

ALERTS

South Carolina Legislative Update - February 20, 2015

February 20, 2015

The House of Representatives adopted several ethics reform measures (public meeting notice, Freedom of Information Act/public records, and public official reporting requirements) this week. In addition, the House Ways and Means Committee adopted their version of the FY15-16 state appropriations bill (\$6.9 billion general fund revenue) and approved a bond measure authorizing the borrowing of up to \$500 million for buildings and infrastructure improvement.

The Senate continued debating a bill prohibiting persons convicted of criminal domestic violence from possessing a firearm. Additionally, the Senate approved revisions to the licensure requirements for accountants, revisions to the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Practice Act, and an update to the South Carolina Code of Laws regarding references to the Internal Revenue Code and year 2014.

Introductions

To view this week's introductions in the Senate, please click [here](#), and [here](#) for the House.

In The News

Cell phone service fees advance in the SC senate

Amid objections from major cellphone carriers Verizon Wireless, Sprint and others, a Senate subcommittee Thursday moved forward a bill that would extend a state universal landline service fee to cellphone users in South Carolina. The cellphone carriers estimate 4.5 million cellphone users in the state could see their monthly bills rise by 1 percent to 2 percent if the legislation becomes law, but proponents, including major telecommunications company AT&T and senior advocate AARP, contended sharing the fee among all phone users is the only fair way forward. Read more [here](#).

Sparring over remarks hits SC Senate floor

South Carolina's lone female state senator had a message for women Tuesday as she responded to a male colleague's apology for an offensive remark. "(Y)ou will experience roadblocks and challenges," state Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, said from the Senate's podium. "Don't be discouraged. Don't give up. "And don't you dare let anyone tell you that you are less than what you are. We need you to help solve the problems we face. South Carolina needs you to step up and lead." The first-term senator's comments came immediately after state Sen. Tom Corbin, R-Greenville, took the Senate's podium to apologize to Shealy for offending her over dinner at a Columbia restaurant last week. "At the time, we were all talking and laughing about a myriad of topics," Corbin said. "(I)n jest, I repeated an old joke I had heard. "I realize now that it offended one of our members," Corbin said, directing a public apology to Shealy. Read more [here](#).

Senate bill would oust SC State trustees

Calls for changing the leadership at financially troubled S.C. State University keep growing. State Senate leaders Thursday joined the movement, led by the S.C. House of Representatives, to oust the trustees of the state's only historically black public college. Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, introduced a bill to replace the Orangeburg school's trustees and hand over its control to a temporary five-member board, appointed by the governor, and House and Senate leaders. S.C. State's new trustees would be required to have finance, higher education administration or public administration experience. The board would run the school until June 30, 2018, when new trustees would be elected by the General Assembly. Read more [here](#).

House budget panel approves borrowing \$500 million for projects

House budget writers Thursday approved borrowing nearly \$500 million for building and infrastructure projects. The proposal - 15 years after the General Assembly last approved borrowing money for building and infrastructure projects - includes money for projects at S.C. universities and technical colleges. It also includes \$50 million for K-12 education, money that does not have a defined purpose. House Ways and Means Committee chairman Brian White, R-Anderson, described the K-12 money as a placeholder. Read more [here](#).

'Nothing to hide': SC senators grill DHEC nominee

Democratic state senators repeatedly asked Thursday how a close friend and campaign donor to Republican Gov. Nikki Haley ended up the sole candidate to run the state's health and environmental agency. For four hours, Eleanor Kitzman, that friend and donor, responded to those questions and others, including inquiries into financial and legal dust-ups, her lack of expertise in health and environmental issues, the circumstances behind her leaving jobs working for two governors and why she had to change answers on a questionnaire about her personal and work history. The hearing, which will resume Tuesday at 4 p.m., was Kitzman's first public appearance before the Senate Medical Affairs Committee. Read more [here](#).

SC senators grill transportation secretary on how much is needed for road repairs

State senators grilled state Transportation Secretary Janet Oakley on Wednesday about the amount of money needed to fix the state's crumbling roads. Senators asked Oakley if the state really needs an added \$1.5 billion a year through 2040 - the amount a Transportation Department study says is needed to repair, maintain and expand the state's roads. "I stand by the results of that study," Oakley said, adding that figure represents the state's total road needs. But Oakley also told senators she supports Republican Gov. Nikki Haley's roads plan, which would raise less - \$400 million a year - for roads, primarily by increasing the state's 16.75-cent-a-gallon gas tax by 10 cents over three years. Read more [here](#).

Vice President Biden, in Columbia, pushes \$478 billion federal spending plan for roads

Vice President Joe Biden stopped in Columbia on Wednesday to tout federal legislation that would pump nearly \$500 billion into transportation infrastructure and workforce development. The Democrat appeared with U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Columbia, and Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin at Owen Steel. Touting the "Grow America Act" - a \$478 billion spending plan that would span six years - Biden said the United States ranks 28th in the world in infrastructure investment. "We shouldn't rank 28th in the world in anything that needs to be done for a country." Read more [here](#).

