I -- I see that you've noted
24 that as well on -- on your questionnaire. What ideas do
25 you have for raising capital for primarily what -- what

1 I see, building needs?

2 MR. PINSON: Well, we're in process now --
3 we just got through with our annual Corps date. Over 52
4 percent -- I don't have the figures for this Corps date,
5 but last Corps date 52 percent of the alumni contributed
6 to that one fund. So we're constantly raising money.
7 You can't raise enough.

8 Citadel alumni are prone to give back to
9 the school. I think the only competition within the
10 Southern Conference is actually VMI. They give it a
11 little bit higher percentage per -- per alumni than we
12 do.

13 We're constantly raising money. Luckily
14 the building we're breaking ground for this -- this
15 week, the Bastin -- excuse me -- yeah, excuse me, Rick
16 Bastin business administration school is a 60 million
17 dollar project we're breaking ground for today.

18 Capers Hall, as you're familiar with, the
19 liberal arts building, is right when you come on campus
20 to the left. We're trying to raise money for it. 66
21 million dollar project. When we were looking at this
22 thing five years ago, it was 56 million dollars. So
23 we're trying to stay ahead of the curve.

24 It costs a lot of money in Charleston to
25 live and to build. But we're -- we're on -- right now

1 we have the business school. We've got the liberal arts
2 building, Stevens Barracks. We've got turf replacement
3 at the football stadium. That's already paid for.
4 We'll have all the money available to do the east side
5 stands in the next two years.

6 So we're constantly doing it. Just
7 finished the boat -- Swain boat center. All these are
8 privately funded. So we don't come to the state asking
9 for a whole lot of money. We think The Citadel alumni
10 community will respond to the needs.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Is Fifth Battalion
12 on that list anywhere?

13 MR. PINSON: That is an interesting
14 question. It is. We've looked at plans to relocate it.
15 But I think that somewhere along the line the board is
16 going to have to make a determination what we want to
17 see the size of the Corps of Cadets, whether we want to
18 be at 2000 or whether we want to be at 2400. We've got
19 to make that decision, and once that decision's made,
20 that will determine what we're going to do with Stevens
21 Barracks.

22 I lived in Stevens Barracks. A lot of fond
23 memories in those walls.

24 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I bet.

25 All right. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You're under
2 oath, you do know that. That's what you're claiming.

3 MR. PINSON: My upper class years was
4 pretty fun.

5 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay.
6 Representative Clary.

7 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 The great thing about it, Mr. Pinson, is
10 that as we grow older those -- those bad experiences
11 kind of fade away and you only remember the good things.

12 But when we talk about limited space in the
13 Corps of Cadets -- and I hear you talking about 2000,
14 2400. I know that -- that you have a shortage of -- of
15 living quarters of -- of residence halls, tell me -- and
16 you mentioned a new residence hall building. What --
17 what will that do to alleviate some of those issues?

18 MR. PINSON: Well, I -- when -- when I was
19 in school, it was called the Fourth Battalion. Now it's
20 actually the Fifth Battalion. It houses approximately
21 625 kids. So it's -- it's an old -- it's an old
22 building, built -- built in 1947, Stevens Barracks.
23 It's in very bad shape and we put over a million dollars
24 a year into it to keep it up.

25 When I say we can make the decision --

1 we've got limited space granted now, but we're going --
2 and we're going do this based on forecast. And we just
3 got to make the determination what we want the size of
4 the Corps to be. If we want it to stay at 2400 -- well,
5 actually 2345 today, we're going to have to build a new
6 facility.

7 Now, when you build a new facility in
8 Charleston, especially where The Citadel is located, it
9 takes planning because one thing offsets another thing,
10 offsets another thing, offsets another thing. And we've
11 got limited space to grow. We're being indulged by
12 concrete, asphalt and steel all around the campus now.
13 I hope the place doesn't sink. But that's what we're
14 looking at.

15 So once we make the determination what in
16 20 years we want the Corps to look like, I think then
17 we'll make the decision on what to do with Stevens
18 Barracks.

19 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: I guess my -- my
20 next question then, you're spending a million dollars a
21 year on it.

