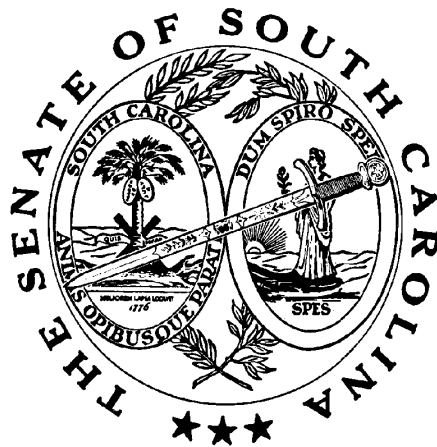


NO. 10

JOURNAL
OF THE
SENATE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024

Wednesday, January 24, 2024
(Statewide Session)

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

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

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

Luke 15:21

In the Prodigal Son story we read: “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ”

Bow in prayer with me, please: O loving God, I doubt that a single one of us in this Senate Chamber doesn’t now and then stumble into sin. Truly, while we daily make our way through life -- no matter how diligently we strive to sidestep around sin -- we inevitably slip. And in those moments our very humanity reaches out and pulls us down. The story of the Prodigal is therefore our own story in every regard, and we must never forget that our Gracious Father is always there for us, too, ready as ever to pull us back on our feet, having taught us yet again another life-lesson. May we always embrace God’s unfailing love. And may our Lord guide our State’s Governor, Henry McMaster, as he addresses the people of South Carolina tonight, encouraging us all to live fully and faithfully as Your children. We pray this in Your loving name, O Lord. Amen.

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

Call of the Senate

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

Adams	Alexander	Allen
Campsen	Cash	Climer
Corbin	Cromer	Davis
Devine	Gambrell	Garrett
Goldfinch	Grooms	Gustafson
Harpootlian	Hembree	Jackson
<i>Johnson, Kevin</i>	<i>Johnson, Michael</i>	Kimbrell

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Malloy	Martin	Massey
McElveen	Peeler	Reichenbach
Rice	Senn	Setzler
Shealy	Talley	Turner
Verdin	Williams	Young

A quorum being present, the Senate resumed.

Recorded Vote

Senator FANNING desired to be recorded as present.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

The following appointment was transmitted by the Honorable Henry Dargan McMaster:

Local Appointment

Reappointment, Richland County Magistrate, with the term to commence April 30, 2023, and to expire April 30, 2027

Sandra A. Sutton, 1 Richmond Lane, Blythewood, SC 29016-9088

Doctor of the Day

Senator CROMER introduced Dr. Gerald Harmon of Georgetown, S.C., Doctor of the Day.

Leave of Absence

On motion of Senator CORBIN, at 3:09 P.M., Senator LOFTIS was granted a leave of absence for the balance of the day.

Leave of Absence

On motion of Senator SETZLER, at 3:09 P.M., Senator HUTTO was granted a leave of absence for today.

RECALLED

S. 985 -- Senator Alexander: A SENATE RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE MARCH 5, 2024, AS "DISABILITY ADVOCACY DAY" IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Senator VERDIN asked unanimous consent to make a motion to recall the Senate Resolution from the Committee on Medical Affairs.

The Senate Resolution was recalled from the Committee on Medical Affairs and ordered placed on the Calendar for consideration tomorrow.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following were introduced:

S. 986 -- Senator Hembree: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 7-13-353 SO AS TO REQUIRE A DECLARATION BY A CANDIDATE OF FINES OWED TO THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION, SENATE ETHICS COMMITTEE, OR HOUSE ETHICS COMMITTEE, AND TO FURTHER PROVIDE THAT A CANDIDATE MAY NOT BE PLACED ON A BALLOT UNLESS THE CANDIDATE IS ENROLLED IN A PAYMENT PLAN FOR THE OUTSTANDING FINES AND IS NOT IN DEFAULT; AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ONE TIME REDUCTION OF OUTSTANDING FINE BALANCES OVER FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS TO BE REDUCED TO FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

sedu-0061db24.docx

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

S. 987 -- Senators Fanning, Tedder, K. Johnson, Matthews, McLeod, Devine, Hutto, Sabb and Stephens: A JOINT RESOLUTION TO REQUIRE THE GOVERNOR AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO FILE A NOTICE OF INTENT WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITHIN FIVE DAYS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS JOINT RESOLUTION.

lc-0246ha24.docx

Read the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

S. 988 -- Senator Shealy: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY PALMETTO GIRLS STATE TO USE THE CHAMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2024.

sr-0557km-vc24.docx

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

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S. 989 -- Senator Alexander: A SENATE RESOLUTION TO COMMEND TAIWAN FOR ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

sr-0547km-vc24.docx

The Senate Resolution was introduced and referred to the Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry.

S. 990 -- Senators Setzler, Shealy, Adams, Alexander, Allen, Bennett, Campsen, Cash, Climer, Corbin, Cromer, Davis, Devine, Fanning, Gambrell, Garrett, Goldfinch, Grooms, Gustafson, Harpootlian, Hembree, Hutto, Jackson, K. Johnson, M. Johnson, Kimbrell, Loftis, Malloy, Martin, Massey, Matthews, McElveen, McLeod, Peeler, Rankin, Reichenbach, Rice, Sabb, Senn, Stephens, Talley, Tedder, Turner, Verdin, Williams and Young: A SENATE RESOLUTION TO HONOR CANCER PATIENTS, SURVIVORS, AND THEIR FAMILIES, TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN LOST TO CANCER, AND TO RECOGNIZE JANUARY 24, 2024 AS "SUITS AND SNEAKERS DAY" IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

sr-0551km-vc24.docx

The Senate Resolution was adopted.

S. 991 -- Senators Tedder, McLeod, McElveen and Setzler: A SENATE RESOLUTION TO URGE CONGRESS TO EITHER EXTEND THE DEADLINE FOR THE NOTICE OF INTENT FOR THE 2024 SUMMER EBT PROGRAM OR WAIVE THE DEADLINE TO PERMIT STATES TO SUBMIT A NOTICE OF INTENT AFTER JANUARY 1, 2024.

lc-0256ha-ha24.docx

The Senate Resolution was introduced and referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

H. 4903 -- Reps. Pedalino, Alexander, Anderson, Atkinson, Bailey, Ballentine, Bamberg, Bannister, Bauer, Beach, Bernstein, Blackwell, Bradley, Brewer, Brittain, Burns, Bustos, Calhoon, Carter, Caskey, Chapman, Chumley, Clyburn, Cobb-Hunter, Collins, Connell, B. J. Cox, B. L. Cox, Crawford, Cromer, Davis, Dillard, Elliott, Erickson, Felder, Forrest, Gagnon, Garvin, Gatch, Gibson, Gilliam, Gilliard, Guest, Guffey, Haddon, Hager, Hardee, Harris, Hart, Hartnett, Hayes, Henderson-Myers, Henegan, Herbkersman, Hewitt, Hiott, Hixon, Hosey, Howard, Hyde, Jefferson, J. E. Johnson, J. L. Johnson, S. Jones, W. Jones, Jordan, Kilmartin, King, Kirby, Landing, Lawson, Leber,

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Ligon, Long, Lowe, Magnuson, May, McCabe, McCravy, McDaniel, McGinnis, Mitchell, J. Moore, T. Moore, A. M. Morgan, T. A. Morgan, Moss, Murphy, Neese, B. Newton, W. Newton, Nutt, O'Neal, Oremus, Ott, Pace, Pendarvis, Pope, Rivers, Robbins, Rose, Rutherford, Sandifer, Schuessler, Sessions, G. M. Smith, M. M. Smith, Stavrinakis, Taylor, Thayer, Thigpen, Trantham, Vaughan, Weeks, West, Wetmore, Wheeler, White, Whitmire, Williams, Willis, Wooten and Yow: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE CLARENDON HALL VARSITY SOFTBALL TEAM, COACHES, AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS FOR A REMARKABLE SEASON AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM FOR WINNING THE 2023 SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATION CLASS 2A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE.

lc-0338dg-gm24.docx

The Concurrent Resolution was adopted, ordered returned to the House.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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

S. 577 -- Senator Alexander: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-8-530, SECTION 12-8-540, SECTION 12-8-570, SECTION 12-8-580, AND SECTION 12-8-595, ALL RELATING TO THE WITHHOLDING OF INCOME TAXES, SO AS TO UPDATE A REFERENCE TO THE TOP MARGINAL INCOME TAX RATE.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

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

S. 578 -- Senator Alexander: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-54-240, RELATING TO DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS OF AND REPORTS AND RETURNS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, SO AS TO AUTHORIZE THE DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

