

# ALERTS

## South Carolina Legislative Report - May 3, 2013

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### *On the Floor*

#### **Ethics Reform**

The House ethics reform bill, H. 3945 was debated and approved this week. The legislation is aimed at strengthening the state's current ethics laws governing elected officials and lobbyists. The measure calls for more income disclosure, reporting of pre-election political donations and extends regulation of lobbying to local governments. The measure was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee for consideration.

#### **Public Service Commission - Elections**

On Wednesday, the House and Senate met in a joint assembly to elect commissioners to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. The following individuals were elected to serve.

- Seat 1: John E. "Butch Howard, Incumbent
- Seat 3: Comer H. "Randy" Randall
- Seat 5: Swain E. Whitfield, Incumbent
- Seat 7: Gordon "O'Neal" Hamilton, Incumbent

#### **Medicaid Nursing Home Permits**

This week the House of Representatives passed H. 3978 and sent it to the Senate for consideration. The legislation amends the definition of a "Medicaid Permit Day," specifies how additional permit days may be allotted and sets compliance standards and penalties for violations. It was referred to the Senate Medical Affairs Committee.

#### **Patient Information Disclosure**

H. 3366 was given third reading this week by the House of Representatives and sent to the Senate for consideration. The legislation, as amended, requires a health care provider to give patients the opportunity to authorize the disclosure of information to designated individuals and authorize their involvement in the patient's treatment.

#### **First Steps to School Readiness - Reauthorization**

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H. 4020, a joint resolution to reauthorize the First Steps to School Readiness Act for one year was adopted by the House of Representatives and sent to the Senate for consideration.

**Physician Assistant Practice Act**

S. 448, the Senate approved modifications to the South Carolina Physician Assistant Practice Act, which proposes to improve the ratio of physician assistants to physicians and increase the distance authorized for off-site supervision. The bill was referred to the House Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs Committee. The House companion bill, H. 3618, was passed the House last week and is in the Senate Medical Affairs Committee for consideration.

**Closed Health Insurance Plans**

S. 530, was approved by the Senate this week and referred to the House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee. The bill proposes to remove the requirement that certain employers that offer closed health insurance plans must also offer point-of-service options and increases the allowable difference for coinsurance percentages for covered services under a point-of-service option. The House companion, H. 3818, is on the House floor for consideration.

**Introductions of Note**

H 4095 - Truth In Health Financing and Responsible Consumer Health Care Act

S. 662 - Electronic monitoring for resident's rooms in a long term care facility

**House of Representative on Furlough**

The House of Representatives will be on furlough next week and resume session on Tuesday May 14<sup>th</sup> at noon. The Senate will continue to meet on the regular schedule.

***In Committee*****Appropriations**

The Senate Finance committee approved its version of H. 3710 and H. 3711, the annual appropriations bill and capital reserve fund. The 6.3 billion dollar spending plan approved by the Senate includes a 1% pay raise for state employees, increases funds for hiring law enforcement officers and expands 4K in some of the state's poorest school districts. Like the House version, the Senate did not include any provisions to expand Medicaid coverage as provided for under the federal Affordable Care Act, instead choose to keep the state-based alternatives that would subsidize rural health clinics and incentivize outcome-based performance by hospitals. The budget will be up for consideration on the floor of the Senate in two weeks.

**Transportation Funding**

A Senate Finance Special Subcommittee on Transportation Funding advanced a series of proposals this week that addresses transportation and infrastructure needs in the state. Included in the proposals were indexing the state's gasoline tax that would raise it to 20 cents per gallon over 10 years, an increase in fees on cars, trucks and licenses as well as setting aside \$70 million per year from the general fund to allow for borrowing \$500 million for road and bridge repair.

***In The News*****Nikki Haley Names Cheryl Stanton to Lead SCDEW**

Gov. Nikki Haley has picked Cheryl Stanton to lead the state's unemployment agency. Thursday, Haley announced Stanton as her pick to be director of the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce.

**Sen. Ford accused of altering campaign documents**

The Senate Ethics Committee has accused state Sen. Robert Ford of intentionally altering documents as the legislative panel reviewed his campaign records. The committee added the allegation Thursday to its complaint against the Charleston Democrat. The amended complaint was signed by 10 of his colleagues.

**Poll: Sanford, Colbert Busch tied in South Carolina**

Former South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford (R) and businesswoman Elizabeth Colbert Busch (D) are tied in their House race with just days until the election, according to a new poll.

**2016 presidential race gets off to its SC start**

A little more than a year after the last presidential primary in South Carolina, the next one gets an unofficial start Friday night. Vice President Joe Biden and Republican U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas - two presumed 2016 White House hopefuls - are the keynote speakers at the state's annual Democratic and Republican fundraising dinners in Columbia.

***Meetings*****Tuesday, May 7th**

- 3:00 pm -- Gressette Room 308 -- Judiciary Subcommittee

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### Wednesday, May 8th

- 9:00 am -- Gressette Room 207 -- L.C.I. Professions and Occupations Subcommittee
- 10:00 am -- Gressette Room 209 -- Education Committee
- 11:00 am -- Gressette Room 408 -- Banking and Insurance Subcommittee
- 11:00 am -- Gressette Room 307 -- Judiciary Subcommittee on S.513
- 11:00 am -- Gressette Room 207 -- Judiciary Subcommittee

### Thursday, May 9th

- 9:00 am - Gressette Room 308 - Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee
- 10:00 am -- Gressette Room 209 -- Judiciary Subcommittee on H.3491