22 MR. PINSON: Yes, sir.

23 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: What -- what -- what
24 are your short-term plans to -- to try to alleviate the
25 issues if it's in the shape that you say it is --

1 MR. PINSON: Well, it -- it -- it's a
2 different generation we're dealing with. I was reading
3 an article about Presbyterian College the other day, and
4 the president of student body when they're breaking
5 ground on the new dorm was talking about the kids today
6 want a real formal, extremely nice atmosphere. That's
7 not quite the game at The Citadel. Maybe at Clemson
8 too.

9 But it was fine, believe me. I -- I can
10 live in it. Today's crowd we -- they look at things a
11 little bit different. They want a little bit nicer
12 facility.

13 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Oh, I --

14 MR. PINSON: But it's very liveable now.

15 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: I -- I -- I get it.

16 MR. PINSON: You go to VMI, you'll see real
17 bad barracks.

18 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: You know, if --
19 if -- if -- if I could move into Douthit Hills, I
20 believe I would at Clemson.

21 MR. PINSON: Yes, sir.

22 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Thank you very much.
23 Appreciate your service.

24 MR. PINSON: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?

1 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Favorable.

2 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Before we take a
4 vote, I was teasing you about under oath. I always feel
5 funny swearing in a preacher or a Citadel graduate. It
6 just seems so unnecessary.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Redundant.

8 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: No other
9 discussion, we'll take it to a vote. Raise your right
10 hand.

11 MR. PINSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman --

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Unanimous.

13 MR. PINSON: -- if I can say one thing. On
14 behalf of Senator Scott, bill Pickering is our diversity
15 officer and does a great job. Citadel alumni himself.

16 SENATOR SCOTT: And also your former
17 commander was -- I -- I -- I mentioned him last year
18 when he talked about how well y'all were doing with
19 diversity especially your -- your -- your cadets who
20 were in charge of barracks, some of the lead personnel
21 that y'all had.

22 And so y'all have been really, really
23 working to -- to improve -- improve diversity there.
24 And I keep telling folk you win a lot of national awards
25 across the country. Really take a look at those and you

1 would get extra points when you're competing -- when
2 you're competing with that. Thank you.

3 MR. PINSON: Thank you. The eyes of the
4 world are always on The Citadel and I hope it's on a
5 positive note.

6 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you, sir.

7 MR. PINSON: Thank y'all.

8 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next we'll move
9 to Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Deborah Blalock,
10 Charleston.

11 We're running a little ahead of schedule
12 which is unusual for us.

13 Dan Dobson from Myrtle Beach.

14 MR. DOBSON: Yes, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you
16 in, Mr. Dobson.

17 MR. DOBSON: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to
19 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
20 truth so help you God?

21 MR. DOBSON: I do.

22 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to
23 make a brief statement on why you'd like to serve on the
24 Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School board?

25 MR. DOBSON: Yes, sir. My name is Dan

1 Dobson -- Dan Austin Dobson, and I'm from Myrtle Beach,
2 South Carolina, originally from the upstate,
3 Greenville/Spartanburg area, grew up in -- in
4 Spartanburg County. I am very interested in serving Wil
5 Lou Gray Opportunity School as a member of the board of
6 trustees. I have had a great interest in youth and
7 education throughout the years.

8 Of note, I have volunteered on numerous
9 occasions as a chaperone for James F. Byrnes Rebel
10 Regiment marching band, Spartanburg County in District
11 Five of which my son was a member. I volunteered with
12 Troop 24, Boy Scout troop in Lyman, South Carolina, and
13 which both of my sons achieved the Eagle rank award.
14 I'm very proud of them for doing that.

15 I served as a chaperone for numerous class
16 field trips at schools -- three different schools that
17 my wife worked at in the computer labs.

18 I was a member of the Kiwanis Club of Greer
19 for 16 years serving in various officer capacities,
20 including two times as president. I was honored with
21 the distinguished club president's award that I was able
22 to achieve by my -- with the help of my fellow members.
23 We were able to -- we had to complete a required number
24 of projects to be able to do this, and they were really
25 beneficial in helping me do this.

1 One of the key initiatives of the Kiwanis
2 Club is the Terrific Kids Program that we are -- that
3 they were so highly involved in, and it's really a
4 terrific program to help these kids that achieve good
5 things, character and academic recognition.