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

S. 620 -- Senator Davis: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-51-50, RELATING TO SALES OF PROPERTY BY A COUNTY RESULTING FROM DELINQUENT TAXES, SO AS TO ALLOW AN ELECTRONIC SALE AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROCEDURES OF AN ELECTRONIC SALE; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 12-51-60, RELATING TO PAYMENT BY THE SUCCESSFUL BIDDER IN A TAX SALE, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROCEEDS DERIVED FROM AN ELECTRONIC TAX SALE.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator SHEALY from the Committee on Family and Veterans' Services submitted a favorable report on:

S. 708 -- Senators Young and Shealy: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-420, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS PERTAINING TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY MEDICAL RESPONSE SYSTEM, SO AS TO DEFINE CHILD ABUSE MEDICAL SERVICES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 63-11-430, RELATING TO PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE INCLUSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA NETWORK OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS IN THE PROGRAM.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator SHEALY from the Committee on Family and Veterans' Services submitted a favorable report on:

S. 778 -- Senator Shealy: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING TITLE 40, CHAPTER 63, ARTICLE 5, SO AS TO CREATE THE SOCIAL WORK MEMBER STATE COMPACT, OUTLINE THE RULES OF THE COMPACT, AND DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

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

S. 806 -- Senator Alexander: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 2-1-180,

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RELATING TO ADJOURNMENT OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CONDITIONS FOR EXTENDED SESSION, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE DATE FOR SINE DIE ADJOURNMENT IS AUTOMATICALLY EXTENDED IF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DOES NOT GIVE THIRD READING TO THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT ON OR BEFORE MARCH TENTH, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MAY CALL THEIR RESPECTIVE BODIES INTO SESSION AFTER THE SINE DIE ADJOURNMENT DATE TO FINISH ANY UNFINISHED BUSINESS RELATING TO THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL OR CAPITAL RESERVE FUND RESOLUTION, AND TO PROVIDE THE TIME PERIOD DURING WHICH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MAY BE CALLED BACK TO COMPLETE THE UNFINISHED BUSINESS RELATING TO THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL OR CAPITAL RESERVE FUND RESOLUTION.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

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

H. 3116 -- Reps. Felder, Carter, Pope, Guffey, O'Neal, Gilliam, Hart, Caskey, Williams and Blackwell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-37-610, RELATING TO PERSONS LIABLE FOR TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS ON REAL PROPERTY, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES ARE EXEMPT FROM PROPERTY TAXES IN THE YEAR IN WHICH THE DISABILITY OCCURS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

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

H. 3951 -- Reps. Haddon, G.M. Smith, Bannister, Hiott, Ligon, Hixon, Leber, Erickson, Forrest, Brewer, Murphy, Robbins, Willis, Calhoon, Pope, Davis and M.M. Smith: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "WORKING AGRICULTURAL LANDS PRESERVATION ACT" BY ADDING CHAPTER 57 TO TITLE 46 SO AS TO DEFINE TERMS,

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ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE, AND OUTLINE PROGRAM CRITERIA, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Senator ALEXANDER from the Committee on Operations and Management polled out H. 4895 favorable:

H. 4895 -- Reps. Caskey, Jordan and Rutherford: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO FIX NOON ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024, AS THE TIME TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT, UPON HIS RETIREMENT ON OR BEFORE JULY 31, 2024, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL A NEW TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JULY 31, 2034; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS, SEAT 8, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE, 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS, SEAT 9, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2028; TO ELECT A JUDGE TO A NEWLY CREATED SEAT FOR THE CIRCUIT COURT, SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL BE FROM JULY 1, 2024, UNTIL JUNE 30, 2030; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, UPON HIS RETIREMENT ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE, 30, 2028; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2025; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, UPON HIS RETIREMENT ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH

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WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2025; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A JUDGE TO A NEWLY CREATED SEAT FOR THE CIRCUIT COURT, NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 4, WHOSE TERM WILL BE FROM JULY 1, 2024, UNTIL JUNE 30, 2030; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 2, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL A NEW TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2030; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 4, UPON HIS RETIREMENT ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2028; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024; TO ELECT A JUDGE TO A NEWLY CREATED SEAT FOR THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 3, WHOSE TERM WILL BE FROM JULY 1, 2024, UNTIL JUNE 30, 2030; TO ELECT A JUDGE TO A NEWLY CREATED SEAT FOR THE CIRCUIT COURT, FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 3, WHOSE TERM WILL BE FROM JULY 1, 2024, UNTIL JUNE 30, 2030; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, AT-LARGE, SEAT 4, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2027; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, AT-LARGE, SEAT 8,

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AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2027; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, AT-LARGE, SEAT 11, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2026; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, AT-LARGE, SEAT 16, UPON HIS RETIREMENT ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2025; TO ELECT A JUDGE TO A NEWLY CREATED SEAT FOR THE FAMILY COURT, FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 4, WHOSE TERM WILL BE FROM JULY 1, 2024, UNTIL JUNE 30, 2030; TO ELECT A JUDGE TO A NEWLY CREATED SEAT FOR THE FAMILY COURT, SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 4, WHOSE TERM WILL BE FROM JULY 1, 2024, UNTIL JUNE 30, 2030; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE FAMILY COURT, NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 4, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE, WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2025; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE FAMILY COURT, NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 6, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE, WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2028; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE FAMILY COURT, TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE, WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2025; TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE FAMILY COURT, SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 1, UPON HIS RETIREMENT ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2024, AND THE SUCCESSOR WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF THAT OFFICE, WHICH WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2028; TO ELECT A JUDGE TO A NEWLY CREATED SEAT FOR THE FAMILY COURT, SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEAT 3, WHOSE TERM WILL BE FROM JULY 1, 2024, UNTIL JUNE 30, 2030; AND TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO A CERTAIN JUDGE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW COURT, SEAT 1, WHOSE TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2024.

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Poll of the Operations and Management Committee

Polled 9; Ayes 9; Nays 0

AYES

Alexander	Peeler	Setzler
Rankin	Hutto	Malloy
Massey	Shealy	Turner

Total--9

NAYS

Total--0

Ordered for consideration tomorrow.

Appointment Reported

Senator SHEALY from the Committee on Family and Veterans' Services submitted a favorable report on:

Statewide Appointment

Initial Appointment, South Carolina Foster Care Review Board, with the term to commence June 30, 2022, and to expire June 30, 2026

1st Congressional District:

John F. Seignious III, 735 Lavalier Square, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464-7746 *VICE* Charles F. Koche

Received as information.

HOUSE CONCURRENCE

S. 980 -- Senator Sabb: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR SERGEANT ADRIAN DUNMORE, DEPUTY ERIC WHETSELL, DEPUTY STEPHANIE LAW, CHIEF DEPUTY VERNEY D. CUMBEE, AND LIEUTENANT SHANNON L. COKER, ALL OF THE WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, FOR EXCEPTIONAL COURAGE IN THE FACE OF DANGER WHILE IN THE LINE OF DUTY AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM UPON RECEIVING THE SOUTH CAROLINA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION 2023 MEDAL OF VALOR AWARD.

Returned with concurrence.

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Received as information.

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

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

The following Bill was read the third time and ordered sent to the House:

S. 972 -- Senator Garrett: A BILL TO AMEND ACT 595 OF 1994, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF TRUSTEES IN GREENWOOD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 50, SO AS TO REAPPORTION THE NINE SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS FROM WHICH THE TRUSTEES ARE ELECTED, TO REDESIGNATE THE MAP NUMBER ON WHICH THESE DISTRICTS ARE DELINEATED, AND TO PROVIDE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THESE REAPPORTIONED DISTRICTS.

On motion of Senator GARRETT.

OBJECTION

H. 3518 -- Reps. Felder and Williams: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 56-1-395, RELATING TO THE DRIVER'S LICENSE REINSTATEMENT FEE PAYMENT PROGRAM, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE DRIVERS' LICENSES ISSUED UNDER THIS PROGRAM ARE VALID FOR AN ADDITIONAL SIX MONTHS, TO REVISE THE AMOUNT OF REINSTATEMENT FEES OWED BY PERSONS TO BECOME ELIGIBLE TO OBTAIN THESE DRIVERS' LICENSES, TO REVISE THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE FEES COLLECTED, TO PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES MAY PROVIDE PERSONS IN THE PROGRAM A FEE SCHEDULE OF THE AMOUNTS OWED AND THE ABILITY TO MAKE ONLINE PAYMENTS, TO REVISE THE TYPES OF DRIVERS' LICENSE SUSPENSIONS THAT ARE COVERED BY THIS SECTION, AND TO REVISE THE FREQUENCY THAT PERSONS MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM AND THE CONDITIONS FOR FUTURE PARTICIPATION; BY AMENDING SECTION 56-1-396, RELATING TO THE DRIVER'S LICENSE SUSPENSION AMNESTY PERIOD, SO AS TO LIMIT THE TYPES OF QUALIFYING SUSPENSIONS;

