

ALERTS

South Carolina Legislative Report - May 25, 2012

May 21 - May 25, 2012

On the Floor

State Budget

The Senate gave final approval to its version of the state's \$6.6 billion annual budget this week. H.4813, the General Appropriations bill, was given final passage and will be sent to the House of Representatives for concurrence and then conference committee to work out the differences. H.4814, the state's Capital Reserve Fund, was given second reading and will be considered for third reading next week. This year's budget plan is comprised of \$672 million of recurring revenue and \$785 million of non-recurring revenue. It includes a 3% raise for state employees, a 2% raise for teachers, \$77 million for State Unemployment Insurance Tax (SUTA) relief and approximately \$15 million in tax relief for small businesses.

Sine Die

This week S. 1553, the annual Sine Die resolution dealing with the adjournment of the General Assembly, was introduced and placed on the calendar. Pursuant to the state constitution both house will adjourn on Jun 7, 2012 no later than 5:00pm. The resolution calls for the General Assembly to reconvene on June 19 - 21, 2012 to take up limited items such as vetoes, appointments, ratification of acts and potential conference committees.

In Committee

Tax Credits

The House Ways & Means Committee approved S. 1409, a bill dealing with various tax credits and the Department of Revenue. The committee amended the legislation to include a number of previously passed House bills that have since stalled in the Senate. The amendments included language from the datacenters (energy-intensive facilities) tax credits, solar tax credits and owner-occupied property tax credits. The bill will be up for debate on the floor next week.

Capital Project Sales Tax Act

The House Ways & Means Committee passed S. 1100, the Capital Project Sales Tax Act, which authorizes dredging, dewatering, construction of spoil sites, and the disposal of spoil material for funding by county capital projects. Both Houses have previously agreed to H. 4033, the House version of the legislation.

Unemployment - Drug Testing

The Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee approved H. 4033, a bill to suspend unemployment benefits for individuals who fail a drug test as a condition of employment. The legislation will be placed on the Senate calendar for debate next week.

Right to work

The Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee also approved H. 4652, the right to work legislation. The bill, as amended, removes definitions, dues provisions and other filing requirements originally included in the legislation. The amendment will also require a labor union to additionally file with the South Carolina Department of Labor, License and Regulation any regularly required U.S. Secretary of Labor documents, and maintains provisions regarding posting of information on right to work and fines and fees.

In the News**Lawmaker Arrested**

State Representative, Ted Vick (D-Chesterfield), was arrested in Columbia on Wednesday night and charged with DUI and unlawful carrying of a firearm. Representative Vick was reported leaving a local establishment in 5-points. Vick is also a candidate for the new 7th Congressional District and was considered the front-runner for the Democratic nomination. News outlets out of Florence are reporting that Vick has dropped out of the race for Congress, but will seek reelection to the House of Representatives. Read more about this story here.

Haley accuses Speaker of pushing Ethics Investigation

Governor Nikki Haley accused House Speaker Bobby Harrell (R-Charleston) of pushing the ongoing ethics investigation stemming from her time as a Lexington County representative. The committee has been investigating whether or not Haley engaged in illegal lobbying during her time in the House of Representatives. Harrell's office denied the charge, calling it a distraction.