6 My passion is for helping children most
7 likely derived from my wife Virginia who is behind me
8 supporting me who worked in Spartanburg County District
9 School Five. She drove a school bus and worked in the
10 computer lab, and she was really happy with her work.
11 She had a lot of -- a lot of issues with children to
12 deal with, but she was very good at it, I might say.

13 Like myself, she has a passion for working
14 with children. After retiring, we both drove buses for
15 the athletic department at USC upstate where we
16 transported kids back and forth to different sporting
17 events, and some of those trips were driving them to
18 Charlotte when they went out of town to various
19 destinations.

20 While retired I continued to give -- to
21 strive to find ways to serve my state and my community
22 in the Myrtle Beach area. My hope is that all children
23 in our state will have the opportunity to succeed in
24 life. I feel like my involvement with the board of
25 trustees would provide that opportunity.

1 Thank you for your consideration and I
2 have -- hope to have the opportunity to serve you.

3 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you, sir.
4 Questions or comments from the Committee?
5 Representative Davis.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 Do you have any specific ties to Wil Lou
9 Gray, or if not, what are your specific interests in --
10 in that -- in serving on that board?

11 MR. DOBSON: My ambition would be to -- to
12 get in on this board of trustees and to be able to help
13 provide a new fresh look -- perspective on. If there
14 were some -- any kind of areas of weakness, I would -- I
15 feel like I could be an asset to being on that committee
16 and being able to work with kids and come up with some
17 fresh new ideas.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: So you do not have
19 any direct ties with Wil Lou Gray now?

20 MR. DOBSON: No. No, I do not.

21 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Others?

23 SENATOR VERDIN: Fine with me. Favorable.

24 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Is there a
25 second?

1 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any discussion?

3 Take it to a vote. All in favor raise your
4 right-hand.

5 MR. DOBSON: Thank you, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you, sir,
7 and I appreciate your willingness to serve.

8 MR. DOBSON: Thank you. Thank you,
9 Mr. Chairman.

10 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Blalock, you
11 catch your breath now.

12 Ms. Deborah Blalock, Charleston, At-Large,
13 Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School.

14 MS. BLALOCK: Good afternoon.

15 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Swear you in.

16 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole
17 truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

18 MS. BLALOCK: I do.

19 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to
20 make a brief statement?

21 MS. BLALOCK: I've been serving on the
22 board for the last four years and I'd like to continue
23 my service.

24 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I love it.

25 MS. BLALOCK: That's brief.

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Questions or
2 comments from the Committee?

3 Senator Scott.

4 SENATOR SCOTT: Oh, okay. I was looking
5 for an opening statement, but they said that was it.

6 Tell me a little bit about your mental
7 health experience and what that has done to add to
8 service on the Wil Lou Gray board --

9 MS. BLALOCK: I think --

10 SENATOR SCOTT: -- especially with some of
11 those young people coming with all kinds of problems.

12 MS. BLALOCK: Yes, sir. I think it's been
13 helpful. So I've been with the Department of Mental
14 Health for 25 years, and I think my experience with the
15 department has -- I've been able to transfer some of
16 that knowledge in my service on the board and make --
17 help -- help Wil Lou Gray make some connections for --
18 for services for kids sometimes who need those services
19 at some of the mental health services where those kids
20 come from. And I think that's been useful.

21 And I also think a my knowledge of state
22 agency and state government has been useful to the
23 board. I can help explain things to maybe other board
24 members who don't understand necessarily how state
25 agency works. But I definitely think my mental health

1 background has been helpful.

2 SENATOR SCOTT: No more.

3 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER:

4 Representative Whitmire.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 Ms. Blalock, thank you for serving on the
8 board. My subcommittee here is Wil Lou Gray when they
9 make their presentations, and I have to say I'm
10 extremely impressed with the job that the administrators
11 and the board does down there with the students, the way
12 you turn them out and just a real success story. So
13 thank you for what you do, and I want you to thank the
14 rest of the board from me also.

15 MS. BLALOCK: Thank you. Will do. It's --
16 it's an impressive agency. I didn't know much about it
17 until I became a member of the board, and I'm blown away
18 by the work that they do.