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BY AMENDING SECTION 56-10-240, RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENT THAT UPON LOSS OF INSURANCE, NEW INSURANCE MUST BE OBTAINED OR PERSONS MUST SURRENDER THEIR REGISTRATION AND PLATES, WRITTEN NOTICE BY INSURERS, APPEAL OF SUSPENSIONS, ENFORCEMENT, AND PENALTIES, SO AS TO REVISE THE PERIOD OF TIME VEHICLE OWNERS MUST SURRENDER MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE PLATES AND REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES FOR CERTAIN UNINSURED MOTOR VEHICLES, TO DELETE THE PROVISION THAT GIVES THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES DISCRETION TO AUTHORIZE INSURERS TO UTILIZE ALTERNATE METHODS OF PROVIDING CERTAIN NOTICES TO THE DEPARTMENT, TO DELETE THE PROVISION THAT ALLOWS CERTAIN PERSONS TO APPEAL CERTAIN SUSPENSIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE FOR FAILURE TO MEET THE STATE'S FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS IN ERROR, AND TO ALLOW THESE PERSONS TO PROVIDE CERTAIN DOCUMENTS TO SHOW THE SUSPENSION WAS ISSUED IN ERROR; BY AMENDING SECTION 56-10-245, RELATING TO PER DIEM FINES FOR LAPSE IN REQUIRED COVERAGE, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE FINES CONTAINED IN THE SECTION MAY NOT EXCEED TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS PER VEHICLE FOR A FIRST OFFENSE; BY AMENDING ARTICLE 5 OF CHAPTER 10, TITLE 56, RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNINSURED MOTORIST FUND, SO AS TO REVISE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ARTICLE TO REGULATE THE OPERATION OF UNINSURED MOTOR VEHICLES, TO DELETE PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT AND COLLECTION OF UNINSURED MOTOR VEHICLE FEES, TO MAKE TECHNICAL CHANGES, TO REVISE THE AMOUNT OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE REINSTATEMENT FEE AND PROVIDE IT SHALL BE INCREASED ANNUALLY, TO PROVIDE SUSPENDED LICENSES, REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES, LICENSE PLATES, AND DECALS MAY BE RETURNED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES BY ELECTRONIC MEANS OR IN PERSON, AND TO DELETE THE PROVISIONS THAT REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO COLLECT STATISTICS REGARDING VARIOUS MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION, INSURANCE, AND UNINSURED MOTORIST FUND ISSUES.

Senator MALLOY objected to consideration of the Bill.

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OBJECTION

H. 4116 -- Reps. Sandifer, M.M. Smith and King: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 40-19-295 SO AS TO PROHIBIT THE DIVIDING OF FEES OR OTHER COMPENSATION CHARGED OR RECEIVED BY LICENSEES OF THE BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICES WITH ANOTHER PERSON, PARTNERSHIP, CORPORATION, ASSOCIATION, OR LEGAL ENTITY FOR THE DELIVERY OR PERFORMANCE OF FUNERAL SERVICES; BY AMENDING SECTION 32-7-100, RELATING TO PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF PROVISIONS REGULATING PRENEED FUNERAL CONTRACTS, SO AS TO INCREASE FINE RANGES AND PERMANENTLY BAR PERSONS CONVICTED OF A FELONY FROM CONDUCTING PRENEED CONTRACT SALES; BY AMENDING SECTION 32-7-110, RELATING TO THE INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST UNLICENSED PRENEED CONTRACT SALES PROVIDERS, SO AS TO PROVIDE COMPLAINTS TO WHICH THE DEPARTMENT SHALL RESPOND MAY BE WRITTEN OR ORAL; BY AMENDING SECTION 32-8-360, RELATING TO PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFE CREMATION ACT, SO AS TO INCREASE MONETARY FINES AND REQUIRE IMMEDIATE REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS TO THE BOARD; BY AMENDING SECTION 32-8-385, RELATING TO REQUIREMENTS THAT CREMATORIES EMPLOY CERTAIN TRAINED STAFF TO PERFORM CREMATIONS, SO AS TO REQUIRE ALL CREMATIONS BE PERFORMED BY THESE TRAINED STAFF MEMBERS; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-20, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF EMBALMERS AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS, SO AS TO REVISE CERTAIN DEFINITIONS; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-30, RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENT OF LICENSURE TO PRACTICE FUNERAL SERVICES, SO AS TO PROVIDE CONDUCT CONSTITUTING THE PRACTICE OF FUNERAL SERVICES INCLUDES PARTIES WHO EXERCISE ANY CONTROL OR AUTHORITY OVER A FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT OR ITS EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, OR REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO PROHIBIT CORPORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, OR INDIVIDUALS IN WHOSE NAME APPEARS THE NAME OF A PERSON WITH A REVOKED OR LAPSED LICENSE FROM HAVING A LICENSE TO OPERATE A FUNERAL HOME; BY AMENDING SECTION

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40-19-70, RELATING TO POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD, SO AS TO PROVIDE BOARD MEMBERS, COMMITTEES, OR EMPLOYEES MAY NOT BE LIABLE FOR ACTS PERFORMED IN THE COURSE OF THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES IN THE ABSENCE OF MALICE SHOWN AND PROVEN IN A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-80, RELATING TO INSPECTORS EMPLOYED BY THE BOARD, SO AS TO INSTEAD REQUIRE THE BOARD TO EMPLOY AT LEAST TWO INVESTIGATORS WHO MAY BE LICENSED EMBALMERS AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS WITH CERTAIN EXPERIENCE BUT WHO HAVE NOT BEEN DISCIPLINED; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-110, RELATING TO CONDUCT CONSTITUTING UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BY A LICENSEE OF THE BOARD, SO AS TO MAKE GRAMMATICAL CHANGES; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-115, RELATING TO JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD, SO AS TO INCLUDE UNLICENSED PERSONS WITH THIS JURISDICTION; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-200, RELATING TO PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF PROVISIONS PROHIBITING THE PRACTICE OF FUNERAL SERVICES WITHOUT A LICENSE OR USING FALSE INFORMATION TO OBTAIN SUCH LICENSURE, SO AS TO INCREASE MONETARY FINES, AND TO SUBJECT PERSONS WHO AID AND ABET UNLICENSED PERSONS OR ENTITIES IN ENGAGING IN THE PRACTICE OF FUNERAL SERVICE WITHOUT LICENSURE TO THESE PENALTIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-250, RELATING TO CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SO AS TO REQUIRE CERTAIN COURSEWORK IN ETHICS, TO REQUIRE FOUR HOURS OF TOTAL ANNUAL COURSEWORK, TO REQUIRE A CERTAIN PORTION OF THIS COURSEWORK TO BE IN ETHICS, AND TO REQUIRE A CERTAIN PORTION OF THIS COURSEWORK BE COMPLETED IN PERSON; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-19-290, RELATING TO THE FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENTS WITH RESPECT TO PAYMENTS RECEIVED FOR FUNERAL MERCHANDISE BEING PURCHASED, SO AS TO PROVIDE THESE PAYMENTS MUST BE KEPT IN A TRUST ACCOUNT UNTIL THE MERCHANDISE IS DELIVERED FOR ITS INTENDED USE OR IS DELIVERED INTO THE PHYSICAL POSSESSION OF THE PURCHASER.

Senator MALLOY objected to consideration of the Bill.

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OBJECTION

H. 3592 -- Reps. Hyde and Carter: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 40-43-30, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS IN THE PHARMACY PRACTICE ACT, SO AS TO REMOVE CERTAIN DEFINITIONS; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-43-86, RELATING TO COMPOUNDING OF MEDICATIONS BY PHARMACIES , SO AS TO REVISE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPOUNDING PHARMACIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-43-87, RELATING TO NUCLEAR/RADIOLOGIC PHARMACY PRACTICES, SO AS TO REMOVE REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING NUCLEAR PHARMACY FACILITIES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-43-88, RELATING TO STANDARDS FOR PREPARATION, LABELING, AND DISTRIBUTION OF STERILE PRODUCTS BY PHARMACIES, SO AS TO REMOVE CERTAIN STANDARDS.

Senator VERDIN objected to consideration of the Bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ADOPTED

READ THE SECOND TIME

H. 4159 -- Reps. Herbkersman, Davis, M.M. Smith, Erickson, W. Newton, Bradley, Ballentine, Hewitt and Blackwell: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS SO AS TO ENACT THE “SOUTH CAROLINA TELEHEALTH AND TELEMEDICINE MODERNIZATION ACT” BY ADDING CHAPTER 42 TO TITLE 40 SO AS TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS AND PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN REGULATED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS WHO PROVIDE HEALTH CARE BY MEANS OF TELEHEALTH; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-47-20, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS IN THE MEDICAL PRACTICE ACT, SO AS TO DEFINE “TELEHEALTH”; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-47-37, RELATING TO THE PRACTICE OF TELEMEDICINE, SO AS TO REVISE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PRACTICE OF TELEMEDICINE AND TO INCLUDE PROVISIONS CONCERNING TELEHEALTH.