Meeting Schedule

Monday, February 23

- 1:00 pm -- Blatt Room 110 -- Education Policy Review and Reform Task Force

Tuesday, February 24

- 9:30 am -- Blatt Room 110 -- Education and Cultural Subcommittee of the Legislative Oversight Committee
- 10:00 am -- Blatt Room 511 -- Executive Subcommittee of the Legislative Oversight Committee
- 10:00 am -- Gressette Room 105 -- Joint Bond Review Committee
- 11:00 am -- Blatt Room 112 -- Majority Caucus
- 11:00 am -- Blatt Room 305 -- Minority Caucus
- 12:00 pm -- State House, House Chamber -- House of Representatives
- 12:00 pm -- State House, Senate Chamber -- Senate
- Upon adjournment of the House -- Blatt Room 305 -- Minority Caucus
- Upon adjournment of the House -- Blatt Room 112 -- Majority Caucus
- 1:30 pm -- State House, 3rd Floor Conference Room -- Higher Education Subcommittee

I. S. 475 - SC State University

- 2:30 pm or 1 hours after the House adjourns -- Blatt Room 516 -- Judiciary Committee

I. H. 3522 - Infant Safe Havens

II. H. 3099 - Tort Claims Act Exemptions

III. H. 3190 - FOIA Exemptions

IV. H. 3576 - Youth Sports Organizations

V. S. 177 - Procedure for Certification of Foreign and Domestic Records

- 3:00 pm -- Gressette Room 105 -- Judiciary Committee

I. S. 398 - Magistrates Eligibility Examination

II. S. 304 - Contracts to Buy Power

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III. S. 255 - Destruction of Booking and Arrest Records

IV. S. 277 - State Telecom Equity in Funding Act

V. S. 48 - Study Committee on Racial Profiling

- **3:00 pm** -- Gressette Room 308 -- Finance Committee

I. S. 212 - Property Tax Assessment of Boats

II. S. 375 - Local Government Surplus Funds Deposits

III. S. 379 - County Tax Officials

- **4:00 pm** -- Gressette Room 308 -- Medical Affairs Committee

I. Ms. Eleanor L. Kitzmen, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Wednesday, February 25

- **8:00 am - 10:00 am** -- Blatt Room 112 -- Legislative Breakfast - Community Associations Institution

- **8:30 am** -- Blatt Room 108 -- South Carolina Tree Farmers Association

- **8:30 am** -- Blatt Room 321 -- College of Charleston

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 318 -- Legislative Group (Rep. Ralph Kennedy)

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 317 -- Legislative Group (Rep. Shannon Riley)

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 305 -- South Carolina Primary Health Care Association

- **9:00 am** -- Gressette Room 209 -- Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee

I. PEBA - State Health Plan

II. Department of Mental Health

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 110 -- Procurement Review Panel

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 403 -- L.C.I. Real Estate Subcommittee on H.3662

I. H. 3662 - Automatic Residential Fire Sprinklers for Homes

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 511 -- Judiciary Special Laws Subcommittee

I. H. 3305 - Unemployment Benefits

II. H. 3039 - Dilapidated Building Act

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III. H. 3430 - Tires

- **9:15 am** -- Blatt Room 403 -- L.C.I. Administration and Regulations Subcommittee
- **9:30 am** -- Gressette Room 207 -- K-12 Education Subcommittee

I. S. 437 - James Edwards Civics Education Initiative

- **10:00 am** -- Gressette Room 408 -- Finance Constitutional Subcommittee
- **10:00 am** -- Gressette Room 207 -- Education Committee

I. S. 475 - SC State University Board of Trustees

II. S. 320 - Comprehensive Health Education Program

III. S. 437 - James Edward Civics Education Committee

- **10:00 am** -- Gressette Room 105 -- Judiciary Subcommittee on S.13 and S.18

I. S. 13 - SC Common Interests Community Association Act

II. S. 18 - SC Homeowners Protection Act

- **10:30 am** -- Gressette Room 209 -- Senate General Committee
- **11:00 am** -- Gressette Room 307 -- Medical Affairs Subcommittee on Regulations and on S.413 and S.466

I. S. 413 - Pharmacists

II. S. 466 - Optometrists

- **11:00 am** -- Gressette Room 308 -- Banking and Insurance Committee on Appointments, on S.361, S.389 and S.441

I. S. 361 - Business Development Corporations

II. S. 389 - Driving Training Courses

III. S. 441 - Guaranteed Asset Protection Act

- **11:00 am** -- Gressette Room 207 -- Education Legislative Oversight Subcommittee

I. SC Museum Commission

II. SC Confederate Relic Room & Military Museum

- **2:30 pm** -- Blatt Room 427 -- 3-M Subcommittee II, Occupational Regulation and Licensing Boards

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I. H. 3348 - Prescription Drugs

II. H. 3349 - Pharmacy Practice Act

Thursday, February 26

- **8:00 am - 10:00 am** -- Blatt Room 112 -- Legislative Breakfast - South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 427 -- 3-M Subcommittee I, Health and Environmental Affairs

- **9:00 am** -- Gressette Room 308 -- Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee

I. William H. Dill (Loris, South Carolina) - Appointment South Carolina Residential Builders Commission

II. George E. Knight (Columbia, South Carolina) - Reappointment South Carolina Real Estate Appraisers Board

- **9:00 am** -- Blatt Room 516 -- Judiciary Criminal Laws Subcommittee

I. H. 3545 - Arson

II. H. 3433 - Domestic Violence Reform Act

- **9:30 am** -- Gressette Room 407 -- Finance Subcommittee on K-12 Education, Budget Hearings

I. Governor's School for Arts and Humanities

II. Governor's School for Science and Math

III. School for Deaf and Blind

IV. Archives and History

V. Arts Commission

- **9:30 am** -- Gressette Room 209 -- Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

I. S. 284 - Federal Good Manufacturing Practices Regulation

II. H. 3323 - SC Noxious Weed Act

- **10:00 am** -- Gressette Room 408 -- Higher Education Subcommittee

I. S. 391 - In-State Tuition Rates for Veterans

- **11:00 am** -- Blatt Room 112 -- Legislative Group (Rep. David Hiott)

- **2:00 pm** -- Blatt Room 110 -- First Steps Study Committee