19 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
20 Clary.

21 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Thank -- thank you
22 very much, Ms. Blalock, and -- and I think you bring a
23 very unique skill set to -- to Wil Lou Gray. It's
24 something that -- it's a shame that we don't have more
25 people like you to scatter around on our various boards

1 in -- in the state.

2 But in talking about Wil Lou Gray, I know
3 every year when we have Wil Lou Gray that -- that comes
4 in and -- and brings your students, I am so impressed
5 with -- with those young men and women and the -- the
6 job that y'all are doing. I know that -- I -- I have
7 colleagues who talk about the -- the cost of -- of each
8 student, but I think when you see the results, it
9 certainly -- certainly very well spent.

10 So, once again, as Representative Whitmire
11 says, please convey to -- to your other board members
12 and -- and to the staff there that you're -- you're
13 doing a great job. We appreciate it. Thank you for
14 serving.

15 MS. BLALOCK: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Verdin.

17 SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 I also appreciate the work you've done with
19 not only with Wil Lou Gray and also as we've interacted
20 with DMH.

21 And I have a specific inquiry related to
22 your employment. Are you doing your administrative work
23 from Charleston or -- I'm con -- I'm interested if
24 there's a commute, how you're doing it.

25 MS. BLALOCK: I commute. I come up on

1 Mondays and rent an apartment and go home on Fridays.

2 SENATOR VERDIN: Well --

3 MS. BLALOCK: I commute. It's tough.

4 SENATOR VERDIN: It -- it -- it is doable.

5 MS. BLALOCK: It's doable.

6 SENATOR VERDIN: It's doable.

7 MS. BLALOCK: It's tough, but it's doable.

8 My husband might actually like it, I don't know.

9 SENATOR VERDIN: How long have you --

10 how -- I'm curious, how long have you actually been in

11 that commute?

12 MS. BLALOCK: Charleston? 50 -- let's see.

13 I'm 59. 57 years.

14 SENATOR VERDIN: Well, the commute --

15 MS. BLALOCK: Oh, the commute?

16 SENATOR VERDIN: The commute as director --

17 MS. BLALOCK: Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you

18 said --

19 SENATOR VERDIN: -- deputy director of

20 community services.

21 MS. BLALOCK: A year -- it was a year

22 January 8th. Yeah, so a little over a year.

23 SENATOR VERDIN: You can do anything for a

24 short period of time -- or for a prescribed --

25 MS. BLALOCK: I tell myself.

1 SENATOR VERDIN: -- if you know what --
2 that's all right.

3 MS. BLALOCK: That's what I tell myself.
4 Yeah. The weeks go by really quickly. I'm super busy,
5 so that part's good.

6 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any others?

7 SENATOR VERDIN: Favorable.

8 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is
9 favorable.

10 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Seconded.

12 Any other discussion?

13 Hearing none, we'll take it to a vote. All
14 in favor raise your right hand. It's unanimous.

15 Thank you so much --

16 MS. BLALOCK: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: -- for what you
18 do.

19 Now we have Robert Nichols Collar,
20 Bluffton, Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, At-Large.

21 Swear you in, sir.

22 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole
23 truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

24 MR. COLLAR: I do.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to

1 make a brief statement?

2 MR. COLLAR: I -- along with Ms. Blalock,
3 I've been serving for the past four years at the Wil Lou
4 Gray Opportunity School. I've greatly appreciated and
5 enjoyed it and would like to continue to do so with your
6 all's blessing.

7 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Questions or
8 comments?

9 How long have you been on the board?

10 MR. COLLAR: Four years.

11 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Four?

12 MR. COLLAR: Yes, sir.

13 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
14 Clary.

15 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Mr. Collar, i -- I
16 note that you are currently the assistant
17 superintendent. Is that in Clarendon County?

18 MR. COLLAR: Yes, sir, Clarendon School
19 District One.

20 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: And what -- what led
21 you to serve on the Wil Lou Gray board initially?

22 MR. COLLAR: Initially I have been very
23 fortunate and really attribute the success of my
24 educational career of starting my very first job out of
25 the University of South Carolina at the Wil Lou Gray

1 Opportunity School. Mr. Smith and his fantastic staff
2 kind of led me to -- with my love of children and at
3 risk youth. Unfortunately in the state of South
4 Carolina, human service specialists twos don't make a
5 whole lot of money and they pointed me in the direction
6 of public education, thought I might be better suited
7 there.