The Senate proceeded to a consideration of the Bill.

The Committee on Medical Affairs proposed the following amendment (SR-4159.JG0005S), which was adopted:

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

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SECTION X. Section 40-33-34(I)(2) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

(2) An APRN may perform medical acts via telemedicine and telehealth pursuant to a practice agreement as defined in Section 40-33-20(45) without having to be licensed to practice medicine in this State as otherwise required in Section 40-47-37-(A)(4).

SECTION X. Section 40-47-935(A)(3) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

(3) telemedicine and telehealth in accordance with the requirements of Section 40-47-37 including, but not limited to, Section 40-47-37(C)(6) requiring board authorization prior to prescribing Schedule II and Schedule III prescriptions; Section 40-47-113, approved written scope of practice guidelines, and pursuant to all physician supervisory requirements imposed by this chapter without having to be licensed to practice medicine in this State as otherwise required in Section 40-47-37-(A)(4).

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator DAVIS explained the amendment.

The amendment was adopted.

Senator DAVIS explained the Bill.

The question being the second reading of the Bill.

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

Motion Adopted

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

There was no objection.

ADOPTED

S. 978 -- Senator McLeod: A SENATE RESOLUTION TO INVITE ALL SOUTH CAROLINIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN “NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY” ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2024, DURING

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AMERICAN HEART MONTH AND TO ENCOURAGE ALL CITIZENS OF SOUTH CAROLINA TO JOIN TOGETHER IN REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN WOMEN THROUGHOUT THIS GREAT STATE.

The Resolution was adopted.

H. 4849 -- Reps. Calhoon, Erickson and Bradley: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO DECLARE JULY 2024 AS JUVENILE ARTHRITIS AWARENESS MONTH AND URGE CITIZENS TO BE MINDFUL OF THE CONDITION AND ITS EFFECT ON SOUTH CAROLINA'S YOUTH.

The Resolution was adopted, ordered returned to the House.

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

MOTION ADOPTED

At 1:51 P.M., on motion of Senator MASSEY, the Senate agreed to dispense with the balance of the Motion Period.

THE SENATE PROCEEDED TO A CONSIDERATION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS RETURNED FROM THE HOUSE.

CARRIED OVER

S. 557 -- Senators M. Johnson, Peeler, Kimbrell, Adams, Rice, Rankin, Reichenbach, Young, Loftis, Climer, Garrett, Alexander and Campsen: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-3477, RELATING TO THE APPRENTICE INCOME TAX CREDIT, SO AS TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THE CREDIT AND THE NUMBER OF YEARS IN WHICH IT MAY BE CLAIMED.

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

THE SENATE PROCEEDED TO THE ADJOURNED DEBATE.

AMENDMENT PROPOSED

DEBATE INTERRUPTED

H. 3594 -- Reps. B.J. Cox, G.M. Smith, Lowe, Wooten, Hiott, Bailey, Beach, Burns, Caskey, Crawford, Cromer, Elliott, Forrest, Haddon,

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Hardee, Hixon, Hyde, Jordan, Ligon, Long, Magnuson, May, McCabe, McCravy, A.M. Morgan, T.A. Morgan, T. Moore, B. Newton, Nutt, Oremus, M.M. Smith, S. Jones, Taylor, Thayer, Trantham, Willis, Yow, West, Lawson, Chapman, Chumley, Leber, Mitchell, Pace, Harris, O'Neal, Kilmartin, Murphy, Brewer, Robbins, Hager, Sandifer, Connell, Gilliam, Davis, B.L. Cox, Vaughan, White, Collins, J.E. Johnson, Gagnon, Gibson, W. Newton, Bustos, Herbkersman, Landing, Moss, Pope and Guest: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SOUTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTIONAL CARRY/SECOND AMENDMENT PRESERVATION ACT OF 2023" BY AMENDING SECTION 10-11-320, RELATING TO CARRYING OR DISCHARGING FIREARMS AND EXCEPTIONS FOR CONCEALABLE WEAPONS PERMIT HOLDERS, SO AS TO DELETE A PROVISION THAT MAKES THIS SECTION INAPPLICABLE TO PERSONS THAT POSSESS CONCEALABLE WEAPONS PERMITS AND TO PROVIDE THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO PERSONS WHO POSSESS FIREARMS; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-23-20, RELATING TO UNLAWFUL CARRYING OF HANDGUNS, SO AS TO REVISE THE PLACES WHERE AND CIRCUMSTANCES UPON WHICH HANDGUNS MAY BE CARRIED, AND PERSONS WHO MAY CARRY HANDGUNS; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-23-50, RELATING TO CERTAIN PENALTIES, DISPOSITION OF FINES, AND FORFEITURE AND DISPOSITION OF HANDGUNS, SO AS TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONS TO THE UNLAWFUL CARRYING OF HANDGUNS; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-23-55, RELATING TO PROCEDURES FOR RETURNING FOUND HANDGUNS, SO AS TO DELETE THE PROVISION RELATING TO FILING APPLICATIONS TO OBTAIN FOUND HANDGUNS, AND PROVIDE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ALLOW LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO MAINTAIN POSSESSION OR DISPOSE OF FOUND HANDGUNS; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-23-420, RELATING TO POSSESSION OF FIREARMS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY, SO AS TO DELETE THE PROVISION THAT EXEMPTS PERSONS WHO POSSESS CONCEALED WEAPON PERMITS FROM THIS PROVISION, AND DELETE THE TERM "WEAPON" AND REPLACE IT WITH THE TERM "FIREARM"; BY AMENDING SECTION 16-23-430, RELATING TO CARRYING WEAPONS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY, SO AS TO DELETE THE PROVISION THAT EXEMPTS PERSONS WHO POSSESS CONCEALED WEAPON PERMITS FROM THIS PROVISION; BY

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AMENDING SECTION 16-23-465, RELATING TO THE ADDITIONAL PENALTIES FOR UNLAWFULLY CARRYING PISTOLS OR FIREARMS ONTO PREMISES OF BUSINESSES SELLING ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR, BEER, OR WINE FOR ON-PREMISES CONSUMPTION, SO AS TO PROVIDE THIS PROVISION DOES NOT APPLY TO CERTAIN OFFENSES THAT PROHIBIT PERSONS FROM CARRYING CERTAIN DEADLY WEAPONS, TO PROVIDE THIS PROVISION APPLIES TO PERSONS WHO KNOWINGLY CARRY CERTAIN FIREARMS, TO DELETE THE PROVISION THAT EXEMPTS PERSONS WHO POSSESS CONCEALED WEAPON PERMITS FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION, AND TO PROVIDE PERSONS LAWFULLY CARRYING FIREARMS WHO DO NOT CONSUME ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE EXEMPT FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION; BY AMENDING SECTION 23-31-215, RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF CONCEALED WEAPON PERMITS, SO AS TO DELETE THE PROVISIONS REQUIRING PERMIT HOLDERS TO CARRY PERMITS WHILE CARRYING WEAPONS AND IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS PERMIT HOLDERS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, TO REVISE THE REQUIREMENTS TO REPORT THE LOSSES OF PERMITS TO SLED, TO REVISE THE PREMISES UPON WHICH PERMIT HOLDERS MUST NOT CARRY WEAPONS, TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN VIOLATIONS, TO REVISE THE PROVISION THAT PROVIDES EXEMPTIONS TO CARRYING PERMITS, AND TO DELETE THE PROVISION RELATING TO PENALTIES FOR CARRYING EXPIRED PERMITS; BY AMENDING SECTION 23-31-220, RELATING TO THE RIGHT TO ALLOW OR PERMIT CONCEALED WEAPONS UPON PREMISES AND THE POSTING OF SIGNS PROHIBITING THE CARRYING OF WEAPONS, SO AS TO MAKE TECHNICAL CHANGES, THAT PERSONS MUST KNOWINGLY VIOLATE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION TO BE CHARGED WITH A VIOLATION, AND TO PROVIDE THIS SECTION DOES NOT LIMIT PERSONS FROM CARRYING CERTAIN WEAPONS IN STATE PARKS; BY AMENDING SECTION 23-31-232, RELATING TO CARRYING CONCEALABLE WEAPONS ON PREMISES OF CERTAIN SCHOOLS LEASED BY CHURCHES, SO AS TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE CHURCH OFFICIALS OR GOVERNING BODIES MAY ALLOW ANY PERSON TO CARRY A CONCEALABLE WEAPON ON THE LEASED PREMISES; BY

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AMENDING SECTION 23-31-235, RELATING TO CONCEALABLE WEAPON SIGN REQUIREMENTS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE SIGNS MUST BE POSTED AT LOCATIONS WHERE THE CARRYING OF CONCEALABLE WEAPONS ARE PROHIBITED; BY AMENDING SECTION 23-31-600, RELATING TO RETIRED PERSONNEL, IDENTIFICATION CARDS, AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR CARRYING CONCEALED WEAPONS, SO AS TO MAKE A TECHNICAL CHANGE; BY REPEALING SECTIONS 16-23-460, 23-31-225, AND 23-31-230, RELATING TO THE CARRYING OF WEAPONS BY INDIVIDUALS ON THEIR PERSON, INTO RESIDENCES OR DWELLINGS, OR BETWEEN A MOTOR VEHICLE AND A RENTED ACCOMMODATION; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 16-23-500, RELATING TO UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS BY PERSONS CONVICTED OF VIOLENT OFFENSES, THE CONFISCATION OF CERTAIN WEAPONS, AND THE RETURN OF FIREARMS TO INNOCENT OWNERS, SO AS TO REVISE THE LIST OF CRIMES SUBJECT TO THIS PROVISION AND THE PENALTIES ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLATIONS, AND TO DEFINE THE TERM “CRIME PUNISHABLE BY A MAXIMUM TERM OF IMPRISONMENT OF MORE THAN ONE YEAR”.

