

ALERTS

South Carolina Legislative Update - December 12, 2014

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Prefiled Legislation

The Senate finished their prefiling this week on December 10 and the House prefiled over 180 bills on December 11. Highlights from this week's prefiles include measures related to: ethics reform, heirs property, human trafficking, child safety, environmental protection, off-shore wind, shortening the legislative session, elimination of corporate tax and other tax reform measures, economic development incentives, and regulation reform.

The House will prefile again on December 18 and the entire General Assembly will convene January 13, 2015.

In The News

SC House panel: Let State Ethics Commission investigate lawmakers

All ethics complaints against S.C. lawmakers would be investigated by a restructured S.C. Ethics Commission as part of a proposal passed by a House ethics panel Tuesday. A separate proposal, adopted by the panel, clearly defines some ethics violations as crimes, removing confusion about whether violations - including using campaign money for personal expenses - are crimes or civil violations.

Ethics, gas tax top SC Senate's early agenda

Round 2 of a showdown over ethics reform and various proposals to fix the state's crumbling roads are among state senators' upcoming legislative priorities. Bills dealing with both issues were among more than 170 filed Wednesday - the first day that senators could introduce proposals before the January start of the next two-year session.

Florence Republican resigns from House, citing family concerns

State Rep. Kris Crawford, R-Florence, resigned his seat Tuesday, citing family reasons. Crawford, the full-time medical director of a hospital emergency room, said he was stepping down from his District 63 seat to spend more time with his family. "My kids have gotten a lot bigger. I didn't realize how hard it would be to go back this time," Crawford said, adding his children were "not in favor" of him serving another term and "are certainly old enough to have a say in it."

Republicans may scramble for Crawford's seat

Former state Rep. Kris Crawford, R-Florence, defeated several challengers over the eight years he represented District 63. Now his seat is up for grabs, and some Republicans are salivating at the possibility of

snagging the office many saw for years as off limits.

Dates set for House District 63 election

The State Election Commission has confirmed dates for the S.C. House District 63 special election that will take place on April 14. The filing period is supposed to start Dec. 26, but the office of the County Voter Registration and Election Commission will be closed for the Christmas holiday. The office will be reopened Dec. 28 and filing will end at noon on Jan. 5. Anyone in the district wishing to vote in the primary, possible runoff and election needs to be registered by Jan. 24. The primary will be held on Feb. 24 and a runoff will be March 10 if needed.

Forecast: Economic, job growth expected to remain stable in SC in 2015

South Carolinians overall can expect to see more money in their pockets next year, two USC economists predicted Wednesday, but not necessarily due to higher wages.

Gov. Haley changing communications staff

Gov. Nikki Haley's office announced a shakeup in its communications operations Thursday, adding three members from her campaign staff. Rob Godfrey, the governor's former spokesman and deputy campaign manager, will re-join Haley's office as deputy chief of staff for communications and external affairs. He joined the governor on a 10-day trade mission to India last month. Chaney Adams, who was Haley's campaign spokeswoman, will become the governor's press secretary. The governor's office did not release details about the role of current communications director Doug Mayer. Zach Pippin, who was paid by the Haley campaign to shoot videos, will move to the governor's office as director of digital media. Democrats complained about Pippin flying on the state plane in 2013, but the S.C. Ethics Commission found no violations. The changes take effect Monday.

Gov. Haley names new licensing and regulation director

Gov. Nikki Haley appointed an agency lieutenant Monday to head the state department that oversees professional licensing and workplace and fire safety. Richele Taylor has succeeded Holly Pisarik as director of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. Taylor was named LLR's deputy director of administration this year after a 14-year legal career, most recently with Fisher & Phillips.

New speaker's political savvy springs from small town roots

While growing up in a small Pee Dee town, Jay Lucas stuttered severely, not exactly a confidence-building experience on his way to becoming one of South Carolina's most powerful politicians. "I had a fear of speaking in public," the newly elected S.C. House speaker said last week. "It threw my timing in life off."

Greenville Editorial: Lucas off to a good start in House

Newly elected House Speaker Jay Lucas seems to be the right person at the right time in this state's history for a difficult job. The Darlington Republican was elected to the state House of Representative's top position last week after serving on an interim basis in this powerful position since Rep. Bobby Harrell suspended himself from the job in mid-September when he was indicted on multiple charges for illegally spending tens of thousands of dollars from his campaign account on personal expenses.

Meeting Schedule

Monday, December 15

- 9:30 am -- Blatt Room 516 -- Ethics and Freedom of Information Act Study Committee
- 1:00 pm -- Blatt Room 433 -- Education Oversight Committee
- 2:00 pm -- Blatt Room 521 -- Legislative Oversight Committee

Tuesday, December 16

- 10:00 am -- Blatt Room 110 -- Senate Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee
 1. Department of Social Services
- 10:00 am -- Blatt Room 318 -- Block Grants Committee of the SC Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program (Education Oversight Committee)

Wednesday, December 17

- 1:00 pm -- Blatt Room 403 -- Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on S.3
 1. S.3 - Criminal Domestic Violence

Thursday, December 18

- 10:00 am -- Blatt Room 403 -- Joint Bonds Study Committee
- 1:00 pm -- Blatt Room 110 -- First Steps Study Committee

Friday, December 19

- 11:00 am -- Blatt Room 321 -- Ways and Means Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Subcommittee
 1. Administrative Law Court
 2. State Law Enforcement Division
 3. Prosecution Coordination Commission