8 So I went to Richland School District Two,
9 but I've always looked at my experiences there and the
10 staff there and have always wanted to assist them in any
11 way necessary and bring some of my experiences to the
12 board just as a -- as a helping hand or a sounding
13 board.

14 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Thank you very much.
15 Appreciate your service.

16 MR. COLLAR: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anything?

18 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Favorable.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Seconded.

21 Any other discussion? If not, we'll take
22 it to a vote.

23 All in favor raise your right-hand. It's
24 unanimous. Thank you so much.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Now we'll move to
2 Medical University of South Carolina, 4th Congressional
3 District, medical seat, Frederick Butehorn, Spartanburg.

4 Afternoon, Doctor.

5 DR. BUTEHORN: Hi, President Peeler. How
6 are you?

7 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: All right.

8 Swear you in.

9 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth
10 and nothing but the truth so help you God?

11 DR. BUTEHORN: Yes, sir.

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Like to make a
13 brief statement?

14 DR. BUTEHORN: I'm Henry Frederick
15 Butehorn, III. My friends call me Fritz and most people
16 call me Fritz. I'm from Spartanburg. I'm privileged to
17 be here today, and it would be such an honor to serve my
18 alma mater at the Medical University of South Carolina
19 board of trustees.

20 I feel that the way the state has set up
21 the board of trustees having a healthcare provider and
22 then a layperson in each district is very wise, and I
23 hope that my experience as a physician not only
24 representing Spartanburg but the upstate as well as the
25 whole state on various other boards, which I can go into

1 if need be, will provide a good leadership qualities --
2 or good leadership qualities to help with the board of
3 trustees.

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Questions or
5 comments?

6 Senator Scott.

7 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

8 Thank you for your willingness to serve.

9 We -- we screened you a while back?

10 DR. BUTEHORN: I believe we did, yes.

11 SENATOR SCOTT: And what happened in that
12 process prior to the time to get -- get votes? Do you
13 recall anything unusual that took place?

14 DR. BUTEHORN: No, sir, I'm not aware of
15 anything unusual.

16 SENATOR SCOTT: Were there any
17 communication between you and any legislators from your
18 area or another area?

19 DR. BUTEHORN: Well, I communicated with
20 people that I was interested in the seat, but beyond
21 that, no, sir.

22 SENATOR SCOTT: I'm talking about -- the interest as
23 it relates to -- there was another candidate as well, if
24 I can recall, that was in that race. Were -- were there
25 any communication between you and -- and any other

1 legislator to get the other candidate out of the race?

2 DR. BUTEHORN: No, sir.

3 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other
4 questions or comments?

5 So you didn't ask for a commitment prior to
6 the time?

7 DR. BUTEHORN: No, sir, not any way.

8 Certainly this is my first time doing this. I followed
9 the rules. In no way, shape or form.

10 (Senator Alexander entered the
11 proceedings.)

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
13 Whitmire.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you,
15 Doctor. Are you aware what we were made privy to? I
16 mean, we had some real discussions and heartburn over
17 this whole issue because we were led to believe the
18 other candidate was pressured to get out. Whether he
19 would have won or not, that's immaterial.

20 So what I'm concerned about is did anyone
21 interfere on your behalf, whether you knew it or not?
22 Because we -- we need to put a stop to that going
23 forward.

24 DR. BUTEHORN: Well, I would certainly
25 understand that. I'm not aware of anything that -- I

1 most certainly am not aware of anything.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I take you at
3 your word.

4 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative
5 Clary.

6 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Dr. Butehorn, I
7 think that the day that you were screened was
8 January 14th of -- of this year, if I'm -- if I'm not
9 mistaken.

10 DR. BUTEHORN: I'll take your word for
11 that. I don't remember exactly.

12 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: And on that date and
13 in subsequent dates thereafter, did you have any
14 telephone conversations, any text communications with
15 any member of the General Assembly concerning the seat?

16 DR. BUTEHORN: Not concerning the board of
17 trustee seats, no, sir.

18 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: None whatsoever?