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

Senator MARTIN explained the Bill.

Amendment No. 1A

Senator HARPOOTLIAN proposed the following amendment (SJ-3594.BM0074S), which was withdrawn:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 16, by striking Section 16-23-500(A) and inserting:

(A) ~~It is unlawful for a person who has been convicted of a violent crime, as defined by Section 16-1-60, that is classified as or a felony offense, as defined within Title 16, to possess a firearm or ammunition within this State. However, this section does not apply to:~~

(1) offenses defined by Chapters 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, and 21 of Title 16; or

(2) any crime for which the conviction has been expunged, or set aside, or for which a person has been pardoned or has had civil rights restored, unless such pardon, expungement, or restoration of civil rights

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expressly provides that the person may not ship, transport, possess, or receive firearms.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 16, by deleting Section 16-23-500(F).

Re-number sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator HARPOOTLIAN explained the amendment.

On motion of Senator HARPOOTLIAN, with unanimous consent, Amendment No. 1A was withdrawn.

Amendment No. 2

Senator MARTIN proposed the following amendment (SR-3594.KM0085S), which was withdrawn:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, by deleting SECTION 16.

Re-number sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator MARTIN explained the amendment.

Senator HEMBREE spoke on the amendment.

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

Amendment No. 3

Senator HEMBREE proposed the following amendment (SEDU-3594.DB0099S), which was withdrawn:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 19, by striking Section 23-31-245 and inserting:

Section 23-31-245. A person openly carrying a weapon in accordance with this article does not give a law enforcement officer reasonable suspicion or probable cause to search, detain, or arrest the person absent other articulable circumstances.

Re-number sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator HEMBREE explained the amendment.

On motion of Senator HEMBREE, with unanimous consent, Amendment No. 3 was withdrawn.

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Amendment No. 4

Senator GOLDFINCH proposed the following amendment (SR-3594.JG0107S), which was carried over:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 10, by striking Section 23-31-220(A)(1) and inserting:

(A) Nothing contained in this article shall in any way be construed to limit, diminish, or otherwise infringe upon:

(1) the right of a ~~public or private employer~~ public accommodations business to prohibit a person who does not hold a valid concealed weapon permit and is licensed under this article otherwise not prohibited by law from possessing a handgun from carrying a concealable weapon, whether concealed or openly carried, upon the premises of the business or ~~work place~~ workplace or while using any machinery, vehicle, or equipment owned or operated by the business; or

Amend the bill further, SECTION 10, by striking Section 23-31-220(B) and inserting:

(B) The posting by the employer, owner, or person in legal possession or control of a sign stating “NO CONCEALABLE WEAPONS ALLOWED UNLESS POSSESSED BY A PERSON WITH A VALID CWP” shall constitute notice to a person ~~holding a permit issued pursuant to this article~~ that the employer, owner, or person in legal possession or control requests that concealable weapons, whether concealed or openly carried, not be brought upon the premises or into the ~~work place~~ workplace. A person who knowingly brings a concealable weapon, whether concealed or openly carried, onto the premises or ~~work place~~ workplace in violation of the provisions of this paragraph may be charged with a violation of Section 16-11-620. In addition to the penalties provided in Section 16-11-620, a person convicted of a second or subsequent violation of the provisions of this paragraph must have his permit revoked for a period of one year. The prohibition contained in this section does not apply to persons specified in Section 16-23-20, ~~item~~ (B)(1).

Amend the bill further, by adding an appropriately numbered SECTION to read:

SECTION X. SLED shall promulgate regulations requiring the course and qualifications for concealed weapon permits to include two additional hours of training regarding the proper handling of firearms and two additional hours of legal training.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

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Senator GOLDFINCH explained the amendment.

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

Amendment No. 5

Senator HARPOOTLIAN proposed the following amendment (LC-3594.WAB0105S):

Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 3, Section 16-23-20, by adding an item to read:

(12) retail establishment that serves beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

Senator CLIMER spoke on the amendment.

Debate was interrupted by adjournment.

MOTION ADOPTED

On motion of Senator MASSEY, with Senator CLIMER retaining the floor on Amendment No. 5 of H. 3594, the Senate agreed that, when the Senate completed its business today, the Senate would stand in recess until 6:40 P.M. for the purpose of attending the Joint Assembly and at the conclusion of the Joint Assembly, the Senate would stand adjourned to meet at 11:00 A.M. tomorrow.

NIGHT SESSION

The Senate reassembled at 6:40 P.M. and was called to order by the PRESIDENT.

Committee to Escort

The PRESIDENT appointed Senators SETZLER, PEELER, DAVIS, ALLEN, SHEALY and REICHENBACH to escort the Honorable Henry Dargan McMaster, Governor of South Carolina, and members of his party to the House Chamber for the Joint Assembly.

At 6:55 P.M., the Senate recessed for the purpose of attending the Joint Assembly.

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JOINT ASSEMBLY

Address by the Governor

At 7:00 o'clock P.M., the Senate appeared in the Hall of the House.

The PRESIDENT of the Senate called the Joint Assembly to order and announced that it had convened under the terms of a Concurrent Resolution adopted by both Houses.

H. 4751 -- Rep. G.M. Smith: A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION INVITING HIS EXCELLENCY, HENRY DARGAN MCMASTER, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO ADDRESS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN JOINT SESSION AT 7:00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024, IN THE CHAMBER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

The Honorable Henry Dargan McMaster, and members of his party, were escorted to the rostrum by Senators SETZLER, PEELER, DAVIS, ALLEN, SHEALY and REICHENBACH and Representatives Connell, Cox, Hixon, McDaniel, Thayer and West.

The PRESIDENT of the Senate introduced the Honorable Henry Dargan McMaster, Governor of the State of South Carolina.

The Governor addressed the Joint Assembly as follows:

State of the State Address

Mr. Speaker, Mr. PRESIDENT, ladies and gentlemen of the General Assembly, my fellow South Carolinians:

We are here tonight to address successes, challenges and opportunities. But first, as in prior years, I'd like to recognize those in uniform whom we lost in the line of duty in 2023.

Sergeant Ricky Lydell Green, Jr. of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, Deputy Jacob Eric Salrin of the Richland County Sheriff's Department, Officer Matthew Logan Hare of the Easley Police Department, Lieutenant Michael Charles Wood, Jr. of the Newberry Police Department, Specialist Jayson Reed Haven, South Carolina National Guard, Firefighter James Michael Muller of the Irmo Fire District, and K-9 Agent Rico with the State Law Enforcement Division. To the families and loved ones of these brave South Carolinians, we offer our condolences. We are eternally grateful for their service.

I am delighted to have with us once again tonight our First Lady, my bride Peggy, our son Henry Jr., and his wife Virginia. Their sixteen-month-old daughter, Margot Gray, is at home. And our daughter Mary Rogers, her husband Sam. Their nineteen-month-old son, James Dargan, is at home. Please stand and be recognized.

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Also, our Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette, and her husband David are here tonight and our state constitutional officeholders. Please stand and be recognized. Finally, will the members of the best cabinet in the Nation please stand and be recognized. Thank you all.

I would also like to acknowledge the members of the Supreme Court in attendance tonight, including Chief Justice Beatty, who will retire this summer after more than seven years as Chief Justice of our Supreme Court and more than thirty years of service to our State. I look forward to working with our next Chief Justice, John Kittredge.

I believe there is no higher honor on earth than being selected by the people who know you best to serve in a position like this. I thank you and I will not let you down. We will continue to act boldly, think big and continue building on our successes. My question: What are our priorities now, and what will our magnificent state look like in one hundred years?

The world knows that South Carolina has great people. Our quality of life and cultural heritage, abundant natural resources and prosperous economy make us unique and offer enormous opportunity.

Our booming economy in 2023 once again created a record budget surplus, over \$1.64 billion, with over \$9.21 billion in capital investment and 14,120 jobs. 2022 was equally grand with over \$10 billion in capital investment. Just since 2017, we have announced over \$36.4 billion in new investments and 86,378 new jobs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, South Carolina led the Nation in population growth last year. Also, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, our personal income growth rate ranked 2nd in the country at 4.9% through the third quarter of 2023.

We are firing on all cylinders. South Carolina's tourism industry continued to thrive in 2023, meeting or exceeding the record-breaking tourism growth of earlier years. South Carolina was named as one of the top five golf destinations in the world and best in the country for 2023, according to the International Association of Golf Travel Operators. Ours is the only state in the United States to make this list, sharing recognition with Cyprus, Dubai, Los Cabos and Thailand. This reputation was evidenced in 2023 by the announcement of a new PGA TOUR tournament, the Myrtle Beach Classic, which will debut in May, joining the prestigious RBC Heritage tournament held the month before on Hilton Head Island.

Since 1950, Darlington Raceway, the track "Too Tough to Tame" has provided generations of NASCAR fans with spectacular memories, breathtaking finishes and a lifetime of stories to be told and retold. The

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Mother's Day and Labor Day NASCAR CUP races are South Carolina's largest professional sporting events, generating over \$118 million in economic impact to the state. You have to see it to believe it.

Once again, Charleston was named the #1 City in the South by readers of Southern Living in 2023, and the #1 City in the United States by Travel and Leisure Readers for the 11th year in a row. Hilton Head Island was again named the #1 Island in this year's Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice rankings of the best islands in America. And, Greenville's Unity Park was recognized by Reader's Digest Magazine as one of the "Nicest Places in America."

I would like to recognize several of the businesses which announced their confidence in our people by their substantial capital investment in 2023. If the leaders will stand as I name your company, we will respond when all are standing.

In Richland County, Scout Motors will revitalize an iconic American brand as an all-electric, next-generation truck and rugged SUV with a \$2 billion investment and 4,000 jobs. President and CEO Mr. Scott Keogh. In Chester County, Albemarle Corporation will invest \$1.3 billion, with more than 300 jobs, for a lithium hydroxide processing facility. CEO Mr. Kent Masters. In Sumter County, e-VAC Magnetics' investment of more than a half a billion-dollars and creation of 300 jobs will produce rare earth permanent magnets and will help secure the United States' domestic pipeline for these rare earth magnets, the only such facility in the Western Hemisphere. CEO Mr. Erik Eschen. In Laurens County, ZF Transmissions Grey Court is expanding its operation for the growing and evolving mobility industry with a \$500 million investment and 400 jobs. Vice President and Plant Manager Mr. Tobias Brugger. In York County, Pallidus is relocating its corporate headquarters and semiconductor manufacturing operations to South Carolina with a \$443 million investment and 405 new jobs. Vice President of Global Facilities Mr. Gerald Knowles. In Richland County, Cirba Solutions will build a state-of-the-art flagship operation to produce lithium-ion battery materials with more than 300 new jobs and over \$300 million investment. CEO Mr. David Klanecky. In Spartanburg County, Milo's Tea Company, a family-owned beverage company, will establish operations with a \$130 million investment and 103 new jobs. CEO Mrs. Tricia Wallwork. And also, our Secretary of Commerce, Harry Lightsey, and his remarkable team which worked around the clock to produce these successes. Please stand. We thank all of you. You all made the right decisions. We boomed in 2023 and will boom again in 2024.

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South Carolina is a national leader in advanced manufacturing. And now we are leading the way in the new and innovative electric vehicle and battery manufacturing industry. We are home to four major electric vehicle manufacturers, major international EV battery manufacturers, the nation's largest EV battery recycling facility, and many other industries in the electric vehicle manufacturing supply chain.

Our leadership is displayed in the SC Nexus for Advanced Resilient Energy consortium developed by our Department of Commerce. This consortium was developed in collaboration with our research universities, technical colleges, state agencies, the Savannah River National Laboratory, economic development non-profits, and private businesses. It is the culmination of groundwork laid in prior years through collaborative public-private initiatives. This cooperative spirit produced our EV Working Group, a "one-stop shop" to recruit and assist with electric vehicle investment and manufacturing in the State. It also produced the PowerSC Energy Resources and Economic Development Interagency Working Group. This group leads the effort to coordinate the state's energy stakeholders to ensure that we have the energy necessary to meet the needs of our future.

We know that we will need more. The questions are: how much power will South Carolina need? And how will it be produced and transmitted? Recently SC Nexus won the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's designation as one of the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs, which allows SC Nexus to apply for federal funding. Out of over 400 applications, South Carolina was one of 31 finalists selected. As a federal Tech Hub, SC Nexus will compete for federal grant funding valued between \$40-\$70 million annually. My Executive Budget includes \$15 million to support SC Nexus and serve as the state "match" required for this competition. We are going to win. Also, the demand for a trained EV workforce is outpacing the number of qualified applicants.

Manufacturers like BMW, Mercedes-Benz Vans, Volvo Cars, and Scout Motors will need a highly specialized and trained workforce of almost twenty thousand South Carolinians, and they will need them soon. To meet this demand, my Executive Budget recommends \$50 million to create specialized "EV training institutes" at our technical college campuses.

One thing we do not need is more labor unions. We have gotten where we are without them, and we do not need them now. We are a right to work state. We have the lowest union membership in the country.

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We have worked hard and carefully -- through education, training and business recruitment -- to earn our record prosperity, and we will continue to preserve and enhance it. However, our prosperity -- and that of generations of South Carolinians to come -- face a clear and present danger from the big labor unions. They have crippled and distorted the progress and prosperity of industries and cities in other states. It has taken years, but they have done it. And now, their membership is at an all-time low and falling. So now they are looking at us -- and other booming southeastern states -- none of which want or need labor unions.

In 2021, the International Longshoremen's Association sued maritime shipping carriers for calling on the Port of Charleston's state-of-the-art Leatherman Terminal. Over the past two-and-a-half years, what started as a "secondary boycott" to force the state Ports Authority to cede long-held state jobs to union labor has devolved into a broader threat to our current and future prosperity. Secondary boycotts are illegal. The ILA's secondary boycott was initially rejected but later resurrected by President Biden's appointees on the National Labor Relations Board. We have taken the fight all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which I believe will understand the dire implications of this conduct, uphold the law and rule in our favor.

Our aerospace, vehicle and tire manufacturers are no longer the sole targets for labor organizers. Our thriving hospitality and tourism industry along our coast now finds itself a target. It seems that no business or employee in South Carolina is safe from the disingenuous campaigns and destructive impacts of union infiltration. No one should bargain their prosperity under threats of union boycotts or coercive pressure campaigns. We will not let our state's economy suffer or become collateral damage as labor unions seek to consume new jobs and conscript new dues-paying members. And we will not allow the Biden administration's pro-union policies to chip away at South Carolina's sovereign interests. We will fight. All the way to the gates of hell. And we will win.

State government is in superior fiscal shape. We have the largest rainy day reserve fund balance and the lowest amount of general obligation debt -- than at any other time in recent memory. Once again, I am recommending the General Assembly put additional funds into the state's rainy day fund -- \$54.3 million -- so that the fund maintains a balance of \$1.16 billion which is equal to 10% of this year's General Appropriations Act.

Until a few years ago, South Carolina had the highest personal income tax rate in the southeast and the 12th highest in the Nation -- at 7%. No

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more. Two years ago, I signed into law the largest income tax cut in state history, which will cut the rate to 6% in the next few years. Accordingly, my Executive Budget recognizes this year's \$99 million scheduled cut to the income tax rate, dropping it from 6.4% to 6.3%. The state Board of Economic Advisors will soon issue an updated revenue forecast. If future revenues allow, I ask the General Assembly to speed up the income tax cut schedule, and let taxpayers keep even more of their own money.

As we seek prosperity through our expanding economy, we must constantly be alert to detect, avoid and remove obstacles to its health and vitality. Our laws and regulations provide guidelines to that prosperity, and our civil justice system provides enforcement of these guidelines and redress for injury. Yet, our rules on joint and several liability have introduced an element of uncertainty into our business arena and uncertainty is the enemy of sound business. We must find a common-sense formula which will provide accountability and just compensation without damaging our economy.

We must also ensure that the public has confidence in our state's judges. Circumstances and events continue to raise questions. It is past time to provide full transparency and accountability to the magisterial selection process, which provides the bulk of our judges, over 300 in number. Our constitution provides that the governor appoints magistrates, subject to the Senate's advice and consent. I have instituted a new procedure requiring magisterial candidates to complete more detailed applications and to waive confidentiality protections for -- and to authorize the release of records related to -- any attorney or judicial disciplinary proceedings. This application and screening process closely aligns with the processes used by Senate committees when scrutinizing statewide appointments submitted by the governor, and also by those of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission when evaluating judicial candidates for election by the General Assembly.