19 DR. BUTEHORN: No, sir.

20 REPRESENTATIVE CLARY: Thank you, sir.

21 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: How do you do,
22 sir.

23 You have a question?

24 SENATOR ALEXANDER: I do, sir.

25 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator

1 Alexander.

2 SENATOR ALEXANDER: So just listening to
3 the response to the last question when you said you had
4 no communication regarding the board of trustees --

5 DR. BUTEHORN: Yes.

6 SENATOR ALEXANDER: -- seat, so do I take
7 from that you may have had other conversations with
8 members of the General Assembly?

9 DR. BUTEHORN: I'm on the PAC board and we
10 lobby for multiple issues, and one of those issues is
11 medical marijuana which was very hot at the beginning of
12 the session. So, yes, I was talking to people about
13 that. I may or may not have seen some of y'all at an
14 event that I was invited because I'm on the PAC board.
15 I'm the chairman of the PAC board.

16 SENATOR ALEXANDER: Just wanted further
17 clarification.

18 SENATOR SCOTT: Chair.

19 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

20 SENATOR SCOTT: Did any -- anyone -- was
21 there any lobbyist who represented either your agency or
22 represented you before this body having communication
23 with members of the General Assembly as it relates to
24 your -- to that election?

25 DR. BUTEHORN: I've had no lobbyist for

1 this position in no way, shape or form, no, sir.

2 SENATOR SCOTT: Is there a particular
3 lobbyist that you -- that you do have a relationship
4 with that represent either your company or that you know
5 that represents somebody else before this General
6 Assembly?

7 DR. BUTEHORN: I have relationships with
8 the South Carolina Medical Association lobbyists. I've
9 known them for 15, 20 years through my -- my work, but I
10 don't personally have a lobbyist and --

11 SENATOR SCOTT: Did any of them act on your
12 behalf as it relates to that election, was involved at
13 any aspect of the election?

14 DR. BUTEHORN: No, sir. I'm not aware that
15 anything happened past a screening point and that was
16 it. I was not allowed to do anything beyond that point.

17 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?
18 Representative Davis.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman.

21 As far as your involvement in the issue
22 around medical marijuana, do you see that in any way as
23 a conflict in your position on the MUSC board?

24 DR. BUTEHORN: No, ma'am. I believe that

1 any physician who looks at these issues will come up
2 with their opinions. Obviously my position on the board
3 of trustees would be taken as a representative of
4 physicians as a whole for the Congressional District 4.
5 So I don't think my personal opinion would affect my
6 ability to be on the board of trustees.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Okay. But as you
8 probably know, that's sort of a political -- it's a --
9 it's a political and a medical issue. It's become
10 political for whatever reason, but --

11 DR. BUTEHORN: It's become a political
12 issue --

13 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Uh-huh.

14 DR. BUTEHORN: -- but if you ask the
15 physicians, it's not a medical issue. I think the
16 politicians have tried to make it a medical issue. So
17 that's the -- the thing that most physicians would fall
18 in that line. You may find a few on the other side, but
19 I have very strong beliefs on that particular issue.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Okay. All right.
21 I -- I just --

22 DR. BUTEHORN: I'm happy to -- to further
23 talk about it.

24 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Well, I just wanted
25 to sort of reconcile that in my mind about -- about

1 whether or not that was a conflict. So thank you. I
2 appreciate your input.

3 DR. BUTEHORN: I would certainly be a major
4 advocate for having further research done, and if MUSC
5 can -- can be a venue to do that research, that would be
6 wonderful. I do think there needs to be a lot more
7 research before we turn -- turn that loose.

8 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

10 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you again, Doctor,
11 for -- for -- for being here and answering these
12 questions.

13 What is troubling to me is that prior to
14 this last election members of this General Assembly took
15 it upon themselves to actively be involved in election
16 prior to time to get votes, and with you having no
17 relationship with lobbyists, no relationship with members
18 of the legislature, I just kind of -- I'm just trying to
19 kind of figure all this -- all this out. Why would
20 they have such a major interest in this election if you
21 had no relationship with -- with anybody other than with
22 your association? That's what's troubling me.