As for our circuit and appellate courts, South Carolina is one of two states where the legislature chooses the judges by election. Being unique in itself signifies neither good nor bad: it is the confidence in the process that counts. The people are watching not only how the General Assembly screens and selects judges but also whom the General Assembly elects to these critical positions. The Rule of Law is a cornerstone of our society and our constitutional republic. We need judges who understand the proper judicial role, who appreciate our constitutional structure, and who interpret the law as it is written, rather than as they wish it were written. As the U.S. Supreme Court rightly

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begins to return issues and authority to the States that were never granted to the federal government to begin with, it is essential that the General Assembly elect qualified, intelligent jurists who can carefully analyze the important and challenging questions that will be raised with increasing frequency in our state courts.

To properly provide for a separate and independent Judiciary, the currently unrepresented Executive Branch should play a role in selecting judicial candidates before the General Assembly exercises its constitutional authority to elect judges. I suggest that our Founding Fathers prescribed a method for judicial selection that has served our Nation well and with which our people are quite familiar. Gubernatorial appointment of all judges, with the advice and consent of the state Senate, requires no “re-invention of the wheel,” will inspire the confidence of our people, and will encourage more excellent attorneys to seek public service.

Our state’s roads, bridges, highways, and interstates are the arteries of our prosperity. Our rapid growth is outpacing their capacities. Continued big, bold, and transformative investments are imperative. The 2023 SCDOT Annual Accountability Report highlights the need to repair, rehabilitate, and rebuild many of the nearly 9,000 bridges on our primary and secondary roads. Some are over eighty years old and showing it. Some are in such a state of disrepair that the required restrictions render them useless for commercial trucking, school buses, or fire trucks. Accordingly, I recommend \$500 million in surplus funds from the Homestead Exemption Fund be appropriated to the South Carolina Department of Transportation for emergency bridge replacement and repairs. That will keep us moving.

As you know, after nearly 30 years of service to the State of South Carolina, Christy A. Hall, the Secretary of the South Carolina Department of Transportation, has announced her retirement. Secretary Hall will be remembered as one of the greatest transportation secretaries in state history. Her unparalleled expertise and relentless work ethic has allowed the department to flourish under her leadership. Whether responding to natural disasters or spearheading transformative infrastructure projects, she has consistently delivered for the people of South Carolina. She thinks ahead and leaves a legacy of excellence. She has placed the agency in a position to continue driving our state forward for years to come. Highlights of her career with SCDOT include restoring the agency’s finances and financial reputation, developing and leading our strategic ten-year plan, and accelerating critical interstate widening projects. Secretary Hall has been recognized for her ability to

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work with industry partners to deliver results on major infrastructure projects. In addition, she has helped lead our state through a number of disasters including the floods of 2015, Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Florence. Under her leadership and in partnership with law enforcement, South Carolina executed its first fully successful interstate lane reversal during a coastal evacuation. Madam Secretary, will you please stand and be recognized.

I ask again the question: What will South Carolina look like in one hundred years? South Carolina's mountains, beaches, sea islands, lakes, and marshes are among the most beautiful in the nation. This land, as noted by the explorers for kings and queens, is lush, fertile, and brimming with abundance, flora and fauna. Our incomparable cultural and environmental heritage distinguishes our state and people from others. And all possess a strength and beauty we must never lose. Fortunately, economic growth and the preservation of our shared heritage are not opposing objectives which must be balanced as in a competition, one against the other. Instead, they are complementary, intertwined, and inseparable, each dependent on the other. To strengthen one is to strengthen the other. We cannot allow our state's culturally and environmentally significant structures, monuments, lands, islands, and waters to be overcome by development, mismanagement, flooding, erosion, or storm damage. It is our duty to preserve and protect our history, our culture and our environment, and the public's access to them, before they are lost forever. We have a veritable army of people, and public and private organizations dedicated to these goals.

You may well remember the cautionary lyrics of singer and songwriter Joni Mitchell. *"Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got till it's gone. They paved paradise and put up a parking lot."* Accordingly, I am recommending that \$33 million be appropriated to identify and preserve culturally or environmentally significant properties, disaster recovery and flooding mitigation efforts as well as beach renourishment projects along our coast.

Education is the universal key to a prosperous, happy future. Thus, working together, we must continue to invest in public education; the positive impact of these investments is growing. Enrollment in our full-day, four-year-old kindergarten program for children in poverty continues to grow with 17,437 children now enrolled in a public school, private school, or childcare center. For the next school year, an additional 2,500 children are expected to enroll in the program. My Executive Budget includes \$21.1 million to meet this increase in enrollment. This program is increasing the number of children who enter kindergarten

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ready to learn. Approximately 41% of children who participate in a full-day, four-year-old kindergarten program are ready for kindergarten as compared to 27% of children in poverty who do not participate in the program. In September of 2023 the South Carolina Department of Education released the results of the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments in reading and mathematics for school year 2022-23. For the first time in recent history, at least half of students in grades three through eight met or exceeded grade level standards in reading. This is good news, but it's not nearly enough. We must continue to invest in early literacy and professional development in the science of reading. This will ensure that all children can be reading on grade level by the end of third grade. We know that students who cannot read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

Unfortunately, the assessment results revealed that only 41% of students in grades three through eight in school year 2022-23 met or exceeded grade level standards in mathematics. Therefore, my Executive Budget recommends an additional \$10 million to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics. In addition, this Executive Budget provides \$30 million for the Education Scholarship Trust Fund. Starting this year, these funds will allow low-income parents to choose the type of education environment and instruction that best suits their child's unique needs.

Regarding teachers, we must continue our remarkable progress to raise teacher pay. In school year 2017-18, the minimum starting salary of a teacher in South Carolina was \$30,113. Today, it is \$42,500. My Executive Budget increases the starting pay for teachers to \$45,000 for the next school year. My goal is that by 2026 the minimum starting salary of a teacher will be at least – at least - \$50,000. In school year 2017-18, the average teacher salary was \$50,182, well below the southeastern average. In school year 2022-23, the average teacher salary was \$57,737, exceeding the southeastern average and a fifteen percent increase over five years. That is good news.

South Carolina is also making significant progress in providing school-based mental health services to school-aged children. In January of 2022, I directed the Department of Health and Human Services to perform a comprehensive review and analysis of the school mental health services program at the Department of Mental Health. Within four months, HHS produced a review of the program and seven recommendations for removing barriers that existed to accessing quality mental health services in our schools. These recommendations were

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enacted on July 1, 2022, and produced a public-private partnership that offered schools more choice and control in accessing school-based mental health services for their students. Health and Human Services also conducted a survey at the start of the current school year to determine the availability of school-based mental health services in South Carolina. The survey showed that the number of school-based mental health counselors available for public schools has doubled from 600 in January of 2022 to 1,209 in September 2023. The ratio was one counselor for 1,300 students then, to one for 653 now. The survey also showed that students at more than 200 additional schools now have access to mental health counseling and that all 73 of our traditional school districts now have access to mental health counseling.

We also know that access and affordability to higher education for every South Carolinian is essential to ensuring that we have the trained and skilled workforce to successfully compete for jobs and investment in the future and meet all economic challenges. Therefore, this marks the fifth year in a row that I have asked the General Assembly to freeze college tuition for in-state students, with an appropriation to our institutions of higher education of \$49.8 million. This represents a 4.5 percent increase as defined by the Higher Education Price Index. I am also requesting \$95 million in lottery funds to South Carolina Workforce Industry Needs Scholarships through the South Carolina Technical College System.

Despite the high demand for skills, training, and knowledge, many institutions across the nation are seeing declining enrollments. To address these challenges, I have proposed funding for the Education Oversight Committee -- a nonpartisan committee composed of legislators, educators, and business representatives -- to oversee a systemic review of our state's 33 public institutions of higher education. This study will provide a systemic review, including an assessment of any advantages that are offered in consolidating schools or programs, or re-evaluate the courses, degrees and certificates that are offered at our public colleges and universities. The goal is to make sure we are meeting our state's future workforce needs.

Also, I propose providing \$80 million so that every South Carolinian who qualifies for federal need-based financial aid as measured by federal Pell Grants -- has sufficient state financial assistance to attend any in-state public college, university, or technical college. Students at private, independent, and historically black colleges and universities will receive an additional \$20 million for tuition grants and assistance. Recently we learned that the Commission on Higher Education had approximately

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\$151.7 million in surplus lottery funds that had not been used for college scholarships. My Executive Budget recommends allocating those excess funds for additional need-based grants or to pay for an extra semester of LIFE, HOPE or Palmetto Fellow scholarships. These one-time funds should incentivize students to complete their undergraduate degree and enter the workforce sooner.