23 I'm not -- not able to get my arms around
24 it. You have no relationship with anybody on these
25 legislators. You have no relationship with the

1 lobbyists, but they had all this major interest in
2 either getting the other person out of the race so that
3 the race would be a race ran with just one candidate in
4 it.

5 DR. BUTEHORN: Once again, you can
6 certainly elaborate more about -- I'm kind of working
7 without all the cards you have apparently. I don't
8 know --

9 SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

10 DR. BUTEHORN: -- the details you're
11 talking about. I do have relationships with practically
12 everybody. I know all the people who are elected in
13 Spartanburg County. I -- I think it's my issue as a
14 citizen to do that. I know Senator Peeler. He's come
15 to our legislative sessions that we have once a year.
16 I've kind of started that in Spartanburg to try to get
17 everybody involved and get physicians to meet our
18 legislators. So do I know the legislators? Yes, I do.
19 I know them and I hope they have a positive view of me.

20 Beyond that, I have supported a few which I
21 think you have on the -- beyond that -- that's -- that's
22 it. I do feel like I can call my legislators if I have
23 an issue as a representative of the government, and
24 that's what I -- I try to do. I tried to -- have I
25 called anyone about this position asking for their

1 commitment or their vote? In no way, shape or form.

2 SENATOR SCOTT: If anything happened, they
3 acted on their own is what you're saying?

4 DR. BUTEHORN: I would say that. I'm not
5 aware of -- I know something's happened and things have
6 happened, but I am not aware of all the things. I'm
7 really not.

8 SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

9 DR. BUTEHORN: A bit mysterious.

10 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?

11 SENATOR VERDIN: Mr. Chairman.

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Verdin.

13 SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 I want to thank Dr. Butehorn for the
15 response on the research that is inevitably got to
16 transpire in this country as it relates to the plant.
17 And you and I have had had multiple conversations about
18 it, formally, informally, and I appreciate your candor.

19 Also the -- I lost my train of thought. I
20 do want to thank you for that acknowledgement going
21 forward. Oh, yeah, we were talking about cannabis.
22 Some people talk about medical marijuana. I talk about
23 medicinal cannabis because -- and I don't want to hear
24 it right now. Not the time or the place.

25 Normally that's been my question for

1 everyone. And I thought I might jog back around to my
2 part B comment, but I don't want to -- didn't want to
3 fail to acknowledge the -- whether it be the medical
4 community or the law enforcement community, they're
5 coming up and -- and of course as representative of the
6 CM -- SCMA, y'all have been very -- much more pronounced
7 in your address of the issue this year, and that's what
8 it's going to take going forward.

9 So I thank you for that on part of the
10 SCMA. Rather than neutrality, we need to know where
11 people are and be able to address the concerns, qualms,
12 issues, fears, and certainly deferring to your
13 medical -- which is what we're doing here, by the way.
14 There's a reason we're putting MDs on there, not because
15 you're an alumnus, because that you've been in practice
16 and then now you can take those perspectives and those
17 experiences back to your alma mater and then the next
18 generation.

19 So I thought I'd get back to it, but I
20 didn't. So there was something else stuck back there,
21 but --

22 DR. BUTEHORN: Thank you. I know we've had
23 a lot of conversations about it and --

24 SENATOR VERDIN: It's inevitable for --
25 from -- from where I sit, from where the chairman,

1 President Peeler used to sit, and from the actions of
2 SCMA, you know, we're going to -- we can sit back and do
3 nothing or we can grapple over it, and I think we best
4 serve our constituencies by grappling over it. That
5 will enable us to have the conversation of how far the
6 political debate has outrun the medical debate.

7 And for you to say, "Certainly I would
8 support MUSC's research of the matter," is all the
9 encouragement and comfort that I can take as we try to
10 establish new public policy.

11 I want South Carolina to establish public
12 policy. I don't want a nationalized policy forced on us
13 which is inevitably what's going to happen within a few
14 short years. It's breaking fast, and I want to have a
15 proactive approach and it's going to take everybody, law
16 enforcement, our medical research instruments. And I
17 would like to show the rest of the country a better way,
18 and I think we can do that from the southeast.

19 I think the mid-Atlantic states, midwestern
20 states will follow our lead. Some of them will back up
21 on themselves to fix some of the stuff that they've
22 enacted already.

23 DR. BUTEHORN: I think if you go to states
24 that have enacted it, you will -- and you talk to
25 political officials without a camera present, they will

1 tell you several things that -- that they would like to
2 do differently, and I think South Carolina has an
3 excellent opportunity to do things correctly as you
4 said.

5 Are there positive things to the plant?
6 100 percent. Are there negative things to the plant?
7 100 percent. And it's federally illegal and it's
8 classified as a drug that doesn't have medical benefit.
9 So I have a hard time with that.

10 SENATOR VERDIN: I know that's the silo
11 that we're in currently. That -- the walls of that silo
12 are coming down. FDA is gonna deschedule and the
13 federal government is going to decriminalize and the
14 states are going to be sitting out here saying, "Uh-oh,
15 we now have to do something."

16 I'd rather us get in the game now because
17 what I just said I don't think is more than 18 to 24
18 months away.

19 DR. BUTEHORN: I think if we are all
20 looking for our citizens' and patients' best interest,
21 then we all have the right goal, and it's not
22 necessarily the -- the thing that's going to make the
23 state the most money. It would be the thing that is
24 safest for the state and safest for our citizens, and
25 that -- that takes time and it's not something that

1 happens in 18 months.

2 It would be something that takes medical
3 literature for a drug to be approved after you go
4 through a double-blinded placebo controlled trial which
5 is powered enough in order to prove what you need to
6 prove, and that would take, if you're ready to go,
7 probably a minimum of two to three years to actually get
8 your study done.

9 So we don't prescribe drugs or -- we don't
10 prescribe drugs -- that's the important word --
11 prescribe drugs that -- that aren't FDA approved.

12 SENATOR VERDIN: Where we have our greatest
13 agreement is in the sanctity of the doctor-patient
14 relationship. Where we're going to struggle going
15 forward as a General Assembly as a country is the
16 efficacy and timeliness of pharmacology and federal
17 regulators. Hanging our hat on a -- on a peg on the
18 ability of the federal government to serve us best is
19 where a lot of this is going to break as well.

20 DR. BUTEHORN: Well, hopefully we got 50
21 states and state --

22 SENATOR VERDIN: Each a laboratory.

23 DR. BUTEHORN: Right. So that's the way
24 it's supposed to be. So I would agree with you there.

25 SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?

2 Dr. Butehorn, I appreciate your attendance.
3 I appreciate your willingness to serve. I appreciate
4 your forthrightness. The Committee takes very seriously
5 our role and I think you would appreciate that.

6 DR. BUTEHORN: Yes, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: There were some
8 questions that needed to be answered that -- asked and
9 answered, and I'm satisfied with the questions and the
10 response.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Uh-huh.

12 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: So what's the
13 desire of the Committee?

14 SENATOR VERDIN: I move for a favorable
15 report --

16 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is
17 favorable.

18 Is there a second?

19 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Seconded.

21 Any other discussion?

22 We'll take it to a vote. All in favor of a
23 favorable report, please raise your right hand.

24 All opposed raise your right hand.

25 Five positive. Two abstained.

1 Thank you, sir.

2 DR. BUTEHORN: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Appreciate it.

4 Completes our agenda and adjourned.

5 (The screenings were concluded at

6 2:18 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Yvonne R. Thurston-Bohannon, Registered Merit Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter, and Notary Public for the State of South Carolina at Large, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing transcript was taken before me on the date and at the time and location stated on page 1 of this transcript; that the candidates were duly sworn to testify to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth by the Chairman; that the testimony of the candidates and all comments made at the time of the screenings were recorded stenographically by me and were thereafter transcribed; that the foregoing screenings as typed is a true, accurate and complete record to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am neither related to nor counsel for any party to the cause pending or interested in the events thereof.

Witness my hand, I have hereunto affixed my official seal March 29, 2019, at Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina.

Yvonne R. Thurston-Bohannon
Registered Merit
Reporter, CRR
My Commission expires
May 6, 2025

I N D E X

Page

CANDIDATES FOR COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

AT-LARGE, SEAT 13, EXPIRES 2023, LEE A. 3
 BELCHER, LEXINGTON

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