My Executive Budget also provides \$44 million for deferred maintenance and health and safety upgrades at our four-year comprehensive institutions, two-year branch campuses of the University of South Carolina, and our technical colleges. In addition, I am proposing a \$34 million appropriation for campus infrastructure resiliency at the Medical University of South Carolina, a second \$70 million installment for the College of Veterinary Medicine at Clemson University, and a \$35 million investment for the Health Sciences Campus at the University of South Carolina. My Executive Budget also proposes \$1 million for operations and security for the Anne Frank Center and \$1 million for the Center for Civil Rights History and Research, both at USC. And finally for education, I propose continued funding of \$20 million for the Battelle Alliance, a collaborative nuclear sciences research partnership between the University of South Carolina, Clemson University, South Carolina State University, and the Savannah River National Laboratory. Truly, we must have the strongest focus on education we can muster if we are going to succeed.

Our COVID-19 experience revealed that a mental health crisis existed in South Carolina. What wasn't clear was just how bad it was. That's why two years ago, I directed Health and Human Services Director Robby Kerr to initiate an immediate review of our State's behavioral health funding and delivery system. It became clear from Director Kerr's efforts that the time had come to modernize and restructure South Carolina's siloed healthcare delivery agencies: the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Environmental Control, among others. The restructuring of these agencies is and will continue to be a complicated legal and financial endeavor, involving billions of dollars in federal funding that flow through these agencies for a myriad of services and programs such as Medicaid.

Last year, my Executive Budget and the General Appropriations Act directed the Department of Administration to procure the professional expertise necessary to analyze and provide the General Assembly with a comprehensive plan to restructure these agencies, consolidating and privatizing services where possible.

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The prestigious Boston Consulting Group was hired and has provided their initial report. Unfortunately, their analysis confirmed what many of us had feared -- and much worse. According to their report, South Carolina has the most fragmented health and human service delivery system in the nation. As a result, 77% of our state's young people with major depressive episodes do not receive mental health treatment, according to Mental Health America. This ranks lowest in the country. Our citizens and families are suffering as a result of this dysfunction. With little to no coordination between the relevant agencies, South Carolinians seeking assistance are forced to navigate through a confusing landscape of offices, agencies, and officials as they seek help for a loved one or dependent. Too often they fall through the cracks of a system that does not coordinate, communicate or collaborate. The time has come for dramatic restructuring: for the consolidation and streamlining of these agencies into one single cabinet agency. One that will develop a strategic plan and operational approach to improve the quality, accountability and delivery of health and human services to the citizens of our state -- as the Boston Consulting Group has recommended. This will require us to reimagine how the state provides access to crisis mental health care, physical health care, substance abuse services, disability and special needs services and assistance to the elderly and at-risk. I implore you: Let this legislative session be remembered for the creation of the most effective, efficient and professional health and human service delivery system in our history.

Our state law enforcement and criminal justice agencies have begun to stem the tide of personnel loss with recruitment and retention pay raises provided in the previous two General Appropriations Acts. I propose that we build on this success, by providing an additional \$17.8 million for recruitment and retention pay raises in FY 2024-2025. Invaluable experience should not be allowed to walk out the door. I am also once again proposing a \$2,000 state income tax credit for every active-duty law enforcement officer, firefighter, first responder, and emergency medical technician employed by a public entity. Additionally, this budget maintains a proviso suspending the \$10,000 retirement cap for anyone enrolled in the Police Officer Retirement System. This will allow retired officers to return to work and fill existing vacancies.

Placing an armed, certified school resource officer in every school, in every county, all day, every day, has been one of my top priorities. At my request, the General Assembly began providing funds to hire more resource officers for our state's 1,284 public schools. The grant program

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has been very successful and has more than doubled the number of officers assigned to a school, going from 406 in 2018 to 1,109 in 2023. I am recommending an additional \$13.4 million to add officers in each of the remaining 175 schools currently without an assigned SRO.

Animal fighting, especially dog fighting, is one of the cruelest criminal activities in our society. Law officers estimate that most of the people participating in this barbaric activity have long criminal records. In September 2022, a SLED agent was dedicated to combating animal fighting and working in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies. Shortly thereafter, the agent helped execute one of the “biggest takedowns of a dogfighting operation in South Carolina history,” according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office. This Executive Budget expands upon this success by recommending \$566,000 to hire three additional SLED agents dedicated to animal fighting.

In July 2023, the South Carolina Department of Corrections began utilizing a process that allows mobile phone providers to permanently disable contraband phones and devices. They are detected by a certified contraband interdiction system approved by the Federal Communications Commission. To date, over 875 phones and devices have been disabled at Lee Correctional Institution. My Executive Budget recommends \$23 million to expand this valuable program to each prison in our State. Our law enforcement officers know who the repeat criminals are. They commit over eighty percent of the crimes. Unfortunately, this is happening every day. How long are we going to let this happen?

Law enforcement needs our help. They need stronger laws to keep illegal guns out of the hands of criminals and juveniles, and they need new laws to “close the revolving door” and keep career criminals behind bars and not out on bond. Currently, there are no graduated criminal penalties for illegal gun possession in state law. That means the penalty is the same – small – no matter how many times the criminal gets caught. This provides no deterrent. Graduated felony penalties, with no bond, will help keep repeat criminals behind bars and not out on bail where they can -- and will -- commit more crimes. During the last year, I have continually called on this General Assembly to act, to simply take a vote, and pass graduated criminal penalties for illegal gun possession so that I can sign it into law. And during this last year, it has become an almost daily occurrence for an innocent South Carolinians to be shot or shot at by a career criminal who should be behind bars instead of roaming our streets with virtual impunity.

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Ladies and Gentlemen, this new law will require no appropriation -- no money -- except whatever it costs to feed these killers while they rest peacefully behind bars. Joining us today is South Carolina Highway Patrol Lance Corporal B.A. Frazier. Around 3:30 am on April 16, 2023, Trooper Frazier was on duty and initiated a traffic stop after witnessing a vehicle traveling at high speed on U.S. Highway 78 in Bamberg County. As a Bamberg County Sheriff's Deputy arrived to assist, Trooper Frazier was shot by the suspect. Both officers returned fire as the suspect sped away. Following a long chase, the suspect crashed into a home in Branchville. Video from the body and dash cameras of the incident is hard to watch. Trooper Frazier's professionalism and composure while under fire and getting shot in the face -- was remarkable. He embodies the best of the Highway Patrol, and South Carolina law enforcement. The gun that was used to shoot Trooper Frazier? According to the State Law Enforcement Division, it was a stolen gun. The assailant? Derrick Edwards Gathers, according to SLED, was a 22 year repeat offender who was out on bond on charges in the state of Georgia. Gathers long rap sheet includes numerous charges and convictions for trespass, robbery, assault and battery, dealing drugs, rape, criminal sexual conduct, and 7 charges for criminal possession of a firearm. This career criminal should have been behind bars and not behind the wheel of a car in South Carolina. Trooper Frazier is here with us this evening. Trooper Frazier please stand so that we may recognize you.

So, I ask you, again, send me a bill with graduated criminal penalties for illegal gun possession. I will sign it into law. Let's get these career criminals behind bars and save the lives of our people. When our people are safe -- they thrive.

In closing, to the members of the General Assembly, I say let us continue our successful partnership, one that has been based on communication, collaboration, and cooperation. Let us embrace civility and comity through our thoughts, our deeds, and our words -- and urge our people, especially the young people, to be proud of their State. And let us set our State on a course that will provide the opportunity for prosperity, success, and happiness for generations of South Carolinians. The best is yet to come. May God continue to bless America, and our Great State of South Carolina.

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The purpose of the Joint Assembly having been accomplished, the PRESIDENT declared it adjourned, whereupon the Senate returned to its Chamber and was called to order by the PRESIDENT.

LOCAL APPOINTMENT

Confirmation

Having received a favorable report from the Senate, the following appointment was confirmed in open session:

Reappointment, Richland County Magistrate, with the term to commence April 30, 2023, and to expire April 30, 2027

Sandra A. Sutton, 1 Richmond Lane, Blythewood, SC 29016-9088

Motion Adopted

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

MOTION ADOPTED

On motion of Senators MASSEY, SETZLER and GARRETT, with unanimous consent, the Senate stood adjourned out of respect to the memory of Ms. Jennifer Brooke Wingate of Lexington, S.C. Jennifer graduated from Newberry College and was a well-loved band director and girls' soccer coach at Saluda County High School. Jennifer genuinely touched the lives of everyone she knew and will forever be remembered.

and

MOTION ADOPTED

On motion of Senator STEPHENS, with unanimous consent, the Senate stood adjourned out of respect to the memory of Ms. Daisy Brown of St. George, S.C. Daisy was a faithful member of the Greater Bush Grove M.B. Church where she sang in the choir, was an usher and cooked. She enjoyed Sunday School and Bible study. Daisy was a loving mother and doting grandmother who will be dearly missed.

and

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MOTION ADOPTED

On motion of Senator STEPHENS, with unanimous consent, the Senate stood adjourned out of respect to the memory of McKinley Brown of Saint George, S.C. McKinley was a beloved member of his family and community who will be dearly missed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:03 P.M., on motion of Senator MASSEY, the Senate adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11:00 A.M.

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